RAJIV GANDHI
INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

An Analysis of the Current Status of the Environment, Society and Economy of Mizoram and a NEW Strategy for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth of Mizoram

मिज़ोरम

Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies
May 2025

RAJIV GANDHI
INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

Published by: Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies,
New Delhi

An Analysis of the Current Status of the Environment, Society and Economy of Mizoram and a NEW Strategy for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth of Mizoram

Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (RGICS)

Rajiv Gandhi Foundation
Jawahar Bhawan
New Delhi- 110001

May 2025

Study Team

Mr Mohsin Khan, Study Consultant, RGICS

With field support from

Ms Diana Ralte
Mr Vanlalnghaka Hauhnar
And
Ms Heena Zuni Pandit

Under the guidance of

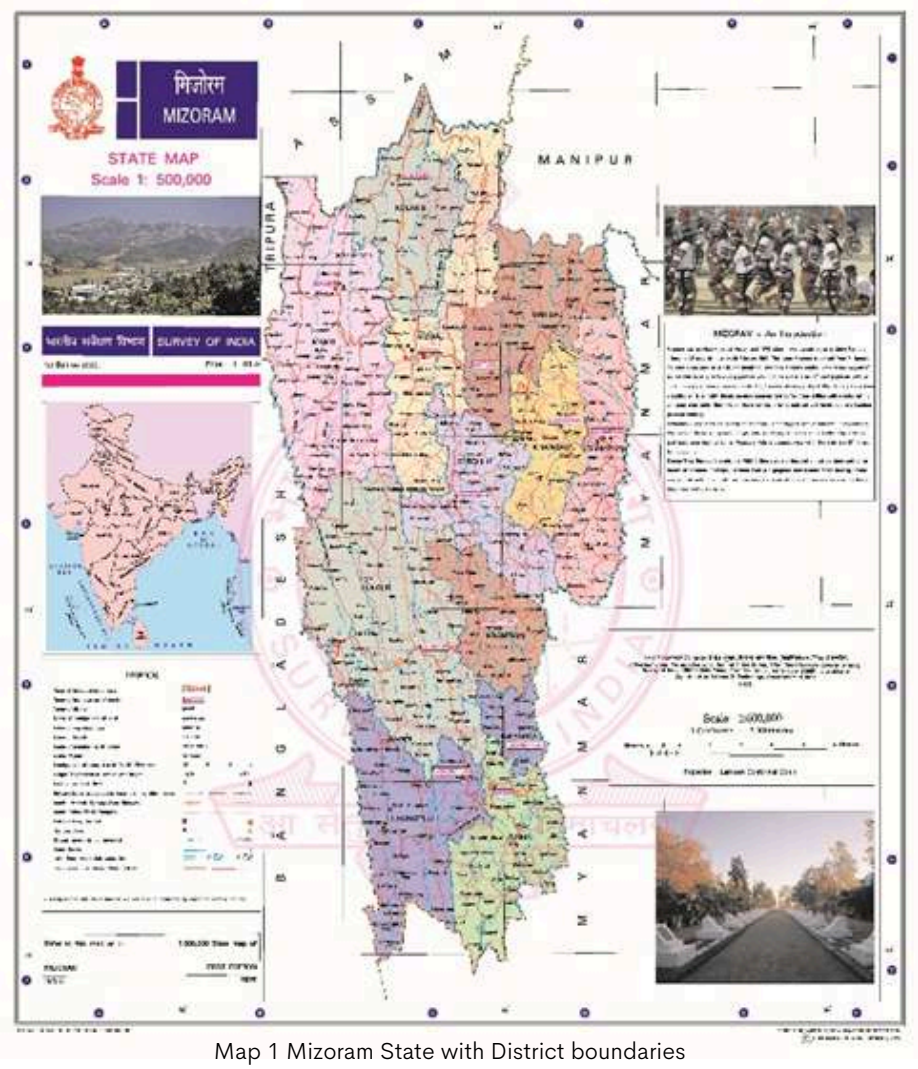
Mr Vijay Mahajan, Director, RGICS
Mr Jeet Singh, Head of Research, RGICS

The literature survey, field work and expert consultations for the study were conducted between Aug 2024 to Feb 2025

Contents

1 Introduction

Mizoram, nestled in the Northeastern hills of India, boasts a rich cultural heritage, unique ecology, and a history that sets it apart from many other Indian states. Formed on February 20, 1987, as the 23rd state of India, its journey reflects a complex interplay of migration, socio-political changes, and cultural evolution.



Map 1 Mizoram State with District boundaries

The state's unique demographic composition, predominantly comprising the Kuki-Chin group of the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Indo-Mongoloid race, reflects a history of migration and settlement influenced by geographical and socio-political factors. Migration patterns were driven by the search for fertile land, insecurity, and inter-tribal disputes, shaping the region's settlement dynamics.

Early Mizo history, largely preserved through legends and traditions, indicates origins in the Mekong Valley, followed by successive migrations to their current homeland. Over time, inter-tribal relationships, periodic relocations, and colonial interventions significantly influenced Mizoram's socio-economic and cultural evolution. The geopolitical development of Mizoram's boundaries highlights the region's challenges under colonial rule, including integration into British India and subsequent administrative reorganizations.

In the absence of adequate historical evidence, the early evolution of the boundary has been based on generalisation. The Mizos migrated from the south-eastern part of Hunan province of China and came to the territory of Burma in the early part of 15th century A.D. They lived at Tlangkha, north of Falam (Chin Hills in Burma). They were the descendants of Thangura. From him, sprang six lines of (Thangura) Chiefs – Rokhum, Zadeng, Thangluah, Palian, Rivung and Sailo. Being economically hard pressed, all these chiefs and their followers moved westward in search of better livelihood and suitable land for agriculture. They were superior and stronger than the early settlers and hence, they easily drove them further west north. (Das, 1990)

These people, who were driven out in the extreme north, were the old Kukis. Thus, these six lines of Thangura Chief became the masters of the territory and spread over a territory which was not properly recorded at that time. Thus, eventually the major Mizo tribes include the Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Paite, and Pawi (Lakhers). These tribes have various sub-clans, with some dominant ones like the Sailo clan.

These tribes dispersed across current Mizoram territory and neighbouring regions, with significant populations in Churachandpur (Manipur), Cachar (Assam), and north Tripura. Some Mizo tribes also reside across international borders in Myanmar (Burma) and Bangladesh. Despite their diversity, the tribes have adopted the Lusei (Lushai) dialect as a common language, fostering a sense of unity. The Sailo chiefs played a key role in unifying the tribes under a common sociopolitical structure during historical migrations (Das, 1990)

Khampat, situated in the Kabaw Valley of present-day Myanmar, holds significant importance in Mizo migration history. It served as a temporary homeland for the Mizo tribes during their westward migration. After departing from the Shan State, the Mizo tribes established a settlement in Khampat, where they are believed to have developed early forms of chieftainship and architectural skills. The town was encircled by an earthen rampart and divided into several parts, with the central block called Nan Yar (Palace Site) serving as the ruler's residence. (Das, 1990)

However, life in Khampat was challenging due to natural constraints and calamities like famine and food shortages, prompting the Mizos to move westward in search of better livelihoods. Before leaving Khampat, the Mizo people planted a banyan tree and took a vow in front of their Burmese neighbours that they would return someday. This act holds symbolic significance in Mizo folklore and migration history. This migration eventually led them to the Chin Hills and further into the present-day state of Mizoram in India. (Das, 1990)

The British intrusion into the hunting grounds of various Mizo tribes to establish large tea gardens particularly in southern Cachar (Assam) and northern Tripura resulted in frequent tribal raids and considerable loss of life. In response, around the mid-19th century, the British entered what is now modern-day Mizoram and carried out several expeditions in the Lushai Hills, some of which were unsuccessful while others achieved their objectives. (Haokip, 2019).

Eventually, in 1891, the British gained control over the Lushai Hills. As part of their occupation, they arbitrarily abolished the traditional rights of tribal chiefs, significantly altering the region's socio-political structure.

The power of the Chief was thus reduced and as a result, the Chief who had freely exercised his power previously was made a mere dependent on the British. This change was a landmark development in Mizoram as the Chief was no longer allowed to take an independent action against any of his subjects without prior permission from the British administration. (Haokip, 2019).

Later on, the British administration was followed by the Christian missionaries. The introduction of Christianity by the missionaries brought about many changes in the life of Mizo people. Christian missionaries replaced the indigenous belief of animism with Christian beliefs. The Zawlbuk (bachelor's dormitory) was the social institution wherein young people were given life education. This indigenous system was replaced by formal education (Haokip, 2019). Today, the Church's influence is widely regarded as a key driver of socio-political and economic progress in Mizoram. Christian faith and principles deeply influence the social values of Mizo society, shaping its moral and cultural foundations.

After India's independence and as Mizoram transitioned from colonial rule to integration into independent India, the region faced new challenges and opportunities that shaped its modern identity. Initially part of Assam as an autonomous district under the Sixth Schedule, Mizoram faced challenges during the Mautam famine (1959-60), which fuelled nationalist sentiments and the rise of the Mizo National Front (MNF) (Zarzosanga, 2016).

Following years of insurgency, the Indian government elevated Mizoram to Union Territory status in 1972 to address demands for greater autonomy. The breakthrough came with the 1986 Mizo Peace Accord lead by the then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, which ended the insurgency and paved the way for full statehood on February 20, 1987.[1] Special provisions under Article 371(G) were introduced to protect the state's cultural and traditional identity.

Image Source

[1] https://mizoram.nic.in/about/history.htm

1.1 Why this study – the triple crisis facing the state

Mizoram currently faces a convergence of three significant challenges - environmental, social, and economic, collectively termed in this study as the **'triple crisis'**. The following section summarizes the key findings and highlights the critical issues arising from these interconnected challenges. For an in-depth analysis and detailed status of each dimension of the triple crisis, please refer to the annexures.

1.1.1 Environmental Challenges

The natural environment in Mizoram faces substantial pressures, predominantly driven by complex interactions among climatic conditions, geographical features, water resource management, forestry practices, and climate change vulnerabilities. Mizoram's landscape consists mainly of low-altitude hills, influencing settlement patterns and agricultural practices such as jhum cultivation. Annual rainfall significantly impacts agriculture and water resource dynamics; despite abundant precipitation, the state suffers acute seasonal water shortages due to inadequate storage and high surface runoff (see Annexure 1 for detailed data).

Water resource management faces critical challenges despite Mizoram's extensive river networks and numerous water bodies, predominantly used for pisciculture. Issues such as drying up, siltation, and encroachment severely impact water sustainability. Moreover, the rapid decline of rural spring water (Tuikhur) due to changing rainfall patterns, land-use shifts, and landslides exacerbates water scarcity. Urban water management in Aizawl also faces substantial deficits, forcing residents to rely heavily on costly private water tanker services despite abundant rainfall (detailed data available in Annexure 1).

Forests extensively cover Mizoram, dominated by Moderate Dense and Open Forests. However, forest degradation due to shortened jhum cycles and frequent forest fires poses significant risks, with over half of Mizoram's forests categorized as highly fire-prone. Bamboo forests, integral to the region's economy and ecology, periodically experience devastating cycles of flowering ("Mautam"), causing widespread ecological and economic disruptions (refer to Annexure 1 for comprehensive forest data).

Agricultural land use in Mizoram is limited due to rugged terrain and extensive forests, with shifting cultivation still prevalent, contributing to significant fallow land areas. Land fragmentation is evident, with a majority of agricultural holdings being small or marginal, restricting agricultural productivity and expansion opportunities.

Climate change further compounds Mizoram's vulnerabilities, demonstrated through rising temperatures and increasingly erratic rainfall patterns. Recent years have recorded a shift toward drier conditions, with severe implications for water security, agriculture, and biodiversity. These climatic shifts necessitate robust adaptation measures and resilient infrastructure development to manage the growing risks (detailed climate trends available in Annexure 1).

Overall, effective intervention strategies, including improved water conservation, sustainable forestry, robust climate adaptation, and resilient infrastructure, are essential to comprehensively address Mizoram's intertwined environmental, social, and economic challenges.

Building on these insights, it becomes evident that addressing Mizoram's environmental challenges requires targeted attention to several priority issues. The primary environmental concerns include shortening of the Jhum cultivation cycle, resulting in loss of forests and increasing forest fires, climate change vulnerability, and emerging water scarcity issues.

Jhum Cultivation

Mizoram's environment faces stress from both traditional and modern practices. The age-old jhum (shifting cultivation) involves burning forest patches for farming, which has led to deforestation and biodiversity loss. Global assessments show Mizoram lost about *274,000 hectares* of tree cover from 2000–2021 (a ~14% decline).[2] Shortened fallow cycles in jhum (now ~3–4 years) mean forests aren't given time to regenerate, exacerbating soil erosion and habitat degradation. Additionally, the burning of vegetation releases carbon dioxide, contributing to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.[3]

The government has acknowledged these environmental crises and taken measures to mitigate them. Policies like the *New Land Use Policy (NLUP)* have incentivized farmers to shift from jhum to stable livelihoods,[4] and there is a push toward horticulture and bamboo cultivation as sustainable alternatives. Afforestation and soil conservation programs are being implemented, and Mizoram's Climate Action Plan (2030) emphasizes landslide risk management and forest regeneration. Officials report steady progress jhum cultivation is reportedly declining ~2-3% annually as farmers adopt new practices but balancing development with ecological security remains an ongoing challenge.

Forest Fires

The frequency and intensity of forest fires in Mizoram have been on the rise, exacerbating environmental degradation.[5] Data from 2001 to 2023 reveals that the state lost approximately 1.19 thousand hectares of tree cover due to fires, with a significant spike in recent years.[6] These fires not only destroy flora and fauna but also contribute to air pollution and soil degradation.

Research indicates that most forest fires occur during March and April, with a total of 1,212 fire events recorded in a study period (Bhavsar, Chakroborty, Mohapatra, Sarma, & Aggarwal, 2023). The interplay between climatic variables and human activities, such as Jhum cultivation, has heightened the state's susceptibility to forest fires.

---

[2] https://www.lifegate.com/controversial-slash-and-burn-farming-method-destroys-green-cover-in-mizoram#:~:text=According%20to%20Global%20Forest%20Watch%2C,environmental%2C%20social%2C%20and%20economic%20sustainability

[3] https://mizoram.pscnotes.com/mizoram-geography/shifting-cultivation-jhum-cultivation-in-mizoram/?

[4] https://india.mongabay.com/2018/11/environment-policies-that-benefit-farmers-could-hold-key-to-votes-in-mizoram/#:~:text=,practice%20in%20Mizoram%20where%20farmers

[5] https://mizoram.pscnotes.com/mizoram-geography/deforestation-in-mizoram/?

[6] https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/country/IND/23/?

Climate Change Vulnerability

Mizoram's topography and socio-economic factors render it highly vulnerable to climate change impacts. The state has been identified as having the highest climate vulnerability score (0.71) among 12 Indian Himalayan states.[7] This vulnerability is manifested through erratic rainfall patterns, temperature fluctuations, and increased incidence of extreme weather events. For instance, between January and June 2023, Mizoram recorded 660.6 mm of rainfall, which surged to 1,010.5 mm by mid-2024, indicating significant variability that adversely affects agriculture and water resources.[8] Furthermore, an annual temperature increase of 0.01°C has been observed, primarily due to a 0.03°C rise in mean maximum temperatures (Monsang, 2021). These climatic changes pose threats to crop productivity, forest health, and overall ecosystem stability.

Emerging Issue: Water Scarcity

Despite receiving substantial rainfall, Mizoram faces seasonal water scarcity, particularly during the dry months from February to June. A survey revealed that 53.1% of households did not have sufficient drinking water during these months, with the situation peaking in April.[9] The scarcity is attributed to factors such as inadequate water management practices, deforestation, and the drying up of water bodies. In urban areas like Aizawl, the problem is exacerbated by rapid urbanization and insufficient infrastructure for water storage and distribution. Efforts to revive traditional water conservation methods and implement sustainable water management practices are crucial to address this emerging challenge.

Addressing these environmental challenges requires a multifaceted approach that balances traditional practices with sustainable development initiatives. Implementing policies that promote alternative livelihoods to Jhum cultivation, enhancing forest fire management strategies, building climate resilience, and improving water resource management are essential steps toward safeguarding Mizoram's environmental and socio-economic future.

1.1.2 Social Challenges

Mizoram demonstrates notable strengths and significant challenges in its social development landscape, characterized by commendable educational achievements, persistent health issues, and unique institutional dynamics. Demographically, the state exhibits balanced gender ratios, particularly in urban areas, and a high urban population share.

Literacy rates are exceptional, surpassing 98% for the population aged seven and above, with minimal gender disparity, a result of robust community engagement and government initiatives, including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and widespread local institutional involvement (see Annexure 2 for detailed data).

---

[7] https://ncdc.mohfw.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/3-Mizoram-SAPCCHH-Version-2-1.pdf?

[8] https://www.eastmojo.com/news/aipp-eastmojo-fellowship-2024/2024/12/14/between-development-and-climate-change-mizoram-farmers-left-counting-losses/?

[9] https://des.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2024/09/0290f27a9811a261b42057b377440758/drinking-water-eco.pdf?

The health scenario presents a dual burden marked by nutritional challenges and rising non-communicable diseases. High rates of stunting and anaemia among children, combined with significant adult obesity and elevated incidences of hypertension and diabetes, reflect lifestyle-related health risks. Persistent high tobacco usage exacerbates these health concerns. Although Mizoram has successfully improved institutional childbirth and reduced infant mortality significantly, regional disparities remain substantial, particularly between rural and urban areas. The forthcoming Mizoram Universal Healthcare Scheme aims to address these inequities through comprehensive medical coverage, underscoring a focused effort to enhance healthcare infrastructure and services statewide (detailed health indicators available in Annexure 2).

Educationally, Mizoram excels at primary levels, boasting universal enrolment and favourable pupil-teacher ratios. However, secondary and higher secondary education encounter significant dropout rates, particularly at the higher secondary stage, highlighting an urgent need for targeted retention strategies. Higher education displays encouraging gender parity and favourable Gross Enrolment Ratios (GER), indicating positive trends in tertiary education access. Nonetheless, infrastructural disparities persist across districts, affecting equitable access to quality education (refer to Annexure 2 for comprehensive education statistics).

Mizoram's institutional fabric strongly influences its social capital, shaped primarily by religious and civil organizations like the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Young Mizo Association (YMA), and Mizoram People's Forum (MPF). These institutions significantly impact governance, electoral integrity, community cohesion, and social reform efforts, extending their role beyond traditional religious activities to include educational, healthcare, and developmental initiatives. Particularly notable is YMA's involvement in addressing refugee crises, environmental campaigns, and promoting Mizo cultural heritage, alongside MPF's contribution to maintaining ethical governance and transparency in political processes.

At the grassroots level, Village Councils and Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) play critical roles in local governance, with ADCs specifically ensuring ethnic minorities' autonomy and cultural preservation within a decentralized governance framework. Despite their administrative importance, these bodies face limitations in autonomy and resource availability, pointing to the need for strengthened capacity and financial independence.

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have emerged as powerful agents of socio-economic empowerment, particularly among women, significantly influencing livelihood diversification, financial inclusion, and gender equality. Supported through initiatives such as the NRLM and the PMFME schemes, SHGs have expanded rapidly, mobilizing savings, enhancing credit access, and driving entrepreneurial ventures across Mizoram. These grassroots movements have successfully mitigated rural poverty and fostered community-level leadership among women (refer to Annexure 2 for detailed institutional analysis).

Emerging from these complex social, demographic, and institutional dynamics are three critical socio-economic issues that demand focused attention: rapid migration and urbanization, challenges related to cross-border migration, escalating substance abuse and addiction, and underlying ethnic tensions. These interconnected issues are exacerbated by uneven development, rural-urban disparities, and stresses placed upon local institutions, necessitating integrated policy responses to ensure Mizoram's sustainable social development

Migration and Urbanization

Socio-cultural stability in Mizoram is being tested by migration and limited economic growth. High unemployment (about 11.9% as of mid-2023) (Devi, 2024) has driven many youths to migrate to cities or out of state in search of jobs. Indeed, Mizoram is now over 58% urbanized – the most urbanized state in Northeast India reflecting significant rural-to-urban migration.[10] This urban expansion, while bringing modern amenities, also encroaches on traditional tribal community life. Village populations dwindle and indigenous farming practices wane, raising concerns about the erosion of cultural identity and social cohesion.

Cross Border Migration

At the same time, the state has absorbed a large influx of refugees from neighbouring Myanmar due to ongoing conflict there. An estimated 70,000–100,000 Burmese (Chin) refugees have taken shelter in Mizoram, straining local resources but also showcasing Mizo society's solidarity and inclusive ethos.[11] Urban issues like housing and drug abuse have emerged as young migrants navigate between tribal values and city pressures. In response, both government and community institutions are working to strengthen social fabric. The Church and the Young Mizo Association (YMA) continue to play key roles in community support and cultural preservation.

Meanwhile, the state has launched programs to improve livelihoods and integration for example, the flagship *Socio-Economic Development Program (SEDP)* provides capital grants to thousands of families to start small ventures, and skill development initiatives (e.g. job fairs, entrepreneurship training) are targeting youth. Such efforts aim to curb out-migration by creating local opportunities, thereby sustaining social cohesion and maintaining Mizoram's rich cultural identity amid change.

Aizawl, the capital, now functions as a primate city attracting most migrants and housing more than one-third of the state's population (N.Pautunthang, 2024) (Singh A. , 2017). This urban influx strains Aizawl's infrastructure and social services, while growth in smaller towns (N.Pautunthang, 2024). Longstanding ethnic tensions persist with minority groups.

Substance Abuse and Addiction in Mizoram

Mizoram faces severe challenges related to substance abuse, including drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. With some of India's highest addiction rates, the state has drawn national attention. An estimated 70% of adult men and nearly half of women (48%) aged 15–49 use tobacco products, significantly above the national average, driven partly by traditional practices like the consumption of "tuibur," a tobacco-infused water popular among women.[12]

---

[10] https://niua.in/intranet/sites/default/files/2802.pdf?

[11] "Census Planned Chins Mizoram State". 2021

[12] https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR374/FR374_Mizoram.pdf

Alcohol use, despite prohibition attempts, remains common, particularly among men, with around 30% of adult men consuming alcohol regularly.[13] However, drug abuse represents the most critical issue, with opioids especially heroin prevalent. Studies estimate that over 10% of Mizoram's population has experimented with or regularly uses opioids, marking one of India's highest opioid abuse rates (Ambekar, 2019).

Substance use often begins in adolescence, fuelled by peer influence, ease of availability, and cultural acceptance of tobacco and alcohol. A majority of drug users reportedly initiate drug use before age 20, primarily influenced by peer groups, indicating that social networks strongly impact youth behaviours (Biswas, et al., 2020). Additionally, factors like high unemployment (approximately 12%, higher among urban youth) and rapid urbanization have contributed to frustration, stress, and diminishing traditional community oversight, driving youth toward substances as coping mechanisms.[14] Mizoram's geographical proximity to Myanmar, a primary source of illicit drugs, further exacerbates drug availability.[15]

Recognizing the gravity of substance abuse, the Mizoram government has implemented various policy measures. Notably, the Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, 2019, reintroduced a statewide alcohol prohibition to reduce alcohol-related harm and societal impacts, reflecting strong local sentiments advocating alcohol-free lifestyles.[16] For drug control, state authorities rigorously enforce the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, conducting regular crackdowns on drug trafficking networks.

Beyond law enforcement, Mizoram actively promotes preventive and rehabilitative strategies. The state collaborates closely with influential community organizations like the Young Mizo Association (YMA) and various church groups to conduct awareness programs, support peer-led interventions, and advocate against substance use. Rehabilitation efforts include government-funded and NGO-run detoxification and counselling centres, which offer comprehensive care, including vocational training and social reintegration programs to assist recovering individuals.[17] [18]

Ethnic minority

Persistent ethnic tensions within Mizoram remain a critical social issue. The Bru (Reang) tribe faced violent clashes with the Mizo majority in 1997 over land and autonomy, displacing over 30,000 Brus to relief camps in Tripura.[19]

---

[13] Ibid

[14] https://planning.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2022/02/5040f97f2c404c9c2bce7c6866f333e9/economic-survey-of-mizoram-2021-22.pdf

[15] https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/mizoram-emerges-as-major-drug-trafficking-route-from-myanmar/articleshow/78553675.cms

[16] https://excise.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2023/06/25120543ba7f8bae06583a1ce2c1eafa/pages-32-mlp-act-2019-and-rules-2022-combinedcover.pdf

[17] https://police.mizoram.gov.in/drug-awareness-programme-under-nasha-mukt-bharat-abhiyaan/

[18] https://socialwelfare.mizoram.gov.in/page/msdrb?

Similarly, the Chakma community, a Buddhist minority with an autonomous council has grievances over land and representation. In 2017, Mizo student protests erupted against the inclusion of Chakma students in reserved quotas, reflecting ongoing disputes over indigeneity.[20]

1.1.3 Economic Challenges

The following summary synthesizes the key findings from Annexure 3, focusing on Mizoram's economic growth, sectoral performance, livelihoods, employment patterns, and financial inclusion. Detailed data supporting these insights are provided in Annexure 3.

Mizoram's economy exhibited consistent growth from ₹7,25,869 lakh in 2011-12 to ₹20,17,318 lakh in 2022-23, driven primarily by the Tertiary sector. Despite a temporary downturn in 2020-21 due to COVID-19, recovery has been robust. However, structural imbalances remain, particularly stagnation in the Primary sector.

Primary Sector: Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries dominate, yet the sector is characterized by stagnant growth due to traditional jhum practices, climatic vulnerabilities, and limited modernization. Forestry has shown temporary expansions, whereas fisheries and livestock experienced declines. Recently, horticulture emerged positively, driven by improved practices, increased productivity, and successful exports of crops like dragon fruit and pineapple.

Secondary Sector: Construction and utility services have driven steady growth from ₹146,930 lakh in 2011–12 to ₹558,356 lakh in 2022–23. Manufacturing remains modest due to limited industrial infrastructure, emphasizing the need for further investment and skilled labour.

Tertiary Sector: Dominating Mizoram's economy, the Tertiary sector grew significantly from ₹441,537 lakh in 2011–12 to ₹1,039,615 lakh in 2022–23. Growth has been widespread across trade, public administration, hospitality, and communication, despite infrastructural constraints, particularly limited connectivity. Tourism is not yet a major part of the Tertiary sector.

Income and Poverty: Per capita income increased sharply, reaching ₹232,126 by 2022-23, compared to the Indian national average of ₹172,000 indicating substantial economic gains and poverty reduction. Multidimensional poverty decreased significantly to 0.024 in 2021-22 and was much lower than the Indian average of 0.113 although gender disparities persist, with males earning substantially more than females.

Consumption Expenditure: Mizoram's households have higher monthly consumption expenditure compared to national averages, with rural and urban households significantly exceeding national spending patterns, reflecting improved economic conditions and living standards.

---

[19] https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/tripura-bru-migrants-settlement-protest-7061521/

[20] https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/mizoram-grappled-with-bru-chakma-issues-in-2017-117122100235_1.html

Employment and Unemployment: Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) remains moderate, notably low among youth due to prolonged education and limited job opportunities. Employment heavily favours self-employment, especially among women, with minimal casual labour. Youth unemployment, particularly urban, is high at 19.6%, suggesting transition challenges from education to employment.

Banking and Financial Services: Banking infrastructure has expanded, but credit deployment is limited, resulting in a low Credit-Deposit Ratio (CDR), below 40%. Priority sector lending shows progress, particularly in agriculture and MSMEs. Financial inclusion has significantly improved, with near-universal banking coverage and increasing digital transactions, though insurance penetration remains low but is gradually improving due to government initiatives and awareness programs.

The state's heavy dependence on agriculture, combined with limited industrial growth, inadequate market access, and persistent infrastructural deficits, collectively hinder economic resilience and employment opportunities, thereby affecting the overall quality of life for its residents. Addressing these issues is critical for Mizoram to achieve balanced and inclusive economic progress.

Agricultural Dependence and Low Productivity

Mizoram's economy remains under diversified and agriculture-dependent, creating vulnerabilities. The majority of the population still relies on farming, yet agriculture contributed only about 19% of the state's GSDP in 2021-22[21] indicating low productivity and a gap in non-farm sector development.[22]The pace of industrialization has been limited; apart from small-scale agro-processing, handloom, and bamboo-based enterprises, there are few large industries. Services sector is also largely driven by government spending.

Poor Connectivity and Infrastructure

Geographical isolation and infrastructure deficits have historically hindered economic expansion. Until recently, connectivity was poor only 59% of villages have all-weather road access;[23] and frequent landslides often damage key roads. However, gradual improvements are underway: new highways, a rail line to Aizawl, and proposed trade corridors (as part of India's *Act East* policy) promise to reduce Mizoram's remoteness.

The state is also eyeing emerging sectors to broaden its economic base. Tourism is one focus, capitalizing on Mizoram's scenic landscapes and unique culture, though tourist inflows remain modest due to limited facilities. Likewise, there's a growing emphasis on entrepreneurship and small industries to create jobs many young Mizos are venturing beyond traditional livelihoods into businesses in food processing, crafts, and services, helping spur diversification.[24]

---

[21] https://prsindia.org/budgets/states/mizoram-budget-analysis-2023-24#:~:text=The%20Gross%20State%20Domestic%20Product,19%25%20over%202022%2D23

[22] Ibid

[23] http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=oct1413/oth06

[24] Ibid

To catalyze this shift, the government (particularly under the new 2024 administration) has unveiled policies and investments. A Mizoram Sustainable Investment Policy 2024 was launched to attract private investment and foster sustainable growth.[25] Alongside, a flagship economic initiative called "Bana Kaih" (Hand-Holding Policy) launched in September 2024[26] is providing interest-free loans and enterprise support focusing on agri-value chains, small-scale industries, and start-ups to boost local production and employment.[27]

Limited Market Access and Trade Barriers

Mizoram's economic development is significantly constrained by limited market access and trade barriers, stemming from both geographic and policy-related challenges. Despite sharing international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh, formal cross-border trade remains minimal.

The Government of India has expressed interest in opening more trade points, such as the Paletwa route in southern Mizoram and the Champhai–Rhi route, to enhance trade with Myanmar. However, progress has been slow, with Myanmar prioritizing the strengthening of the Moreh-Tamu route before considering new trade points.[28] This hampers Mizoram's ability to leverage its strategic location for economic growth.

Furthermore, regulatory bottlenecks and restrictive policies have historically impeded cross-border trade. For instance, border crossings like the Maungdaw gate between Myanmar and Bangladesh were previously subject to stringent visa regulations, limiting the movement of traders and goods.[29]

Although there have been efforts to ease such restrictions, challenges persist, affecting the ease of doing business across borders. The underdevelopment of trade infrastructure further exacerbates these issues.[30]

While projects like the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project aim to connect Mizoram with Myanmar's Sittwe port, delays and security concerns have hindered their timely completion.[31] These infrastructural shortcomings limit the state's ability to participate effectively in regional trade networks.

Additionally, sectors with high potential, such as agro-processing and handicrafts, suffer due to these trade barriers. Limited market access confines these industries to local markets, restricting their growth and the economic diversification of the state.

---

[25] https://static.investindia.gov.in/s3fs-public/2024%2004/Mizoram%20Sustainable%20Investment%20Policy%2C%202024.pdf?

[26] https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/mizoram-partners-with-banks-to-boost-economic-growth-through-handholding-scheme/articleshow/116445115.cms?

[27] https://currentaffairs.adda247.com/mizoram-launches-bana-kaih-scheme-to-support-farmers-and-entrepreneurs/?

[28] https://www.nedfi.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Border-trade-with-Myanmar-Bangladesh.pdf?

[29]]https://www.dmediag.com/business/border_trade.html?

[30] https://mizoram.pscnotes.com/history-of-mizoram/development-of-trade-routes/?

[31] https://urbantransportnews.com/article/unlocking-prosperity-between-india-and-myanmar-the-kaladan-multi-modal-transit-project?

Mizoram faces a complex triple crisis that intertwines environmental, social, and economic challenges. The degradation caused by unsustainable practices like Jhum cultivation, increasing forest fires, and growing climate vulnerability threatens the state's ecological balance.

Image Source

Image Source

Socially, rapid urbanization, migration, and unresolved ethnic tensions are eroding traditional community structures and cultural cohesion.

Economically, limited market access and trade barriers continue to restrict the growth of local enterprises and hinder the state's integration into larger trade networks.

Together, these challenges underscore the urgent need for a new strategy to ensure inclusive and sustainable development of Mizoram. In this report we attempt to delineate such a strategy.

1.2 Scope and Methodology

This study provides an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of Mizoram's environmental, social, and economic conditions. Specifically, the study evaluates ecological resources, social capital, institutional frameworks, economic structures, employment conditions, and livelihoods. These areas are thoroughly explored through detailed qualitative analysis and rigorous quantitative assessments presented in Chapters 9, 10, and 11 (Annexures 1-3).

Data Collection Approach

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach integrating both secondary and primary research techniques:

1. **Secondary Research (Desk Review)**

- Extensive secondary research provided the foundational context and established the preliminary analytical framework. Sources included:
- Academic literature and previously published studies on Mizoram's environment, society, and economy
- Official government statistics, reports, and databases (e.g., Statistical Handbooks, NSSO Surveys, ISFR Reports)
- Policy documents, legislative texts, and government records

Reports from reputable NGOs, civil society institutions, and international development agencies.

2. **Primary Research (Field-Based Inquiry)**

To validate and supplement secondary data, comprehensive primary research was conducted through semi-structured interactions during field visits across Mizoram. Primary data collection involved:

Key Interviews: Interviews with targeted stakeholders including:

- Government officials from NABARD, Pollution Control Board, Lead Bank, Horticulture, Forest & Climate Change Department, and Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission (MzSRLM)
- Academics from Mizoram University and Govt. Zirtiri Women's College
- Entrepreneurs and local business leaders
- Representatives from civil society organizations, notably Young Mizo Association (YMA)
- Members and leaders of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)
- Village Council members and local community leaders.
- Local Residents

Field Observations and Case Studies: Site visits and direct observational studies enriched the understanding of real-world practices, environmental conditions, infrastructural challenges, and societal behaviours within the state.

Analytical Framework and Recommendations

The analysis employed an integrated systems-thinking framework to synthesize findings from both primary and secondary research sources. Quantitative data were systematically analyzed to identify key trends, gaps, and opportunities, while qualitative insights were subjected to thematic analysis to understand underlying drivers and constraints.

This rigorous analysis culminated in evidence-based recommendations tailored for diverse stakeholders, including:

- Local communities and grassroots organizations
- Civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Social innovators and entrepreneurs
- Environmental advocates and policymakers
- State and central government departments
- Technical experts and academic institutions
- Financial institutions and media stakeholders

Report Structure and Content Outline

The study is structured into clearly defined thematic chapters, each addressing a core aspect of sustainable development:

Chapter 1: Introduction offers a comprehensive historical narrative tracing the journey of the Mizo people, beginning from their early migrations through their interactions with British colonial rule, and ultimately their integration into Independent India. The second section of this chapter succinctly summarizes the current status of the three critical challenges – environmental, social, and economic that Mizoram faces today. Additionally, it identifies and elaborates upon the three primary issues associated with each of these interconnected challenges.

Chapter 2: NEW Strategy for Sustainable Development – Framework for a holistic approach toward sustainability, emphasizing environmental regeneration, social empowerment, and economic prosperity. Here NEW stands for Nature regeneration, Enabling human and social development, and Well-th creation, where well-th is spelt as such on purpose to underline not just material wealth but health, education and social well-being.

Chapter 3: Nature Regeneration – Strategies to restore and sustainably manage natural resources including water, forests, land, and climate resilience.

Chapter 4: Enabling Human, Social, and Institutional Development – Approaches to improve health, nutrition, education, skill development, institutional capacity, social inclusion, and governance effectiveness.

Chapter 5: Well-th Creation – Identification and upgrading of local enterprises across agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors to create inclusive economic growth and improved livelihoods.

Estimating Interventions (Chapters 2-5)

These chapters systematically outline interventions required to address Mizoram's challenges, specifying:

- Description and justification of each proposed intervention
- Quantification of required scale and coverage
- Unit cost estimation and aggregated investment needs

Chapter 6: Level of Investments required and its Benefits and Sources

Chapter 6 provides an extensive analysis of the investments required to implement the proposed interventions. It evaluates potential economic, social, and environmental benefits, employing detailed quantitative analysis and economic modelling. These include projected growth in employment, improved livelihoods, wage increases, and environmental sustainability gains. Later section delves deeper into calculating the total investment required for executing the recommended interventions. It identifies viable financial sources, including governmental funding, private investments, international development agencies, CSR contributions, and financial institutions. This chapter includes detailed cost distribution strategies and insights from financial experts to facilitate realistic and feasible investment planning.

Chapter 7: Call to Action

Chapter 7 presents a structured Call to Action targeting various stakeholders. It clearly delineates roles and responsibilities across different societal sectors, ranging from individual actions and community-driven initiatives to engagement from civil society organizations, local governance bodies, state and central governments, and international bodies. This chapter emphasizes collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts essential for successful sustainable development in Mizoram.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Chapter 8 synthesizes key findings, summarizes core recommendations, and underscores the strategic significance of adopting the integrated the NEW strategy for Mizoram's sustainable development.

Annexures (Chapters 9, 10, and 11)

The annexures offer detailed analyses of Mizoram's environmental conditions, social development indicators, and economic structures, providing in-depth background and supplementary data that support the main findings and recommendations.

Chapter 12: References

Chapter 12 compiles comprehensive bibliographic details of all secondary sources utilized in the study, facilitating transparency and scholarly rigor.

2 NEW strategy for sustainable development

Mizoram's experience in recent decades clearly shows that conventional economic development has not adequately addressed the state's growing challenges in ecological degradation, social vulnerabilities, and economic disparities. Issues such as rising unemployment and underemployment, environmental degradation due to practices like Jhum cultivation, deforestation, landslides, and water crises emphasize the need for a new sustainable development strategy.

The normal strategies put macroeconomic GDP growth first, then worry about human development and well-being, and finally pay some residual attention to environmental aspects. We assert that the triad of employment crises requires us to adopt a radically different developmental strategy, which reverses the normal economic priorities.

We need to put nature first, then human beings and then GDP growth. We call this growth strategy Nature-regenerating, enabling human, social and institutional development and Well-the (well-being not just income) enhancing. which makes the acronym NEW. As against the "business as usual" strategy, which is exploitative of both nature and human beings, the new strategy nurtures both nature and human beings, through the following three prongs:

2.1 Nature regeneration

Invest in regenerating nature and conserving the environment: water, forests, land and the climate (Jal, Jangal, Jameen and Jalvayu) need to be regenerated, for reviving the agriculture and allied sectors. New green activities such as generation of renewable energy, recycling of waste, and climate-change adaptive construction and services, eco-tourism, etc. will have to be taken up in a big way. These will lead to the setting up of many nature-care enterprises.

2.2 Enabling human, social and institutional development

To generate more well-being for all species, we need to focus on services that carry out nature conservation and sustainable use, including agricultural and livestock extension services which teach sustainable practices.

We also need to adopt a new paradigm of human development services – health services need to focus on nutrition and wellness instead of medical treatment. Education services need to focus on lifelong learning instead of cramming or tuition for passing exams and tests.

We also need to focus on increasing social cohesion and capability for local participatory governance. The issue of ethnic minorities will have to be addressed within a spirit of inclusive development.

Financial services need to serve the self-employed and the agro=processing, manufacturing and service enterprises. Police and Justice Delivery services need to serve the citizens and not the political masters or criminal elements.

2.3 Well-th creation through entrepreneurship

Marginal and small farms as well as micro enterprises need to be upgraded into DECI farms and firms. DECI, pronounced "desi" farms and firms are local Demand based, led by Entrepreneurs emerging from collectives such as self-help groups, Capitalised well and have adequate Input linkages and infrastructure. The small percentage of larger farms and firms also need to grow in size and employment, becoming MESO farms/firms.

MESO pronounced "mee-so" stands for farms and firms which target Metro and Export demand, are led by Socially, Ethically and Environmentally Responsible (SEER) Entrepreneurs and have Skilled workers and are supported by an Organised Eco-system. This twin upgradation – from micro to DECI and from small to MESO will create crores of new generation jobs in agricultural, livestock, renewable energy, manufacturing, construction, and well-being service enterprises.

We deal with these three headings one by one. In each, we recommend certain interventions and estimate the extent to which these are needed and the unit investment cost. Then using assumptions about incremental capital output ratio (usually assumed to be 4:1, that is Rs 4 crore of investment would yield Rs 1 crore of output) and the wage share of output (usually 25-40%), we estimate the additional output (GDP) that will be generated as well as the additional employment.

We also pay attention to the environmental aspects and compute the extent of carbon dioxide that will get sequestered or GHG emissions that will be reduced. These are based on authoritative estimates by different experts. We call these AMSERs - Aggregated Micro-carbon-credits for Sequestration and Emission Reductions. We assume that a certain percentage of these can be sold in the global carbon markets to raise funds for the proposed intervention.

Image Source

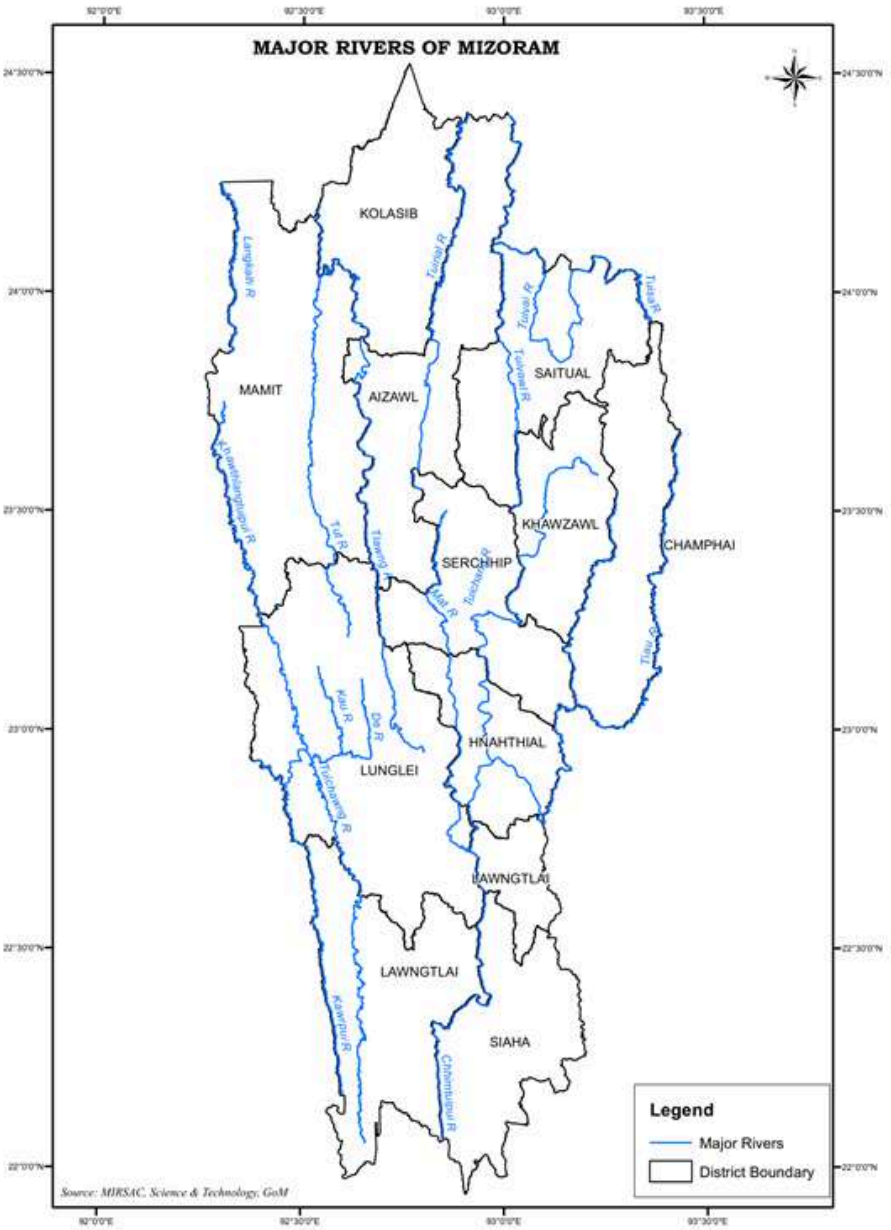
3 Nature regeneration: Jal, Jangal, Jameen, and Jalvayu

Mizoram, home to approximately 1.4 million people, boasts rich natural wealth characterized by extensive forest cover, vital water resources, fertile land, and diverse climatic conditions. This natural wealth forms the backbone of local livelihoods and sustains ecological balance. However, current developmental practices, including shifting cultivation (jhum), urbanization, and climate variability, pose threats to these resources, necessitating focused interventions for regeneration and conservation.

3.1 Water (Jal)

3.1.1 Rivers of Mizoram

Mizoram state has many rivers. The major north-flowing rivers of Mizoram include the Tlawng (also known as Dhaleswari or Katakhal in Assam), Sonai, and Tuivawl. These rivers originate within Mizoram and flow towards the north, eventually joining the Barak River in Cachar district, Assam. The major south flowing rivers of Mizoram include the Kolodyne (Chhimtuipui) and the Karnaphuli the Kolodyne, also known as Chhimtuipui, originates in Myanmar and flows southward, forming a natural border between India and Myanmar. Eventually it joins the Bay of Bengal at Sittwe, the seaport in Myanmar's Rakhine state. The Khawthlangtuipui also known as Karnaphuli arises in central Mizoram and flows southwest into Bangladesh, eventually flowing into Chittagong. The map shows these three major rivers. These rivers have the potential to become inland waterways and eventually connect not just Mizoram but other northeastern states with the seaports of Sittwe and Chittagong.



Source: https://mirsac.mizoram.gov.in/maps-of-mizoram/

The Sittwe port has already been commissioned in 2023 with the help of the Indo-Myanmar Friendship Project and a container depot has also been commissioned at Kaladan. The inland waterway to Chittagong will have to await restoration of normal relations between India and Bangladesh.

In addition to its river systems, Mizoram is home to several perennial lakes as shown in above image, locally referred to as "Dil", which play an essential role in the region's ecological and hydrological dynamics. Notable among them are Palak, Tamdil, Rongdil, Rengdil and Rihdil.

Mizoram, despite high annual rainfall averaging approximately 2327 mm[32], faces acute water scarcity every year within a few months of the monsoon, due to inadequate water resource management and declining groundwater recharge. Shortage of water has become common in hundreds of villagers across Mizoram. It is even worse in cities. In Aizawl, many localities cannot get water supply every week. The state capital is one of the worst affected places since only one single source of supply caters to about five lakh people. Lunglei, the second-largest town in Mizoram with a population of around 80,000, is grappling with a severe water crisis as its primary water sources the Tlawng River the main water source, and the Pialthleng stream, have dried up.[33]

In Mizoram, a traditional method of water storage, particularly in hilly areas, involves a system called "ruza" or "zabo," which captures and stores rainwater for later use. This system is an integral part of local practices and is used for irrigation, drinking water, and other household purposes. In addition to the "ruza" system, Mizoram also utilizes rooftop rainwater harvesting, often using bamboo gutters to collect runoff and store it in tanks. Springs (Tuikhur), crucial for rural water supply.[34]

Recommended interventions include:

- Investment in rainwater harvesting and storage systems like "ruza" or "zabo,"
- Comprehensive springshed management and rejuvenation of mountain springs (Tuikhur).
- Construction of small check dams, and ponds.
- Strengthening watershed management projects to enhance river and stream revival.

These efforts would significantly alleviate water scarcity and bolster water security, enhancing both ecological stability and community resilience.

The interventions proposed for surface water conservation are:[35]

- River rejuvenation – river basin-based soil conservation and water management to prevent erosion and other water borne disasters, building small dams on rivulets,
- Restoration of defunct and damaged water bodies

---

[32] https://des.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2024/02/35227b6bdb32366d10e36dd06bb2d6da/statistical-handbook-2022docx.pdf?

[33] https://nenow.in/north-east-news/mizoram/mizoram-lunglei-town-hit-by-acute-water-shortage-as-rivers-dry-up.html

[34] https://www.downtoearth.org.in/environment/how-the-north-east-uses-traditional-means-to-harvest-rain-water-69490

For groundwater conservation and recharge, the interventions recommended are;[36]

- Check Dams
- Gabion structure
- Rooftop rainwater harvesting structures
- Springshed development

The table below provides estimated expenditure, employment and environmental benefits from restoration of water sources in the state.

Table 1 Estimates for Regeneration of Water Commons

Estimates for Regeneration of Water Commons				
Interventions Proposed	Units	Number of units to be covered	Cost per Unit in INR at 2024 prices	Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)
Surface water conservation				
River rejuvenation – treatment of river basin	Sq kms	21,077	2,500,000	5,269
Restoration of defunct water bodies	Numbers	122	1,000,000	12
Restoration of damaged water bodies	Numbers	2,185	500,000	109
Groundwater Recharge				
New Check Dams	Numbers	500	894,007	45
New Gabion structures	Numbers	1,000	46,676	5
Roof Top Rainwater Harvesting	Numbers	743	34,666	3
Springshed /Watershed Development	Numbers	453	1,122,097	51
Regeneration of Water Commons				**5,493**

[35] Government of India, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (GoI-MJS, 2023). All India report of first Census of Water bodies. https://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/document/all-india-report-of-first-census-of-water-bodies-volume-1/

[36] Government of India, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, Central Ground Water Board Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater In India – 2020 https://jsactr.mowr.gov.in/Public_Dash/download/Master%20Plan%20to%20GW%20Recharge%202020.pdf

3.2 Forests (Jangal)

Forests cover about 85.34% of Mizoram's geographical area but face degradation due to frequent forest fires, shortened jhum cycles, and deforestation. Interventions required include:

- Extensive afforestation and reforestation initiatives, especially in fire-prone districts such as Lawngtlai and Lunglei.
- Promoting community-based forest conservation programs.
- Building capacity in the state to mobilise funding from carbon sequestration credits, arising out of the natural growth of the Mizoram forests as well as new afforestation efforts. As per ISFR, 2023, Mizoram's forests had a carbon stock of 168 million tons. If the Mizoram government and community agrees to not just conserve this carbon stock but grow it by just 1% pa, it can generate an income of between Rs 200 to 2000 crore per annum on a steady basis, depending on carbon dioxide credit prices between USD 4 to USD 40 per ton.
- Implementing targeted forest fire management and mitigation strategies.
- Encouraging bamboo cultivation to maintain ecological balance and support local livelihoods.

The table below provides estimated expenditure required, and the employment and environmental benefits from regeneration of forests in the state.

Table 2 Estimates for Regeneration of Forest Commons

Estimates for Regeneration of Forest Commons				
Interventions Proposed	**Units**	**Number of units to be covered**	**Cost per Unit in INR at 2024 prices**	**Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)**
Regreening of Open/scrub forest land through agroforestry and planted forests	Lakh Hectares	9.09	94,187	8,562
Restoring Moderately Dense Forest forests - mainly through assisted natural regeneration	Lakh Hectares	8.6	51,326	4,414
Regeneration of Forest Commons				**12,976**

3.3 Land and Soil (Jameen)

Mizoram's land resources are predominantly under forests (77.75%) and agriculture is residual. Moreover, traditional agricultural involved jhuming (rotational slash and burn of forest land) which is no longer possible due to increase in the demand for cultivable land. Mizoram announced a land use policy primarily focused on transitioning from unsustainable jhum cultivation to more sustainable farming and other economic activities. The New Land Use Policy (NLUP) 2010, aimed to serve 1,20,000 families over five years, providing livelihood options in agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, fisheries, animal husbandry, and other sectors. As a result, land under jhum cultivation has come down from over 45,000 ha in the mid-1980s to only about 25,000 ha in 2010.

The All-Mizoram Farmers' Union is the state's biggest and most respected non-governmental organization dealing with land-use based programmes. It was established by a group of farmers in 1994 and has since been working to uplift farmers and develop agriculture. It states that "various land-use policies implemented over the past two decades, several trends are now apparent, including: (1) poor forest regeneration due to shortened fallow periods in the jhum cycle; (2) reduced agricultural productivity due to decreasing soil fertility; (3) conversion of community land to private ownership; (4) increasing landlessness and social insecurity following the privatization of land; (5) conversion of shifting cultivation land into exotic plantations, including Eucalyptus spp., Tectona grandis, etc. reducing land available for cultivation of subsistence food and cash crops; (6) loss of authority by traditional community institutions; and (7) government encouragement of afforestation of jhum lands and consequent migration of the rural poor to urban areas." [37]

As per the Mizoram Sloping Agriculture Land Technology (MiSALT) program at Lunglei, one of the traditional methods of soil and moisture conservation used by Mizo farmers is Changkham, which involves placing half-burned logs or debris along contours to control erosion in jhum (shifting cultivation) lands. While this technique is effective, it has fallen into disuse in Mizoram compared to its continued use in Nepal for generations. Promoting Changkham and integration with other modern soil conservation practices would involve training farmers, demonstrating its effectiveness, and possibly incorporating it into MiSALT programs.[38]

Recommended interventions include:

- Land reform policies promoting secure land tenure and sustainable agricultural practices (e.g., NLUP, FRA).
- Accelerated implementation of sustainable farming practices such as contour farming, terracing, and agroforestry.
- Programs addressing soil erosion control and fertility enhancement through Changkham and integration with other modern soil conservation practices
- Development of horticulture and perennial crops as alternatives to shifting cultivation.

---

[37] Tripathi, SK, David C. Vanlalfakawma and F. Lalnunmawia (Shifting Cultivation on Steep Slopes of Mizoram, India Impact of policy reforms https://www.cabidigitallibrary.org/doi/pdf/10.1079/9781786391797.0393

[38] Farmers Guide to Mizoram Sloping Agriculture Land Technology (MiSALT) https://www.greenag.nmsa.gov.in/pdfDoc/ComMaterials/Mz/MISALT_Mz_Eng.pdf

Table 3 Estimates for Regeneration of Land - Common and Private

Interventions Proposed	Number of units in ha to be covered	Cost per Unit in INR at 2024 prices	Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)
Land reform policies to be continued and implemented	Statewide	Only admin	1
Soil and water conservation using traditional and modern practices	2000	20,000	4
Horticulture and perennial crops as alternatives to shifting cultivation	1000	200,000	20
Regeneration of Land - common and private			**25**

Image Source

3.4 Climate Change (Jalvayu Parivartan)

Climate change significantly impacts Mizoram, marked by erratic rainfall patterns, rising temperatures, and increased frequency of extreme weather events.

Mizoram's State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) was designed to address the state's vulnerability to climate change and promote sustainable development. It outlined specific actions for adapting to current and future climate impacts, considering Mizoram's unique vulnerabilities, including its hilly terrain, rich biodiversity, and high forest cover. In the SAPCC Phase – I, 2013 to 2018, 91 climate actions were proposed. The tentative budget to implement these actions was Rs. 3,675.20 crores for five years.[39]The estimated adjusted allocation as deciphered from various sources seem to be Rs. 1,164.5 crores which was about 31% of what was needed. The SAPCC included a number of missions including

- State Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
- State Mission for Green India
- State Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem
- Central and State Schemes State Mission for Health
- Central and State Schemes State Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change
- State Water Mission
- State Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency
- State Solar Mission
- State Mission on Sustainable Habitat, which had the following components

S. No.	Strategies /Activities	Proposed Budget (as in SAPCC 2013-18) in Lakh INR	Allocation / Expenditure during 2013-18 in Lakh INR
1	Capacity building and research initiatives on Climate Change impacts and preparedness	130.00	4,157.20
2	Improvement in water usage management for urban drainage to reduce climate change impacts	60,000.00	9,551.95
3	Development of climate friendly waste management systems and improvement of aesthetics	70,100.00	3,762.53
4	Reduction of disaster risk through climate change adaptation	580.00	14.00
5	Improvement of vehicular pollution control mechanism for reduction of GHG emissions	600.00	78.9
Total		**131,410.00**	**17,564.58**

In the SAPCC Phase – II, 2021 to 2030, 91 climate actions were proposed. The tentative budget to implement these actions was Rs. 20,612 crores for ten years, of which the financing gap was estimated to be Rs 629 crore. As all the other missions are included in our calculations for either Nature regeneration or Enabling social development or Well-th creation, we are not adding any cots to our computation.

[39] Mizoram's State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC) Phase – II, 2021 to 2030 https://forest.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/qms/45aab4c95e697bead079c53a3180b8cf/sapcc-upto-2030-mizoram.pdf

3.4.1 Summary of proposed investments and their benefits in terms of growth, employment and environment

Overall, the Nature regeneration component of the NEW strategy requires a total investment over five years of Rs 18,494 crore. After five years this will generate additional GSDP per annum of Rs 4623 crore and additional employment for 130,261 persons on an annual basis. As most of these will be rural, it just means additional employment and not necessarily new jobs. It will generate wages worth Rs 2996 crore per annum, at an average wage level of Rs 2.3 lakh per annum.

Table 4 Investment and Benefits of Nature Regeneration

Investment and Benefits of Nature Regeneration						
Interventions Proposed	**Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)**	**Additional GDP per annum after 5 yrs due to this Rs crore**	**Employment in person years on an ongoing basis after 5 yrs**	**Additional Wage Income after Investment Period Rs cr pa**	**Average wage or earning per worker in Rs lakh pa**	**AMSERs* in Rs Crore per annum**
Regeneration of Water Commons	5,493	1,373	35,827	824	2.3	356.5
Regeneration of Forest Commons	12,976	3,244	94,219	2,167	2.3	445.8
Regeneration of Land – Common and Private	25	6	214	5	2.3	0.2
Nature Regeneration	18,494	4,623	130,261	2,996	2.3	802.4

*AMSERs = Aggregated Micro-carbon-credits for Sequestration and Emission Reductions

4 Enabling Human, Social, and Institutional Development

The current development paradigm in Mizoram has led to significant inequalities affecting health, nutrition, education, livelihoods, and overall well-being. These inequalities often manifest as social vulnerabilities and potential unrest. Therefore, the NEW strategy emphasizes equal investments in human and social development.

4.1 Ensuring nutrition and health care

The health status of Mizoram's population, as reflected in the NFHS-5 (2019-20)[40], reveals a complex scenario marked by improvements in some health indicators alongside persistent challenges. Nutritional deficiencies remain significant, with 28.9% of children under five years exhibiting stunted growth, and 12.7% classified as underweight. Anaemia is notably prevalent, affecting 46.4% of children aged 6-59 months and 34.8% of women aged 15-49 years, indicating widespread nutritional inadequacies. Moreover, adult nutritional status is characterized by a dual burden, with 24.2% of women and 31.9% of men classified as overweight or obese, highlighting emerging lifestyle-related health issues.

The prevalence of non-communicable diseases is evident, with 13.8% of women and 15.4% of men showing elevated blood sugar levels, and 17.7% of women and 25.2% of men experiencing elevated blood pressure. This suggests an increasing risk and burden of chronic conditions within the population. Furthermore, behavioural factors such as high tobacco use 61.6% among women and 72.9% among men contribute significantly to the overall health risk profile of the region. These indicators underscore a complex health landscape in Mizoram, characterized by nutritional challenges, increasing chronic health conditions, and lifestyle-related risks, necessitating targeted public health interventions.

The data from NFHS V shows that Mizoram has near-complete access to toilet facilities (99%) and high access to improved drinking water (96%), which reduces disease risks. However, lifestyle-related diseases are concerns, necessitating improved public healthcare infrastructure, increased healthcare personnel, and comprehensive public health campaigns emphasizing preventive care, nutrition, and wellness.

Universalizing access to quality healthcare is essential for Mizoram. The Mizoram Universal Healthcare Scheme (MUHCS) was introduced in the state from 1st April 2025 to address the state's healthcare challenges and provide comprehensive medical coverage to all residents. Despite financial constraints, the state government prioritized the MUHCS, with assurances of cooperation from financial institutions to ensure its viability.[41] The government has set aside Rs 14.5 crores for first month to settle outstanding healthcare bills.[42]

---

[40] https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR374/FR374_Mizoram.pdf

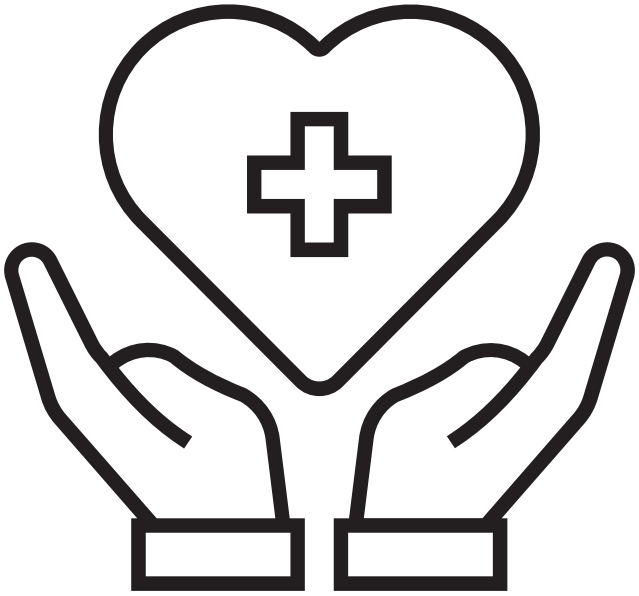
[41] https://www.digitalhealthnews.com/mizoram-to-launch-universal-healthcare-scheme-with-inr-5-lakh-annual-cover?

[42] https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/policy/cm-lalduhoma-launches-mizoram-universal-healthcare-scheme-in-aizawl/119279658?

Preparations include upgrading government health facilities, recruiting additional medical personnel such as doctors, specialists, nurses, and technicians, and ensuring the functionality of intensive care units (ICUs) that were previously non-operational.

The Mizoram State Health Care Society (MSHCS) will oversee the MUHCS. A Universal Health Coverage Council (UHCC) will provide policy direction and coordinate between different departments.

Image Source



4.2 Education and vocational training: REPAIR, PREPARE & COMPERE

4.2.1 REPAIR for Employability

The ASER 2024 report highlights concerning gaps in learning outcomes for Mizoram. For instance, significant proportions of children in rural areas are unable to achieve basic reading and arithmetic proficiency. According to ASER 2024 only 67.5% of the Vth Standard children could read IInd Standard text in Mizo an improvement from 2022 number but at par with 2018 hence covid rob 6 years. The educational attainments of VIII standard student.

Foundational skills for youth in the age group of 15- 16:

- Mizoram rank one of the highest in the country with older girls of age 15 -16 not enrolled in school at 12.2%
- About 40% struggle with division (3-digit by 1-digit) problems. Only 60.9% of 14 year olds are able to do such problems correctly. This skill is usually expected in Std III/IV.[43]

To address this, Mizoram requires a targeted remedial education program (REPAIR), focusing on re-educating youth who dropped out or finished schooling without acquiring adequate foundational skills. Community-driven remedial programs, supported by NGOs and local citizen groups, can rapidly bridge this learning gap, helping young individuals achieve employable capabilities.

4.2.2 PREPARE - Program for Employability through Apprenticeship and Re-skilling

The ASER report also indicates limited vocational training among youth, with only a small percentage receiving formal vocational training. Mizoram urgently needs an extensive apprenticeship and re-skilling initiative, integrating vocational education within the school curriculum and mandating apprenticeship placements in local enterprises. This program will provide paid, hands-on training in agriculture, eco-tourism, renewable energy, construction, and emerging industries, preparing youth for sustainable employment and economic independence.

Care-giving services (for elderly, children, and differently-abled) must also transition into structured employment opportunities, predominantly benefiting women. This transition will significantly increase women's participation in the workforce and contribute to social empowerment.

4.2.3 COMPERE the Talent among Communities

Mizoram is home to rich indigenous knowledge and skills such as traditional medicinal practices, culinary arts, bamboo handicrafts, weaving, music, dance, and folk healing methods. These valuable local skills should be systematically identified, documented, promoted, and integrated into sustainable enterprises such as eco-tourism and wellness tourism. Such initiatives would provide meaningful employment, promote cultural pride, and attract eco-tourism.

[43] https://asercentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ASER_2024_Final-Report_13_2_24.pdf

The Mizo people have a deep-rooted tradition of using medicinal plants to treat a wide range of ailments practices that are increasingly being recognized for their accessibility, affordability, and minimal side effects. A study conducted in Chungtlang village of Mamit District highlights how communities continue to rely on traditional healers and indigenous knowledge systems, largely unaffected by contemporary medical advancements. This ethnobotanical research documents the rich and diverse use of local medicinal plants, illustrating how traditional knowledge continues to serve as the primary form of healthcare for many, especially in rural and tribal settings. Such studies not only preserve this invaluable knowledge but also present opportunities to integrate it into wellness tourism and community-based healthcare models (Lalramnghinglova, 2024).

Mizoram has made significant strides in recognizing and promoting its traditional crafts, particularly in bamboo handicrafts and handloom weaving, leading to notable growth in related enterprises. The state boasts abundant bamboo resources, covering approximately 4.6 lakh hectares and accounting for 3.1% of India's total bamboo stock. Between 2019 and 2021, Mizoram's bamboo stock increased by 43%, from 8.81 million tonnes to 12.58 million tonnes.[44]This growth has bolstered the bamboo handicrafts sector, with skilled artisans producing a variety of products, including baskets, mats, and furniture. These crafts not only serve local markets but also reach neighboring regions, enhancing the state's economic profile.

Mizoram's handloom weaving and handicraft traditions are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural fabric of the state, dating back to ancient times when tribal communities relied on these skills for both utility and identity expression. Over time, especially during the colonial era, Mizo handloom products gained external exposure and absorbed influences that enriched their techniques. Post-independence, institutional efforts to preserve and promote these crafts gained momentum, supported by various government initiatives. Handloom textiles such as the *Puanchei*, *Zakuolaisen*, and *Tawlhloh Puan* each imbued with distinct geometric patterns and symbolic motifs reflect clan identity, marital status, and traditional beliefs. These are commonly produced using backstrap and frame looms, with women playing a pivotal role as both artisans and custodians of generational knowledge.[45] According yo 2019-2020 all Indian handloom census, in Mizoram 27,540 workers are engage in weaving and its allied activities.[46]

Bamboo and cane crafts also form an essential part of Mizo artisanal culture, producing utility items like baskets and mats, as well as decorative pieces and eco-friendly furniture. Alongside this, other craft forms such as beadwork, clay pottery, and wood carving add to the state's diverse artisanal repertoire.

To support these sectors, schemes like the Integrated Handloom Development Scheme (IHDS) and initiatives by the Mizoram Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation (ZOHANDCO) plays a pivotal role in promoting and supporting handloom and handicraft units across Mizoram. The corporation's objectives include developing, aiding, advising, assisting, financing, protecting, and promoting the interests of these units, regardless of their ownership structure. Several villages in Mizoram have been focal points for government-promoted handloom activities:

---

[44] https://www.switch-asia.eu/site/assets/files/3667/bamboo_state_profile_-_mizoram-v2.pdf?

[45] https://mizoram.pscnotes.com/economy-of-mizoram/handloom-and-handicrafts/?

[46] https://handlooms.nic.in/assets/img/Statistics/3736.pdf

Thenzawl village is located approximately 43 kilometers from Aizawl, Thenzawl is a significant hub of traditional Mizo handloom industry, producing rich and colourful varieties of traditional textiles. The Industries Department has established a Handloom Complex in Thenzawl, where nearly every household owns a loom.[47]More than 70% of weavers in Thenzawl work under *master weavers*, who often manage between 10 to over 100 looms and operate across surrounding villages like Kanghmun, Ramlaitui, and Buangpui. These master weavers function as textile entrepreneurs, providing year-round employment, designing products, and coordinating production and marketing. Despite challenges like yarn procurement and delayed client payments, they play a vital role in sustaining livelihoods and promoting Mizo cultural textiles like *Puan* across local and external markets (Sailo & Laldinliana, 2024).

The Zuangtui Handloom Cluster, developed by the Government of Mizoram in December 2015, exemplifies the state's efforts to formalize and support traditional weaving practices. Home to approximately 400 weavers, the cluster has been the subject of academic attention for its socio-economic impact and potential. Handloom weaving in Zuangtui continues to serve as a vital livelihood source, particularly for women, who constitute around 70% of the workforce. However, 79.16% of weavers rely on market-driven designs, with only a small fraction innovating independently, indicating a gap in design training and modernization. (Renthlei, 2019)

Image Source

[47] https://serchhip.nic.in/handicraft/?

4.3 Build social capital among the excluded

While Mizoram has a strong social capital base among the majority Mizo community, there is exclusion of the Bru (Reang) and Chakma communities with whom there are political and ethnic tensions. While Mizoram has historically maintained high levels of social harmony, recent years have seen sporadic conflicts involving non-Mizo minorities, particularly the Bru (Reang) and Chakma communities.

The exodus of Bru refugees in the late 1990s and ongoing tensions over their repatriation reflect underlying ethnic divisions that require long-term reconciliation efforts. For social cohesion it is necessary to ensure the protection of the well-being of all vulnerable sections in Mizoram Institutions like the MPF have taken steps to mitigate electoral conflicts and promote inter-community dialogue.

The Role of Civil Society in Strengthening Social Capital

The lead role in building and sustaining social capital at the local level will have to be played by civil society institutions, churches, and NGOs. These institutions must focus on:

- Expanding the scope of SHGs beyond financial savings to social and governance activities, making them active participants in local decision-making.
- Community-based interventions for youth engagement, including sports programs, skill-building workshops, and cultural activities that reduce vulnerability to drug addiction.
- Strengthening ethnic reconciliation mechanisms, such as peace-building dialogues facilitated by the church and MPF.

Another significant benefit of building social capital at the local level will be to curb recent trends of youth substance abuse and politically fuelled ethnic tensions.

4.3.1 Ensuring citizen participation and transparency

To ensure citizen engagement and institutional accountability, we recommend:

1. Strengthening Village Assemblies – These community meetings must be held regularly and with full seriousness to discuss government schemes, village development plans, and funding allocations. Annual financial accounts and audit reports must be presented to residents for transparency.

2. Capacity-building programs for Village Council members: Training on governance best practices, financial management, and digital tools can help improve their efficiency and decision-making processes.

3. Incorporating SHGs into local governance: Women's SHGs should be given an advisory role in local governance matters, particularly in livelihood development programs and village economic planning.

4.3.2 Challenges and recommendations for institutional strengthening

- Limited Financial Autonomy: Village Councils and ADCs remain dependent on state and central grants. Unlike Panchayati Raj institutions in other states, Mizoram's local governance bodies lack independent revenue-generating mechanisms, restricting their autonomy. Recommendation: Introduce local taxation powers (such as land or market taxes) at the VC level to enhance self-sufficiency.

- Coordination Issues between ADCs and the State Government: ADCs have significant autonomy in tribal regions but face overlaps with state departments in areas such as education, health, and rural development. Recommendation: Establish a formal coordination framework between ADCs and the Mizoram state government to streamline governance responsibilities.

- Lack of Scientific and Research Institutions for Local Development: Unlike many other states, which have invested in local research institutions to tackle environmental and economic challenges, Mizoram lacks dedicated research bodies for agriculture, forestry, and socio-economic development. Recommendation: Invest in setting up research institutions focusing on climate resilience, sustainable agriculture, and ethnic conflict resolution.

4.4 Local Institutional Development

This section recommends strengthening local governance institutions to enhance their capacity for self-governance, service delivery, and community engagement. Investing in the development of Village Councils (VCs), Local Councils, and Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) will improve governance effectiveness while creating additional employment opportunities.

4.4.1 Strengthening local governance institutions- Village Councils and Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)

Unlike other states that follow the Panchayati Raj system, Mizoram operates a Village Council-based governance system, which was first introduced in the 1950s. Currently, Mizoram has 812 Village Councils, of which 536 operate outside Sixth Schedule areas and 276 function under the Autonomous District Councils (ADCs). The Village Councils are responsible for:

- Land allocation for shifting (jhum) cultivation, which remains a dominant practice in rural areas.
- Village sanitation and infrastructure maintenance, including roads and water supply.
- Dispute resolution through customary norms and traditional arbitration mechanisms.
- Community participation through Village Assemblies (Gram Sabhas), which are required to meet at least three times a year to deliberate on development plans.

Additionally, Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) govern Mizoram's Chakma, Lai, and Mara tribal regions under the Sixth Schedule. These ADCs have legislative, executive, and judicial powers, including the authority to regulate land use, forest management (excluding reserved forests), and traditional tribal customs.

Table 5 Enabling Human, Social and Institutional Development

Enabling Human, Social and Institutional Development				
Interventions Proposed	**Units**	**Number of units to be covered**	**Cost per Unit in INR at 2024 prices**	**Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)**
Strengthening Individual capacity through better nutrition and health care	50% of popln in 2024 in Lakhs	6.35	10,000	635
Strengthening Individual capacity through REPAIR/PREPARE/COMPERE	25% of popln	3.18	20,000	635
Strengthening Individuals' Health and Education				1,270
Strengthening household capacity through physical improvements in water, sanitation, ventilation, etc.	Lakh hholds	2.82	50,000	1,411.10
Strengthening capacity of local groups like SHGs, RWAs to build social cohesion and citizen participation	Numbers	6,350	20,000	12.7
Strengthening Social Development				1,423.80
Strengthening capacity of local self-government wards (panchayats, municipal bodies) to build citizen participation and institutional accountability	Numbers	635	1,000,000	63.5
Building local scientific and tech research institutions and civil society institutions to ensure participation	Numbers	6	20,000,000	12.7
Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Accountability				76.2
Enabling Social Development				**2770**

4.4.2 Summary of proposed investments and their benefits in terms of growth and employment

Overall, the Enabling social development component of the NEW strategy requires a total investment over five years of Rs 2,770 crore. After five years this will generate additional GSDP per annum of Rs 913 crore and additional employment for 15,641 persons on an annual basis. It will generate wages worth Rs 730 crore per annum, at an average wage level of Rs 4.66 lakh per annum.

5 Well-th creation

Well-th creation is broadly possible through enterprise in agriculture, industry, including construction and services. We are proposing forward movement in all three, taking into account the profile of employment needed, location where it is needed and the demands of environmental sustainability.

5.1 Upgrading farms to DECI agricultural enterprises

Recall that DECI stands for Demand, Entrepreneurship, Capital and Inputs/Infrastructure.

5.1.1 Demand

We begin with demand. Given below is the projected demand for various food products in Mizoram, based on the monthly per capita consumption expenditure survey.

Table 6 Projected demand for food and non-food products and services in Mizoram

Item Of Expenditure	Rural MPCE Rs	Urban MPCE Rs	Rural Total Consumption Rs Crore Pa	Urban Total Consumption Rs Crore Pa	Mizo Total Consumption Rs Crore Pa
Cereal	128	168	195	256	451
Cereal Substitutes	-	0		0	0
Gram	1	1	1	1	2
Pulses And Pulse Products*	42	44	64	67	131
Sugar	18	19	28	29	57
Salt	7	7	10	11	21
Milk And Milk Products	194	235	296	359	655
Vegetables	440	524	671	799	1470
Fruits (Fresh)	154	230	235	351	587
Fruits (Dry)	60	97	91	147	238
Egg, Fish & Meat	656	726	999	1107	2106
Edible Oil	138	152	210	232	442
Spices	147	165	224	251	475

Item Of Expenditure	Rural MPCE Rs	Urban MPCE Rs	Rural Total Consumption Rs Crore Pa	Urban Total Consumption Rs Crore Pa	Mizo Total Consumption Rs Crore Pa
Beverages, Processed Food, etc	817	1223	1245	1864	3109
Food: Total	**2801**	**3592**	**4269**	**5474**	**9742**
Pan, Tobacco & Intoxicants	406	470	619	716	1335
Fuel And Light	350	409	534	623	1157
Toilet Articles	211	326	321	497	819
Other Household Consumables	163	217	248	331	578
Education	94	177	144	269	413
Medical (Hospitalization)	32	41	48	62	111
Medical (non-hospitalization)	155	205	235	313	548
Conveyance	365	591	557	901	1458
Consumer Services Excluding Conveyance&	358	528	546	805	1351
Entertainment	81	127	123	193	316
Rent	113	470	172	716	888
Other Taxes & Cesses	12	16	18	24	42
Clothing & Bedding	296	437	451	666	1117
Footwear	123	173	188	263	451
Durable Goods	404	931	615	1419	2034
Non-Food: Total	**3162**	**5117**	**4819**	**7799**	**12617**
Total Expenditure	**5963**	**8709**	**9087**	**13272**	**22360**

Source: Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, 2023-24, NSSO, 2023

The total annual demand in Mizoram stands at approximately Rs 22,360 crore, with food-related expenditure accounting for nearly Rs 9742 crore. Among food items, the highest expenditure is on beverages, processed foods, and related items (approximately Rs 3109 crore), followed closely by egg, fish, and meat (around Rs 2106 crore), and vegetables (Rs 1470 crore). These products reflect significant market opportunities within the state and indicate potential sectors for local farmers to transition from subsistence to entrepreneurial farming practices, particularly focusing on diversified agriculture including poultry, livestock, fisheries, and horticulture. Thus, there is enough local demand to ensure a market for a significant part of the agricultural produce of the state.

However, Mizoram faces significant challenges in agricultural production. Constraints such as limited irrigated land, variable climatic conditions, steep terrain, and infrastructural inadequacies contribute to the challenges in scaling agricultural productivity.

To counter these obstacles, there lies an opportunity to adopt sustainable agriculture practices, natural farming techniques, and low input-intensive methods tailored specifically to Mizoram's ecological conditions.

Farmers in Mizoram can greatly benefit from diversification towards high-value crops like fruits, vegetables, and spices, alongside livestock and poultry farming, aligned with existing consumption patterns and local market demands.

Establishing protective irrigation systems, promoting controlled environment agriculture like net-based greenhouse vegetable cultivation, and creating robust local value chains and storage infrastructures could significantly boost agricultural productivity and farmer incomes.

5.1.2 Entrepreneurship and skilled workforce development

Not all small farmers are entrepreneurial. Those who are, need to be selected carefully and mentored. Of course, to produce some of these items, which these enterprising farmers may not have done earlier, they will need some skill training. That is why we recommend many more Krishi Vigyan Kendra to be opened and agricultural extension workers to be hired and deployed by the government. Technology options would be adopted to reduce dependence on labour in agriculture /horticulture considering labour shortage in agriculture.

5.1.3 Capital and Credit

While working capital is available to farmers through the Kisan Credit Cards, the problem is in raising investment capital for farm upgradation.

The upgradation of small farmers into DECI farmers and medium and large farmers into MESO farmers will require investment. This will be for land development, water resource development, irrigation facilities, greenhouses, agricultural equipment, storage, etc. We have made a number of assumptions to compute the total investment required to transform agriculture in Mizoram.

5.1.4 Inputs and infrastructure

A significant constraint in transforming agriculture in Mizoram remains the availability and access to quality inputs and infrastructure. Inputs include climate-resilient seed varieties suited to local shifting (jhum) cultivation practices, improved planting materials for crops like ginger, chilli, and tomatoes, and high-quality seedlings adapted to higher altitudes due to changing climatic conditions, such as oranges and jackfruits.

Infrastructure includes essential facilities such as collection and storage centres, cold storage units, packhouses for perishable produce, processing units for value addition, and reliable transportation networks connecting remote villages to local, interstate, and cross-border markets.

The overall strategy for enhancing agricultural production and incomes is indicated below. It is based on the principle of comparative advantage – let each type of farmer, depending on the size of land holding and ability to deploy more capital as well reach distant markets, produce what she has the maximum likelihood of producing well and getting a good price.

Marginal and small farms need to be upgraded into DECI farms that are local Demand based, led by Entrepreneurs emerging from collectives such as self-help groups, Capitalised well and have adequate Input linkages and infrastructure.

The small percentage of larger farms also need to grow in size and employment, becoming MESO farms which target Metro and Export demand, are led by Socially, Ethically and Environmentally Responsible (SEER) Entrepreneurs and have Skilled workers and are supported by an Organised Eco-system. This twin upgradation – from micro to DECI and from small to MESO will create lakhs of new generation jobs in agricultural, livestock, agro service enterprises.

- For sub-marginal (below 1 acre) holdings to be converted to flowers, medicinal plants, mushroom and bee-keeping

- Marginal and small farms to become DECI Farms - enhancing productivity through soil and water conservation, irrigation, greenhouses, growing cereals and vegetables for local markets

- Medium sized farmers also become DECI Farms - growing cash crops, with controlled irrigation, polyhouses, aggregation and urban market access

- Some small and medium farmers become livestock enterprises - enhancing productivity through breed improvement, stall feeding, biogas digesters, etc.

- Large farmers become MESO Farms -aimed at metro and export markets, with polyhouses, packhouses

Given below are the investments needed in the recommended interventions that can be used to meet the local demand, in the process increase incomes of farmers and generate employment.

Table 7 Interventions and Investments Needed to Upgrade the Farm Sector in Mizoram

Interventions Proposed	Units	Number of units to be covered	Cost per Unit in INR at 2024 prices	Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)
Sub-marginal (below 1 acre) holdings to be converted to flowers, medicinal plants, mushroom and bee-keeping	Number	48,297	50,000	241
Marginal and small farms to become DECI Farms - enhancing productivity through soil and water conservation, irrigation, greenhouses, growing cereals and vegetables for local markets	Number of marginal and small farms	72,446	100,000	724
DECI Farms - growing cash crops, with controlled irrigation, polyhouses, aggregation and urban market access	Number of medium farms	17,043	1,000,000	1,704
MESO Farms -aimed at metro and export markets, with polyhouses, packhouses	Number of large farms	285	5,000,000	143
Livestock enterprises - enhancing productivity through breed improvement, stall feeding, biogas digesters, etc.	5% of number of all farms	4,489	500,000	224
Agricultural Enterprises				**3,037**

The level of investment proposed is in the range of Rs 600 crores per annum. This needs to be compared to the investment credit projected by NABARD for agriculture was 713 crores in 2023 – 24 and 847 crores for 2024 -25 in its State Focus Paper. This is including agriculture infrastructure and ancillary activities which is not part of our projections here. Thus, our projections are reasonable and within reach of the banking system.

The total investment over five years will be Rs 3037 crore. After five years this will generate additional GSDP per annum of Rs 1,012 crore and additional employment for 20,131 persons on annual basis. It will generate wages worth Rs 810 crore per annum, at an average wage level of Rs 4 lakh per annum.

5.2 Promoting non-farm manufacturing and service enterprises

Of the total annual demand in Mizoram of Rs 22,360 crore, Rs 9087 crore exists in rural Mizoram and Rs 13,272 crore in urban Mizoram, half of it concentrated in Aizawl and another 20% in Lunglei and the rest in seven or eight towns. The non-farm products and services are consumed more than proportionately in urban areas. This gives a lot of scope for town-based entrepreneurship.

For items like ginger, turmeric and pineapple produced in Mizoram whose production exceeds local consumption in a big way, Mizoram should adopt a policy that no raw produce should leave the state. Processing locally must be encouraged. Considering Mizoram's substantial expenditure on processed foods and beverages, investment in local food processing units would also add value to primary agricultural products, generating higher returns for producers and fostering local entrepreneurship.

As per the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), 2023[48] there were 16,862 enterprises in Mizoram in 2022-23. Their breakup by size and activity is below:

Table 8 Types of Enterprises in Mizoram

Type of Enterprise	Rural	Urban	Total
Own Account Enterprises (OAE) in Manufacturing	275	235	510
Own Account Enterprises (OAE) in Trade & Services	6889	6770	13659
Hired Worker Enterprises (HWE) in Manufacturing	21	288	309
Hired Worker Enterprises (HWE) in Trade &Services	512	1872	2384

As can be seen from the above, enterprises with hired workers, in manufacturing, are the least in number. In general, OAEs are much more numerous, almost seven times as many. We suggest that the problems of unemployment can be addressed by transforming a major part of these micro-enterprises into what we call DECI and a smaller number into MESO enterprises. The term DECI has been coined for micro enterprises which have potential to meet the market demand and create jobs. DECI stands for Demand-local or locally expressed, Entrepreneurship, Capital/Credit and Inputs/Infrastructure. The term MESO has been coined for larger enterprises that can cater mainly to Metro and Export demand, are run by Socially, ethically and environmentally responsible entrepreneurs with a Skilled workforce; and have an Organised supportive ecosystem.

Not all OAEs can transform into DECI enterprises nor can all HWEs transform into MESO enterprises. However, by following appropriate promotional policies and ensuring the availability of credit from banks, it will be possible for a proportion of these enterprises to transform and generate employment for a more skilled workforce at a higher wage rate. Moreover, by switching to renewable energy, practicing material recycling and energy efficiency, these firms can also generate environmental benefits. A large number of these transformed enterprises will be in services. These have been shown in the table below.

[48] Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), 2023

Table 9 Interventions and Investments Needed to Upgrade Non-Farm Sector in Mizoram

Interventions Proposed	Number of units to be covered	Cost per Unit in INR at 2024 prices	Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)
Some OAEs transforming to DECI enterprises – targeting local markets, better equipment, renewable energy, and diversification.	8,501	500,000	425
Some Mfg HWEs transforming into MESO mfg enterprises – targeting local markets with better equipment, renewable energy and material recycling	217	25,000,000	543
Some Service HWEs transforming into MESO Service enterprises – with better facilities, renewable energy, and diversification.	814	10,000,000	814
Non-farm Manufacturing and Service Enterprises	**NA**	**NA**	**1,781**

The total investment over five years will be Rs 1,781 crore. After five years this will generate additional GSDP per annum of Rs 277 crore and additional employment for 3,644 persons on an annual basis. It will generate wages worth Rs 222 crore per annum, at an average wage level of Rs 6.1 lakh per annum.

5.2.1 Summary of proposed investments and their benefits

Overall, the well-th creation component of the NEW strategy requires a total investment over five years of Rs 4,818 crore. After five years this will generate additional GSDP per annum of Rs 1290 crore and additional employment for 23,775 persons on an annual basis. It will generate wages worth Rs 1032 crore per annum, at an average wage level of Rs 4.8 lakh per annum.

This brings us to the end of our strategic recommendations.

6 Level of investment required, its benefits and sources

In this chapter we take stock of the total investment needed for all the proposed interventions under the NEW strategy and examine two issues:

1. Are the benefits commensurate with the investments. The benefits we have identified are primarily additional economic growth in terms of GSDP of the state as also additional employment generated, as well additional wages and income generated. We have also tried to compute the environmental benefits in terms of reduced GHG emissions.

2. Are there identifiable sources from where this level of investment can be mobilised? Can the source be diversified beyond just the government budgetary resources?

6.1 Investment required

The summary of interventions proposed, investment required, and benefits therefrom is shown in Table below. As can be seen, a total of Rs 26,082 crore of investment is needed in the proposed interventions over a period of five years. Of the proposed investment, 70.9% will go into Nature regeneration, 10.6% into Enabling human, social and institutional development and 18.5% in Well-th creation through agricultural and non-farm enterprises. We maintain that unless the first two sets of investment are made in nature and people, investing in enterprises will not succeed, and to the extent it does, it will serve only the top few percent of the population.

Table 10 Summary of Interventions Proposed, Investment Required and Benefits

Interventions Proposed	Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)	Additional GDP per annum after 5 yrs due to this investment (in INR crore at 2024 prices)	Employment in person years on an ongoing basis after 5 yrs	Additional Wage Income for the state after Investment Period Rs cr pa	Average wage or earning per worker in Rs lakh pa in 2024 prices
Regeneration of Water Commons	5,493	1,373	35,827	824	2.3
Regeneration of Forest Commons	12,976	3,244	94,219	2,167	2.3
Regeneration of Land - Common and Private	25	6	214	5	2.3
Nature Regeneration	**18,494**	**4,623**	**130,261**	**2,996**	**2.3**
Strengthening Individuals' Health and Education	1,270	318	5,522	254	9.2

Interventions Proposed	Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)	Additional GDP per annum after 5 yrs due to this investment (in INR crore at 2024 prices)	Employment in person years on an ongoing basis after 5 yrs	Additional Wage Income for the state after Investment Period Rs cr pa	Average wage or earning per worker in Rs lakh pa in 2024 prices
Strengthening Social Development	1,424	286	4,957	229	11.5
Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Accountability	76	309	5,162	247	4.79
Enabling Social Development	**2770**	**913**	**15,641**	**730**	**25.5**
Agricultural Enterprises	3,037	1,012	20,131	810	4.02
Non-farm Manufacturing and Service Enterprises	1,781	277	3,644	222	6.09
Well-th creation through Enterprises	**4,818**	**1,290**	**23,775**	**1,032**	**10.11**
Total	**26,082**	**6,826**	**169,677**	**4,758**	**2.8**
As percent of GSDP of Mizoram in 2024 over 5 yrs					10.90%
As percent of GSDP of Mizoram in 2024 each year					2.20%

6.2 Benefits of the investment

The NEW strategy will ensure that benefits of the investment accrue in terms of:

- Economic Growth (GDP will grow in five years by Rs 6920 crore, which is about 14%[49] of the 2024 GDP over and above the normal growth), and will be wider and more inclusive.

- Employment (almost 1.69 lakh new jobs, all of them at a remuneration level which at the minimum will be the prevailing per capita income in 2024 – approximately Rs 20,000 per month, and for many of the jobs, much higher remuneration.

- Social Development – Health and Education improvements which will greatly enhance citizens' quality of life and increase in healthy active life years. In addition, the social energies released and institutional effectiveness increase would lead to collective action on many fronts that impact citizens' lives and also the environment.

- Environmental benefits in terms of more availability of clean water, less impact of monsoon failure or other adverse events, increase in green cover, production of more nutritious food crops with less chemical intensity, and reduction in carbon dioxide and GHG emissions as also carbon dioxide sequestration, which if aggregated and sold in the global carbon markets will fetch Rs 1,085 crore per annum.

6.3 Where to mobilise investments from

As stated earlier, a total of Rs 26,082 crore of investment is needed in the proposed interventions over a period of five years. This is a substantial amount, being 54% of the Mizoram projected GSDP in 2024-25. [50]

Though we are suggesting these investments to be made over a five-year period, the annual investment target is still 2.2% of the 2024 GSDP and about 37% of the government expenditure budget for 2024, which was about Rs 13,786 crore. Obviously, we are not expecting all of this to come from the government.

The financing sources identified are numerous. This includes community contributions, bank loans taken by individual farmers and entrepreneurs, climate finance and philanthropic/CSR funding. As a result, the government is expected to contribute about 51.1% of the investment on an annual basis, which comes to about Rs 7,030 cr of the government budget in 2024.

A vast majority of this will go for Nature regeneration and Enabling social development. Most of the investment in upgradation of farm and non-farm enterprises will be done using bank financing.

---

[49] https://prsindia.org/budgets/states/mizoram-budget-analysis-2024-25

[50] https://prsindia.org/budgets/states/mizoram-budget-analysis-2024-25

Table 11 Investment Required and Where to Mobilise it From

Interventions Proposed	Total Investment Over Five Years (INR crore in 2024 prices)	Own private funding by individual, or commu-nity	Bank/FI loans taken by private individuals/ entities	Philanthropic foundations and CSR funds	Individual giving, resource sharing and volunteering	Climate finance against AMCSQs/ AMCERs annuities with sovereign guarantee	Balance from the Government Budget over five years
Nature Regeneration	18,494	925	2,600	1,199	2,399	260	11,111
Enabling Social Development	2,770	456	-	364	139	202	1,610
Well-th creation through Enterprises	4,818	1,142	2,587	-	-	482	607
Total	**26,082**	**2,522**	**5,187**	**1,563**	**2,537**	**944**	**13,328**
Percentage of total	**100%**	**9.70%**	**19.90%**	**6%**	**9.70%**	**3.60%**	**51%**

7 A Call to Action

The message is clear: both the natural and social environments are at a serious level of deterioration and require urgent action for regeneration/revival. There are five levels at which action will have to be taken:

1. Individuals by themselves; as citizens, as activists, as thinkers and influencers
2. Individuals by joining local community Social Groups; and by individuals joining organised NGOs/Civil Society Institutions
3. Village Councils/District Councils both Autonomous Districts and others/ Municipalities
4. State and Central Government departments and specialised agencies
5. International Cooperation at the Regional and Global level

We give below some suggestions for action at each of these levels, broadly covering environmental, social, and economic aspects.

7.1 Individual actions

7.1.1 Environmental aspect

Every individual will have to become mindful of their ecological footprint whether through the burning of fossil fuels for transportation or heating, or through practices that pollute land and water with untreated effluents and solid waste. While it may appear that the contribution of any one person is negligible in the face of global challenges like climate change, we must remember that each person's choices, multiplied across entire villages, districts, or the state, can add up to a significant impact.

There are broadly two ways an individual can help the environment: first, by reducing or modifying one's own harmful practices; and second, by encouraging others to do the same. For example, if a person is a rice farmer, they could adopt sustainable cultivation techniques like the System of Rice Intensification (SRI). This involves using young seedlings planted at wider spacing, applying intermittent irrigation so the soil remains moist but not continuously flooded, and frequently aerating the soil with a weeder. Meanwhile, in places where jhum (shifting) cultivation is common, efforts to shorten the length of active burning periods, increase fallow recovery through agroforestry, and use contour bunding or terracing can help reduce soil erosion and preserve forest cover.

Those who rear pigs or other livestock can also adopt more environmentally responsible practices. Proper collection and treatment of dung whether in compost pits or biogas digesters can reduce methane emissions significantly and, at the same time, provide a valuable source of organic manure or cooking fuel. Methane is known to have a far stronger short-term impact on global warming than carbon dioxide, so managing animal waste well has a positive effect on both the environment and household economics.

Finally, individuals living near forest areas can help prevent forest fires by avoiding careless actions like burning leaves or clearing land without safety measures.

Even a small spark can cause a large-scale blaze that destroys valuable forest, harms wildlife, degrades soil, and chokes waterways with ash. By being mindful, each person in Mizoram can play a meaningful role in protecting our state's unique natural heritage

7.1.2 Social aspect

Individual actions at the social level include ensuring genuine interaction with one's neighbors and the wider community. Merely engaging with people from one's own background, whether related to tribe, language, or social group, can lead to exclusivity. True social harmony arises when we extend our bonds across gender, age, tribe, religion, language, and class. By learning about, and even trying out, different customs such as food, festivals, and community perspectives, we can deepen our appreciation for diversity and its advantages.

Beyond this day to day courtesy, individuals can also stand up more assertively against any attempts at exclusion, injustice, or conflict based on social divides. For example, if some members of a minority tribe or religious group are sidelined in village affairs, it is crucial to bring this to public attention. Such open discussions can broaden the community's awareness of values enshrined in the Preamble to our Constitution: justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, along with sovereignty, secularism, and socialism. By embracing these principles, all groups, including smaller tribal communities such as the Chakma, Mara, Lai, Bru, or recent migrants, can participate on an equal footing in Mizoram's social and cultural life.

Individuals in Mizoram can also make a conscious effort to bridge geographic distances and tribal differences. Residents of Aizawl or Lunglei, for instance, might visit more remote areas such as Lawngtlai, Saiha, or Mamit Districts to foster friendships with local communities. These personal connections can later develop into shared social activities or even mutually beneficial economic ventures. By going beyond our familiar circles and firmly rejecting discrimination, each person contributes to a more inclusive, harmonious Mizoram.

7.1.3 Economic aspect

Individual actions at the economic level include ensuring first of all one's own steady income through a job or any form of self-employment. If one wants a certain type of job, getting the required education and skills should be the main priority. When suitable jobs are not available, one should consider self-employment in an activity for which there is local demand. This may require acquiring both business and technical skills and stepping out of one's comfort zone.

Yet, as we know, lakhs of people establish micro-enterprises. Data from the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Enterprises (ASUSE), 2024 highlight report[51] just released shows that in the one year period 2023 to 2024, the estimated number of establishments went up from 6.50 crore to 7.34 crore.

[51] https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Factsheet_of_ASUSE_2023_24.pdf

So 84 lakh new enterprises came up in a year, employing 1.09 crore addition workers. In Mizoram, the estimated number of such establishments for 2024 was 16,863, employing 28,659 workers, and 54 percent of these workers were female.

Many young people are reluctant to stay and work in rural areas because they believe only traditional farming is available, which is often not very lucrative. However, there are now numerous opportunities in diversified agriculture, including organic farming, production of bio-inputs, mushroom cultivation, horticulture, floriculture and ornamental plants, medicinal and aromatic plants, dairy, poultry, fisheries, and beekeeping. There is also rising demand for nature care enterprises, which focus on sustainably managing water, forest and land resources, as well as in renewable energy and material recycling.

For women who wish to work part-time because of family responsibilities, there are opportunities in providing paid care services for children, the elderly, the sick, and the disabled in urban areas, along with digital ventures such as running homestays in rural regions.

Alongside seeking sustainable livelihoods, individuals can actively safeguard the environment by adopting regenerative agricultural methods (e.g., organic farming, vermiculture) and minimizing resource overuse such as water and energy. In Mizoram, many farmers have shifted to eco-friendly cultivation of crops such as bamboo and mushrooms, reflecting a broader shift toward low-impact land use. Moreover, individual entrepreneurs can incorporate green technologies for instance, solar-powered machinery or biodegradable packaging to reduce their carbon footprint. By prioritizing local, nature-based solutions and limiting harmful inputs, these micro-level actions not only enhance long-term productivity but also preserve the region's fragile hill ecosystems, a critical step toward sustainable development in Mizoram.

Image Source

At the next level, individual economic action includes resisting exploitation and corruption and avoiding participation in it. Eschewing over-consumption and living beyond one's means is another crucial practice that ensures personal financial stability and contributes to a more sustainable society.

7.2 Social Groups, NGOs and Civil Society Institutions' Actions

7.2.1 Environmental aspect

Individuals can be more effective by joining environmental action groups, NGOs, and civil society institutions to undertake clean-ups of solid waste, engage in tree plantation drives, and spread environmental awareness. Mizoram is renowned for its robust community networks and active local councils, which, despite the absence of a conventional panchayat system, serve as effective platforms for mobilizing collective action. Local environmental initiatives in the state include regular clean-up campaigns, tree plantation drives, and innovative waste management practices such as organic waste composting and plastic recycling. These grassroots efforts not only enhance local aesthetics and ecological balance but also demonstrate the capacity of community-led interventions to influence local governance and hold polluting industries accountable. Moreover, the proactive role of NGOs and civil society in raising environmental awareness and encouraging citizen reporting further underscores the relevance of these strategies in promoting sustainable development in Mizoram.

7.2.2 Social aspect

Individuals joining local social groups or NGOs and volunteering whether by conducting classes in literacy, financial or digital literacy, or offering career counseling, community library support, or assistance to the elderly, disabled, or temporarily unwell play a crucial role in building mutual familiarity, trust, and collaboration. According to the CAMS report,[52] approximately 2.4% of individuals aged 6 to 18 in India have never attended school, which equates to roughly 72 lakh persons; addressing this gap through community-led initiatives is essential. Moreover, organizing cultural and community events, such as celebrations of Holi, Diwali, Eid, X-Mas, Gur Purab, Buddha Purnima, Mahavir Jayanti, Navroz, or regionally significant festivals like Bihu in Assam and Pongal in Tamil Nadu, further strengthens the social fabric. These activities, by fostering social capital, are invaluable for mobilizing communal support during adverse events. The experience of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that the resilience, courage, and collective spirit of affected individuals and organized communities can compensate for gaps in governmental response, thereby underscoring the vital importance of robust social networks.

7.2.3 Economic aspect

Joining a group whether an informal self-help group or an organised NGO or a cooperative or a farmers' producer organisation or a consumer union can greatly strengthen individual economic action to resist exploitation and corruption, or eschewing over-consumption and living beyond ones means. With a steep rise in borrowings, net household savings have significantly declined post-pandemic, dropping from an average of 21.1% of GDP in the pre-pandemic decade to 18.4% of GDP in FY23. Instead, saving[53] for desired acquisitions and important life-cycle events should be promoted.

---

[52] https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/CAMS%20Report_October_N.pdf

[53] https://www.careratings.com/uploads/newsfiles/1726222456_Household%20Finances_CareEdge%20Report.pdf

Coming together even in informal groups is a great incentive for saving regularly. Women from lower-income households organised in SHGs saved over Rs 58,893 crore in banks as on 31 Mar 2023.[54] Savings in cooperative banks is the next step, in 2024, there were over 1,500 scheduled and non-scheduled Urban Cooperative Banks in India with a total number of branches exceeding 11,000. The banks had a deposit base of over Rs 5.33 lakh crore, and total lending of more than Rs 3.33 lakh crore.[55]

Image Source

Also taking insurance cover against unforeseen adverse events– be it health incidents (as per the CAMS Report 2022-23, the average per household medical expenditure per annum was Rs 7499 in urban India and Rs 5041 in rural India, which is a significant part of the annual per household incomes)[56] or accidents or fire and theft should be encouraged. Risk pooling is the basic theory in insurance, which began as an informal mutual help effort. We must promote more mutual insurance programs than the present corporate ones.

Here there is a great role for those individuals who are influencers, whether in the traditional face to face interactions or on the new social media. They must expose the hollowness of the "high living, no thinking" lifestyles that are being promoted by the current economic model which needs people primarily as consumers, as long as they can pay for it.

---

[54] https://www.nabard.org/auth/writereaddata/File/highlights-of-the-shg-bank-linkage-programme-2022-23.pdf

[55] https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2010318

[56] Op. cit.

7.3 Village Councils/ District Councils/Municipalities

7.3.1 Environmental aspect

Public representative bodies such as the above need to do more for conserving the environment. They have been assigned the function of taking care of the basic natural resources of the village – jal, jangal, jameen – or water, forest and land. They also get funds under the Integrated Watershed Management Program and the MGNREG Program to undertake projects to conserve or regenerate these natural resources, which are critical for the livelihoods of the rural population and indirectly even for the urban population as many of these resources (or their absence) affects urban populations too,

As part of the Panchayat Development Plans (PDP),[57] each panchayat should make a comprehensive five-year plan for regenerating their water, forest and land resources in their jurisdiction and they must be required to submit a report on the progress made.

Likewise, under the 12th Schedule of the 74th Amendment to the Constitution, Urban local bodies or Municipalities have been assigned the function of taking care of land use planning, water supply, sanitation, solid waste management and public health. They must thus prohibit dumping of solid waste, sewage and untreated industrial effluent in rivers and ban leaf fall burning. They must encourage composing food and organic waste, recycling plastic and other solid waste, treating sewage, establishing green belts, renovating water bodies for water harvesting and recharging groundwater.

They receive funds for these activities under the Swacch Bharat Mission and have been empowered to impose fines and take other civic action to prevent environmental damage. Each ULB should be required to come up with a five-year City Development Plan,[58] as was done under the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNURM) in 200910, for the land and water resources and infrastructure development for public services in their jurisdiction and they must be required to submit a report on the progress made.

7.3.2 Social and Economic aspects

Under the 11th Schedule of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been assigned the function of taking care of poverty alleviation and welfare of the weaker sections in the panchayats, as well as run schools and primary health centres.

Likewise, under the 12th Schedule of the 74th Amendment to the Constitution, Urban local bodies or Municipalities have been assigned the function of taking care of slum upgradation, poverty alleviation and welfare of weaker sections.

---

[57] People's Plan Campaign **https://gpdp.nic.in/**

[58] City Development Plan Toolkit. https://localbodies.up.nic.in/Toolkit/CDP.pdf

Programs have increasingly been funded for this like the National Social Assistance Program which provides pensions to the aged, the disabled and to widows. Under the Indira Awas Yojana, the rural poor are assigned housesits and given built houses.

Under the PM Awas Yojana the urban poor are given subsidised long term housing loans. The National Rural and Urban Livelihood Missions are there to promote income generating activities for the rural and urban poor respectively.

The issue has been that these are all run by state government officials and the Panchayats are treated as last mile contractors. PRIs and ULBs must be given the power over the funds and functionaries to perform the functions assigned to them under the Constitution.

We must learn the lessons from China in this regard its county governments and city mayors wield enormous political and economic powers. They also raise the resources and in fact fund the higher tiers provincial and central governments.

7.4 State and Central Governments

Since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, a lot of progress has been made in environmental knowledge, legislation, regulation and preventive and promotional programs. Yet the fact of the matter is that the overall environmental situation has deteriorated since then. This may be due to the rising population, multiplied by rising per capita consumption levels and one could ask counter-factually what the situation would be if even the extant environmental knowledge, legislation and regulation was not there. Be that as it may, additional efforts will have to be made, and urgently to tackle the environmental crisis, both of global warming triggered climate change as also pollution and degradation caused by human and industrial activity.

The biggest issue is to develop a value for the long-term, inter-generational and "across all species" view of what is good, to replace the dominant short-term, "après moi le déluge", anthropocentric view. This requires more than knowledge – at least more than scientific and economic knowledge – it requires a different world view which values the natural over the man-made, spiritual over material progress and communitarian over individual prosperity. It requires the kind of thinking that Gandhi did in the Hind Swaraj in 1909, EF Schumacher did in Small is Beautiful – Economic as if People Mattered" in 1973and what Gro Harlem Brundtland did in 1987 in the report "Our Common Future - From One Earth to One World.

The Central Government would have to significantly shift its policies from dragging status quo as far as possible to championing change, as it has done in some aspects such adoption of renewable energy. The fact that over 46% of India's energy generation capacity is now from renewable sources, though in terms of actual generation it is still only 22% is a good example. By dragging its feet over transition from coal, the Indian government wants to be on both sides of the fence.

By adopting 2070 as the date when India will become net zero in GHG emissions, when in 2024, the Earth has breached the 1.5 Celsius mark for global warming, India lost its moral standing while arguing for more funds for mitigation and adaptation at the COP29 at Baku recently for example. No amount of preaching adoption of an environmentally conscious lifestyle under the Mission LiFE cuts no ice in front of the fact that India is now the third largest emitter of GHGs. While we should continue to fight for climate justice, we cannot continue to add to the problems. It is our common future after all.

The state governments have an important role to play both as key implementers of these programs as well closer to the ground monitors of the environmental situation. For this they have to get off the view that higher GSDP growth rate is an unmitigated virtue. They must assess every growth proposal for what it does to the environment and what it does for jobs.

The Environmental Impact Assessment reports should not be seen as mere formalities that have to be gone through to expedite "development", not should environmental activists be dubbed as anti-development. In addition, the state pollution control boards need to be better equipped and empowered to monitor and if necessary, penalise polluters. Investments in municipal and panchayat capacity in solid waste management and sewage and drainage, must be made.

7.4.1 Social aspects

That brings us to the social aspects. The budget outlays need to be increased for human development - nutrition, health, education and vocational training - as well as on institutional capacity building all the way from SHGs and cooperatives. We have estimated the outlay required for this in detail in the Table 35 above.

The hill states have always been the abode of peace and tranquillity, and people came here for self-discovery and spiritual solace. Now, however, the erstwhile pilgrimages have become crowded tourism hotspots and the minority community, miniscule in number is being hounded out with hate speeches, concocted accusations and fomented riots. The politics of divisiveness must be eschewed in pursuit of electoral gains. While the ruling party and the central government must ensure that the constitutional rights of all individuals are respected, the operationalization of this has to be managed by the state government

7.4.2 Economic aspects

The Central Government should use the opportunity to massively increase investments in regeneration of jal, jangal, jameen – water, forest and land. Elsewhere we have estimated that Mizoram would need to invest Rs 18,494 crore in this. If it does that however, in addition to the environmental benefits, there are benefits in terms of generating employment for crores of people, particularly in rural areas, and of enhancing agricultural productivity and rural incomes, and reducing rural-urban migration. And to top it all, if the government chooses to establish a mechanism to aggregate the carbon sequestration and emission reduction credits that will arise from lakhs of households, farms and micro-enterprises, then some of the finance could also be raised from the international climate finance market.

The state governments have to promote industry and service enterprises in sectors and size that is in tune with the natural, human and financial resources of the state. Certain type of manufacturing has got located, usually in the foothill districts, under the earlier regime of "backward area" incentives. These included pharmaceuticals, auto components and assembly units. There is a need to diversify both sectorally and spatially, such as in the IT sector and in renewable energy generation.

7.5 International Cooperation – Regional and Global

Many of the environmental challenges faced by India's hill states often extend beyond local control and necessitate international cooperation, particularly in the context of climate change and transboundary water management.

Natural phenomena do not adhere to human-drawn boundaries climate change, cyclones, floods, and even seismic activities cross borders without discrimination, underscoring the need for coordinated international efforts in monitoring, research, prevention, and disaster relief.

7.5.1 Environmental aspect

Natural phenomena do not know humanly drawn boundaries. Climate change sweeps across national borders, just as cyclones and hailstorms, heat waves and earthquake tremors cross these without a visa.

It becomes necessary therefor to seek international cooperation – in monitoring, research, in prevention and mitigation where possible, and in disaster relief when adverse events do happen.

The most evident case for regional cooperation is about sharing of waters which flow across countries. Tibet is regarded as the roof of the world, is the source of two major southwest flowing rivers – Indus and Sutlej and three east/southeast flowing rivers – Yangtze, Brahmaputra and Mekong. The Tibetan plateau frequently experiences earthquakes as it is located over the tectonic plates.

Construction of major dams by China, such as the Three Gorges dam and recently approved what will be the "largest dam in the world" on the Brahmaputra close to the Indian border,[59] can disrupt the seismic balance of the fragile Himalayan range. In this case India is the lower riparian state and thus has to seek China's cooperation.

For Mizoram, this international cooperation is especially pertinent due to its long borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh. Mizoram's shared borders make cooperative water management and joint ecological monitoring critical, particularly as climate change intensifies weather extremes and increases disaster risks.

In this context, the emphasis on regional and global partnerships is vital. Cross-border collaboration can enhance disaster preparedness and environmental conservation efforts, ensuring that local challenges are addressed within a broader cooperative framework.

[59] https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-defends-plan-to-build-worlds-largest-dam-over-brahmaputra-river-in-tibet-says-will-not-affect-lower-reaches/article69034001

8 Conclusion

This study was an attempt to take a comprehensive look at the environmental, social, institutional, and economic situation of Mizoram and the lives and livelihoods of its inhabitants. While Mizoram boasts significant strengths such as its vibrant cultural traditions, robust community networks, and relatively pristine natural environments there remain several challenges that must be addressed for sustainable development.

At the environmental level, key challenges include managing water resources along its international borders with Myanmar and Bangladesh, preserving biodiversity amid increasing developmental pressures, and mitigating the impacts of climate change on its fragile ecosystems. Although Mizoram does not face glacial melt like some of the Himalayan states, issues such as deforestation, degradation of forest patches outside government jurisdiction, and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources pose significant threats.

Research and investments in water conservation structures, groundwater recharge, and ecosystem restoration are imperative. We propose an investment of Rs 18,494 crore in environmental regeneration initiatives including water conservation, forest restoration, and biodiversity preservation with the potential to generate additional benefits, such as an estimated Rs 802 crore per annum from the sale of AMSERs (Aggregated Micro-carbon-credits for Sequestration and Emission Reductions) in global carbon markets (see Table 4).

Image Source

On the social front, Mizoram's closely-knit communities and active local governance structures have built considerable social capital. However, challenges remain in expanding access to quality education especially in higher secondary and higher education, vocational training due to high dropout starting from secondary school onwards, and healthcare, especially in remote areas.

Strengthening initiatives in digital literacy, cultural promotion, and community health services is essential. An additional investment of Rs 2,770 crore over the next five years in social development covering improved healthcare, enhanced educational programs, and capacity building in local institutions will not only uplift the quality of life but also bolster community resilience during adverse events (see Table 5).

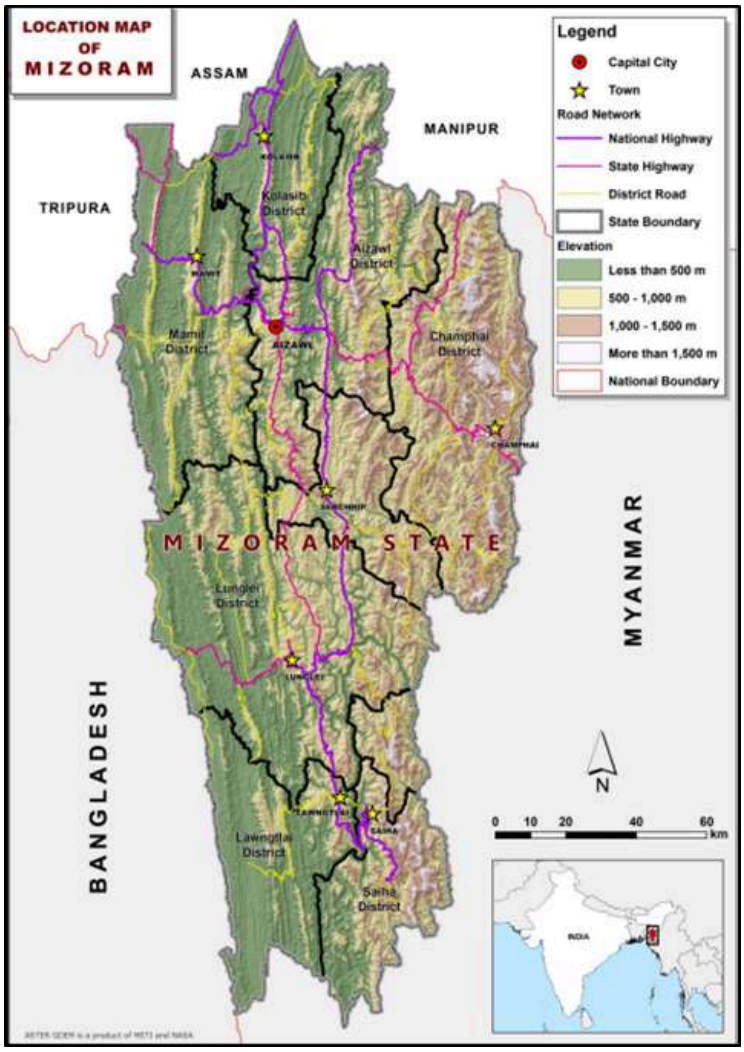
Economically, Mizoram's predominantly agrarian base and small-scale industries have sustained local livelihoods, yet there is a pressing need to transition towards a more diversified, market-oriented economy. Upgrading agricultural practices, promoting agro-processing, and enhancing MSME capacities are crucial to meet both local and regional market demands.

We recommend that an investment of Rs 4,818 crore in the agriculture and allied sectors complemented by initiatives to modernize small and medium enterprises can spur a GDP growth of approximately 0.9% above the current trend and create an estimated 23,775 new jobs, thereby fostering a more resilient and inclusive economic landscape (see Table 10).

Adopting the NEW strategy for Mizoram will ensure that investments yield multifold benefits: environmental sustainability through enhanced water management and biodiversity conservation; social development via improved public services and strengthened community bonds; and robust economic growth through diversified and modernized industries.

By empowering individuals as citizens, activists, and influencers; strengthening local community groups and NGOs; fostering participatory local governance; encouraging proactive state action; and engaging in targeted international cooperation with neighboring countries, Mizoram is poised to overcome its current challenges and achieve a future marked by environmental integrity, social inclusion, and economic dynamism.

9 Annexure 1 - Status of the natural environment in Mizoram



Map 2 Mizoram State Location

The state spans 21,087 km^2, largely composed of low-altitude (less than 2000 metres above sea level) hills which constitute approximately 96.9% of its landscape. The predominant hilltop settlements and sparse population lend Mizoram its epithet, "land of the highlanders." Geologically, it forms part of the Indo-Myanmar Arc and boasts a varied landscape featuring valleys, flood plains, and numerous peaks, with Blue Mountain being the tallest at 2,157 meters.

The environmental dynamics of Mizoram are profoundly shaped by its climatic patterns and geographical features. The region records an average annual rainfall of 2327 mm,[60] which profoundly impacts both its ecological balance and agricultural practices.

The forests of Mizoram, located within the Indo-Burma Global Biodiversity Hotspot, are vital to the local economy and way of life. Bamboo, a significant component of these forests, is not only a critical resource for construction and culinary uses but also holds a place of cultural significance among the tribal communities, who rely on these forests for their sustenance and traditional economic activities.

9.1 Jal - State of water resources in Mizoram

Mizoram experiences the high influence of the Southwest Tropical monsoon which persists from May to October, with occasional winter showers. The average annual rainfall of the state is recorded to be 2327 mm with little variation within the state.[61] The average monsoon rainfall is 60% and non-monsoon rainfall is about 40%. In this abundant Rainfall however, in the state there is cute shortage of water during the summer as majority of the rain is lost as surface run-of.

[60] https://des.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2024/02/35227b6bdb32366d10e36dd06bb2d6da/statistical-handbook-2022docx.pdf?

[61] Ibid

9.1.1 Rivers and its Basins

Mizoram is primarily divided into three major river basins: the Barak Basin (8,935 km^2) in the central to northern part of the state, the Kolodyne Basin (8,144 km^2) in the southeastern region, and the Karnaphuli Basin (3,999 km^2) in the southwestern part (Agency, 2015). The state's hydrological network is characterized by an extensive system of rivers, many of which flow northward and ultimately converge with the Barak River, a major tributary of the Brahmaputra in Assam's Cachar plains.

As shown in map below, among the key rivers in Mizoram are the Tlawng River (also known as Dhaleswari or Katakhal), Tut River (locally called Gutur), Tuirial River (commonly referred to as Sonai), and Tuivawl River. The Kaladan River, locally known as Chhimtuipui Lui, is the most significant transboundary river in the region. Originating in Chin State, Myanmar, it flows through the southern districts of Saiha and Lawngtlai before re-entering Myanmar and ultimately draining into the Bay of Bengal near Akyab, a crucial port city. The Kaladan River holds strategic significance as a vital trade corridor between India and Myanmar.

In addition to its river systems, Mizoram is home to several perennial lakes as shown in map 3, locally referred to as "Dil", which play an essential role in the region's ecological and hydrological dynamics. Notable among them are:

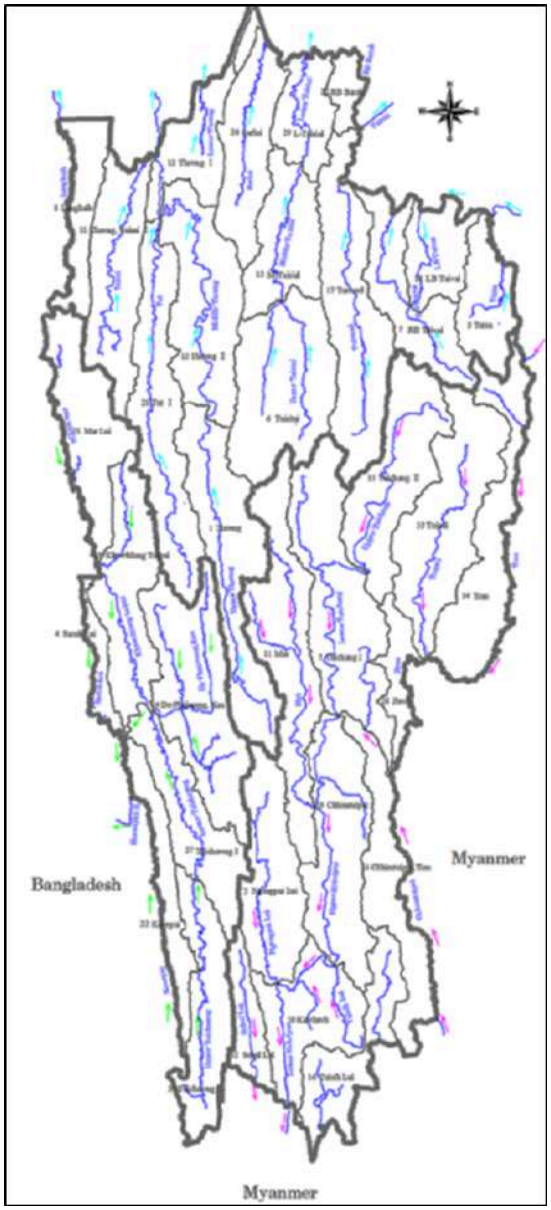
- **Palak Lake** (30 hectares), situated in southern Mizoram, is believed to have formed due to seismic activity or flooding, submerging a former settlement.

- **Tamdil**, located approximately 110 km from Aizawl, is surrounded by tropical evergreen and moist deciduous forests. It serves as a biodiversity hotspot, supporting species such as bears, deer, and wild pigs.

- **Rungdil**, near Suangpuilawn village, spans 2.5 hectares and consists of two interconnected water bodies separated by a narrow strip of land.

- **Rengdil**, an artificial lake, is located northwest of Aizawl, approximately 8 km from Zamuang village.

- **Rihdil**, the largest and most significant lake in Mizoram, is situated at the Indo-Myanmar border in Champhai district.



Map 3 Mizoram State with Rivers

9.1.2 Status of water bodies – Ponds, and other water storages

Mizoram has a total of 2,185 water bodies, with 65.7% (1,436) located in rural areas and 34.3% (749) in urban areas. Of these, 79.4% (1,734) are privately owned, with 86.9% (1,506) controlled by individual farmers, while 20.6% (451) remain under public ownership. Most of these water bodies, 2,171 in total, are found in tribal areas.[62]The majority of Mizoram's water bodies are ponds, followed by tanks. Of the total water bodies, 94.4% (2,063) are currently in use, with 66% (1,361) primarily used for pisciculture, while 5.6% (122) are no longer functional due to drying up, siltation, or destruction beyond repair.

Mizoram has 19 natural water bodies, 16 of which are in rural areas, and 2,166 man-made water bodies, mostly constructed at a cost below ₹5 lakh. Regarding storage capacity, data from 2,171 water bodies indicate that 32.9% (714) are fully filled, while 58.6% (1,273) reach three-fourths of their capacity. Additionally, 6.4% (139) fill up to half, 0.8% (17) reach only one-fourth, and 1.3% (28) have negligible or no storage capacity.[63]

On an annual basis, 62.2% (1,350) of the water bodies fill up every year, 33% (717) usually fill up, 3.3% (71) are rarely filled, and 1.5% (33) never reach their full capacity. Seven water bodies in Mizoram have been reported as encroached upon, including three ponds and four tanks. Only 1.8% (40) of the water bodies are covered under District or State Irrigation Plans. Most water bodies serve multiple towns and cities, with 54.9% (1,132) benefiting a single town and 45% (929) supporting two to five towns.[64]

In terms of water spread area, 64.5% (1,409) of Mizoram's water bodies cover less than 0.5 hectares, and 34.7% (759) have a storage capacity between 1,000 and 10,000 cubic meters. Mizoram's water bodies are vital for agriculture, drinking water supply, and pisciculture. However, pressing concerns such as drying up, siltation, and encroachment highlight the need for sustainable water management policies to preserve and enhance water resources in the state.
These water bodies, along with Mizoram's intricate river systems, play a crucial role in shaping the state's environmental landscape, supporting biodiversity, and influencing local livelihoods and economic activities.

9.1.3 Village spring sources

According to 2018 Niti Ayog study[65] there are some three million springs flows across the Indian Himalayan region. About half of these have either dried up or are in various stages of disappearing. The report also concludes that there are 453 mountain spring sources or Tuikhur in 830 villages of Mizoram constituting 2nd highest number of villages in whole Himalayan region to be depended on Tuikhur. Moreover, same report points that mountain springs, once the lifeline of people living in the Himalayan regions, were rapidly drying up. This finding has since been corroborated by other research organisations.

---

[62] https://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/document/all-india-report-of-first-census-of-water-bodies-volume-1/

[63] Ibid

[64] Ibid

[65] https://dolr.gov.in/springshed/

In Mizoram it was found that Tuikhur or village spring source (VSS) and piped water supply constitute the main lifeline of water supply. Other sources of water include rainwater harvested and water taken from the stream or river.

The springs, which were once perennial, have become seasonal owing to lack of springshed management. Rainwater harvesting, barring inconsequential villages, is meagrely existent in this region of abundant rainfall with almost 130 days of rainfall.

In the study done it was reported that in the absence of proper water resource planning, there is a huge deficit of water every month with the average requirement being 2,49,148 gallons per month with a supply of just 2,14,248 gallons per month. However, water surplus was also observed in villages having a proper water management system in the form of rainwater harvesting and spring shed management. (Biswas & Azyu, 2021)

Springs dry up due to four main reasons.

1. A reduction in the long-term rainfall in the region. This has happened in several parts of the Himalayan states. According to the State Action Plan for Climate Change (SAPCC) version 2 in Mizoram, mean annual rainfall for RCP 4.5 scenario is projected to decrease significantly by about 6.8% towards mid-century. For RCP 8.5 scenario rainfall is projected to decrease by about 17.25% towards mid-century. The maximum decrease in rainfall is expected in Aizawl and Lunglei districts under RCP 4.5 mid-century scenario. Increase in intensity of rainfall events may lead to floods, urban storms, vector borne diseases, loss of work, transport disruption, additional cost for flood proofing factories and warehouses. While some places see excessive rain that leads to landslides and floods, the average annual rainfall in the region has decreased. This deficit is irregular across districts.

2. The second reason is a change in land cover and land use. Some places in the Himalayan states have seen a reduction in forest cover and natural farming, due to both infrastructural development and land-use changes at the local level.

3. The third reason is landslides, due to which the earth moves from one place to another and destroys springs,

4. The fourth cause is rain-related drought. Apart from these four reasons, floods can also result in destruction of springs. Moreover, it is important to note that all these processes are taking place in a fragile and ecologically sensitive region.

Springs get water from aquifers. Even though the Himalayan mountains do not have large aquifers, there are some rocks and systems that have porosity and permeability that can retain water. This is the source of groundwater, which erupts in the form of springs.

The area from which the water seeps into the ground and emerges elsewhere through springs is called a springshed or a natural recharge area. (Kulkarni, 2023)

9.1.4 Aizawl and water management

The population distribution also brings out challenges to the water management. Aizawl city itself has 30% of the state population. It has seen tremendous growth in last 15 years. The city is situated on the hillcrests, steep slopes, and small valleys. The topography is highly undulating and rugged. The unique physical attributes of this rugged land are marked by extreme fragility and frequent landslides, limited land space, steep slopes, and lack of accessibility. The city reveals a rapid and uncontrolled growth pattern with multi-storey settlements that have mushroomed unplanned on highly risk-prone slopes.

Aizawl covers an area of about 128.98 sq. km, and as per Aizawl Municipal Corporation Report 2020, the population is 3,59,829 persons. There are several streams in and around Aizawl City, but none of them is dependable for providing adequate water. The only dependable source is river Tlawng located more than 1,000 m below the city. The piped water supply is highly inadequate and unreliable. Hence, many people get water from private small-scale water service providers.

It has been observed that there are five different types of water sources where the people obtain water for domestic purposes, such as piped water supply, hand pumps, Tuikhur, rainwater harvesting, and private water tankers.

The Government of India Tenth Plan recommendation of standard norms of the per capita water supply (135 litres per capita per day)[66], the water demand in the city worked out as around 48.57 million litres per day (MLD). However, in the present situation, the Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) makes only about 22.99 MLD of water available to the city residents. (Ramhnehzauva, 2023)

Inadequate and unreliable piped water supply, absence of rain and depletion of water in *Tuikhur* during winter and the beginning of summer have provided an opportunity for commercial water tankers service to operate in the study area. The water tankers bridge the gap between demand and supply and provide water to many families. Tankers supply water to mostly middle and upper-class families.

The tanker supply is more during winter when there is a piped supply shortage and availability of water in other sources is considerably declined. The amount of water purchased depends on the socio-economic status of the households and the size of the water storage tank they possess.

Due to the depletion of water in water sources, generally, a water tanker takes nearly three hours to fill up a tanker. Thus, 200 tankers plying in the city are estimated to make at least three trips per day each during the dry season, roughly equivalent to delivering about 1.5 million litres per day.

Ironically, on average, 286 billion litres of water falls in the city per year, whereas the annual water requirement is approximately 12 billion litres, which is only 4.20 per cent of the total rainwater falling over the city per year. In other words, the city can fully subsist only on conserved rainwater. It needs to find a way to save about 5 per cent of the total rainfall in a year. (Ramhnehzauva, 2023)

---

[66] https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1604871

9.1.5 Ground water

During the year 2018-19, the annual groundwater recharge of the state was 0.22 BCM and the annual extractable ground water recharge was 0.19 BCM after deducting the natural discharge. The groundwater extraction estimated in 2019-20 was 0.007 BCM and the overall stage of groundwater was 4%. Annual Extractable ground water resources in the state are of the order of 0.19 BCM.

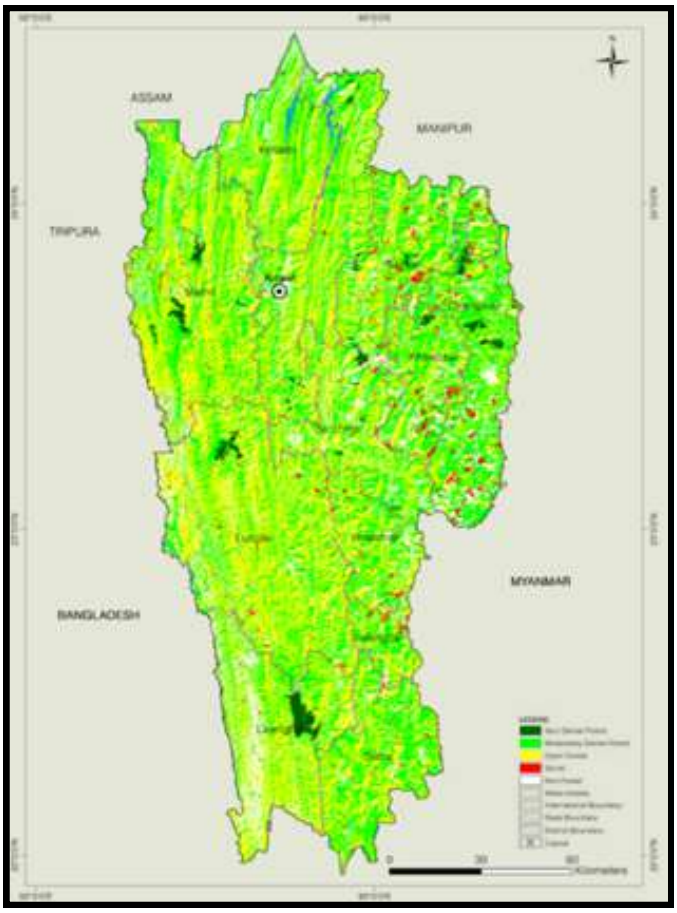
Maximum annual extractable ground water resource of 0.05 BCM is found in Mamit district while the minimum of 0.007 BCM is in Saiha district. The stage of ground water extraction is the maximum in Aizawl district with 14.0 % while the lowest is found in Kolasib district with 1.0 %.[67]

Image Source

[67] https://cgwa-noc.gov.in/LandingPage/LatestUpdate/NCDGWR2023.pdf

9.2 Jangal- State of forest resources in Mizoram

The Northeastern region of India, while occupying only 7.98% of the country's total land area, plays a disproportionately large role in its forest and tree cover, contributing 21.08% of the national total.



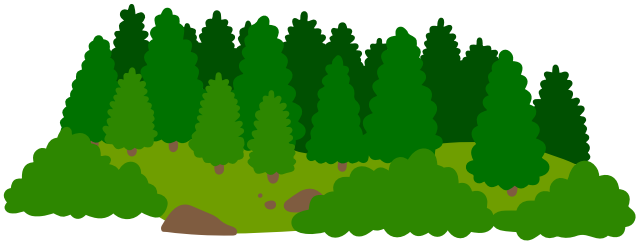
Map 4 Mizoram state with Forest

According to the India State of Forest Report 2023, Mizoram has a total forest cover of 17,990.46 km^2, which accounts for 85.34% of its geographical area. This forest cover is predominantly composed of Moderate Dense Forests (8,635.76 km^2) and Open Forests (9,093.18 km^2). Such extensive coverage reflects a well-preserved forest ecosystem that supports substantial biodiversity.[68]

Mizoram also boasts a robust network of protected forests, covering 9.48% of its total geographical area. This network includes one Tiger Reserve, two National Parks, and eight Wildlife Sanctuaries, which play a critical role in conserving the state's diverse flora and fauna. Additionally, community-conserved areas (CCAs), particularly in the hilly regions, contribute significantly to biodiversity preservation. Plains, by contrast, are relatively sparse and primarily found in eastern regions such as Champhai and North Vanlaiphai.

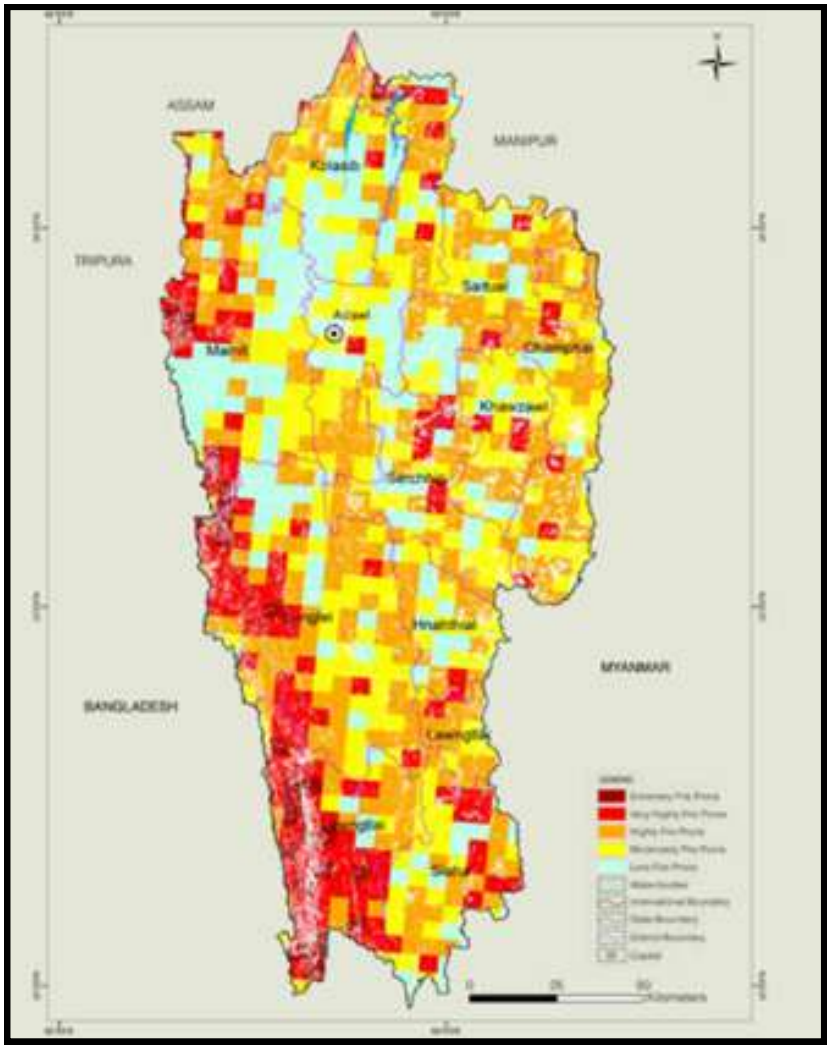
9.2.1 Historical context and forest management

Forest management efforts in Mizoram date back to 1952, when it was designated as an Autonomous District Council. This led to the formal establishment of the Forest Department in 1972, coinciding with Mizoram's transition to a Union Territory. Since then, governance over forest areas has been strengthened, particularly focusing on unclassed forests outside the Inner Line Reserved Forests.



[68] https://fsi.nic.in/forest-report-2023

9.2.2 Forest fires and Jhum cultivation



Map 5 Mizoram State Forest Fire ISFR 2023

One of the primary causes of forest degradation and fires in Northeast India is Jhum (shifting) cultivation. Over time, the shortening of Jhum cycles has resulted in extensive annual deforestation, where large forest areas are slashed and burned for cultivation. This practice significantly increases the frequency and intensity of forest fires, particularly in ecologically sensitive and biodiversity-rich regions.

9.2.3 Forest fire susceptibility and management strategies

Approximately 50.93% of Mizoram's forest cover is classified as highly to extremely fire-prone.[69] This classification is crucial for developing effective mitigation strategies, ensuring better preparedness, and safeguarding the state's valuable natural heritage. Mizoram faces severe challenges with forest fires, with substantial inter-district variability in fire occurrences.

In the 2023-24 season alone, 6,627 forest fire incidents were recorded, marking an increase from 5,798 in 2022-23.[70] Lawngtlai and Lunglei emerged as the most vulnerable districts, reporting the highest number of fire incidents, highlighting the urgent need for targeted fire management strategies.

The rising trend in forest fire incidents suggests several potential causes:

1. Climatic changes leading to drier conditions.

2. Increased human interaction with forested areas.

3. Declining effectiveness of existing fire management strategies.

[69] Ibid

[70] Ibid

Additionally, there are notable district-wise variations in fire activity:

- Lawngtlai and Lunglei reported significant increases in fire occurrences, likely due to extensive forest cover, local climatic conditions, or highly flammable vegetation.
- Champhai, on the other hand, saw a marked decrease in incidents, suggesting successful interventions or differing environmental conditions.

9.2.4 Forest classification and extent in Mizoram

The 2023 Forest Cover Map (FCM) for Mizoram, utilizing the Champion & Seth Forest Classification of 1968, delineates the area covered by various forest types across the state, summarizing their extent and contribution to the total mapped area. Here are the key forest types and their areas:

Table 12 Mizoram State Forest Type ISFR 2023

Forest Type	Area (km^2)	% of Total Mapped Area
Pioneer Euphorbiaceous Scrub	74.28	0.41%
Cachar Semi-Evergreen Forest	5,572.04	30.44%
Secondary Moist Bamboo Brakes	6,656.91	36.37%
East Himalayan Moist Mixed Deciduous Forest	5,897.13	32.21%
East Himalayan Subtropical Wet Hill Forest	7.97	0.04%
Assam Subtropical Pine Forest	92.68	0.51%

Table 13 Mizoram State Forest Class, ISFR 2023

Forest Class	Area (km^2)	% of Total Calculated Area (SoI)
Very Dense Forest (VDF)	261.52	1.24%
Moderate Dense Forest (MDF)	8,635.76	40.96%
Open Forest (OF)	9,093.18	43.14%
Total Forest Cover	17,990.46	85.34%
Scrub Land	314.54	1.49%

Mizoram's total forest cover spans 17,990.46 km^2 (85.34%), highlighting its rich forest resources.[71] Open Forests (OF) dominate, covering 9,093.18 km^2 (43.14%), followed closely by Moderate Dense Forests (MDF) at 8,635.76 km^2 (40.96%), indicating a prevalence of partially dense and moderately stocked forests. However, Very Dense Forests (VDF), the most ecologically valuable category, account for only 261.52 km^2 (1.24%), underscoring the need for conservation efforts to protect biodiversity hotspots (ISFR, 2023).

Additionally, Scrub Land covers 314.54 km^2 (1.49%), representing degraded areas or early-stage afforestation zones. While Mizoram maintains significant forest cover, the low proportion of VDF and the presence of scrub land suggest a need for enhanced conservation and reforestation strategies to sustain and improve forest quality.

Forest Cover Changes

The "Forest Cover Change Matrix Inside RFA/GW for Mizoram" from 2021 to 2023 provides crucial insights into the forest cover dynamics within protected areas, influenced by conservation efforts, natural regeneration, and possibly anthropogenic factors.[72] Key changes include:

1. Very Dense Forests (VDF) expanded significantly, from 193.73 km^2 to 259.83 km^2, indicating successful conservation or natural regeneration.

2. Moderate Dense Forests (MDF) declined by 210.11 km^2 to 8,438.53 km^2, suggesting possible reclassification or degradation.

3. Open Forests (OF) increased by 336.93 km^2 to 8,931.24 km^2, reflecting potential thinning of denser forests or reforestation of previously non-forested areas.

4. Scrub land rose dramatically from 1.43 km^2 to 301.48 km^2, pointing to either improvement in non-forested areas or transition from higher quality forests.

5. Non-Forest (NF) areas decreased by 492.97 km^2 to 2,639.13 km^2, showing effective land management or land conversion to forested states.

These transitions highlight ongoing shifts in Mizoram's forest management and conservation efforts, with both successes and challenges. The data underscores the importance of enhancing forest cover quality and addressing forest degradation to maintain the region's biodiversity.

Outside the RFA/GW, a similar trend is observed with stable VDF, increasing MDF and OF, and declining NF areas, suggesting effective reforestation and adaptive land-use management.[73]

---

[71] Ibid

[72] Ibid

[73] Ibid

Bamboo Forest Cover

Bamboo plays a crucial role in Mizoram's ecology, particularly within the Secondary Moist Bamboo Brakes, which cover 6,656.91 km^2 (36.37%) of the total forested area. The ISFR 2023 reports that Mizoram's bamboo-bearing area has increased from 4,561 km^2 in 2021 to 4,772 km^2 in 2023, marking a 4.63% growth. This expansion reflects successful environmental management and favourable climatic conditions that support bamboo proliferation.

Given bamboo's role in construction, handicrafts, soil stabilization, and carbon sequestration, its expansion has both ecological and economic significance for the state.

9.2.5 Occurence of Mautam and its influence on life in Mizoram

Mizoram's ecological and economic landscape is significantly influenced by unique natural phenomena known as "Mautam" and "Thingtam," which are local terms for famines triggered by the cyclical flowering[67] of specific bamboo species.

The famine known as "Mautam" is caused by the flowering of Melocanna baccifera, while "Thingtam" results from the flowering of Bambusa tulda. Intriguingly, the cycle of these events is interlinked, where "Thingtam" occurs 18 years after "Mautam" and "Mautam" follows 30 years after "Thingtam."

Historically, Mizoram has experienced several significant occurrences of "Mautam," with recorded events in the years 1815, 1863, 1911, 1959, and the most recent in 2006-07. During these periods, the gregarious flowering of bamboos leads to a massive die-off of the bamboo after it flowers and produces seeds.

The flowering produces a large quantity of bamboo seeds, which are a favourite food source for black rats. This abundance of food leads to a rapid increase in the rat population, often referred to as a "rat flood."

Once the bamboo seeds are exhausted, the massive rat population turns to human crops and stored grains for food, causing widespread destruction and food scarcity.

This cycle had a profound impact on the local ecosystem and agriculture, as bamboos form a crucial part of Mizoram's forest cover and are a vital economic and ecological resource. The "Mautam" event of 2006-07 illustrates the severity of this phenomenon.

The initial gregarious flowering began in 2006, leading to the loss of approximately 331.43 million bamboo culms.[74]The situation escalated in 2008, with a staggering loss of 3,324.63 million culms. These events not only resulted in significant ecological disruption but also led to economic hardships for communities dependent on bamboo for various uses, including construction, handicrafts, and as a food source.

[74] https://forest.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/qms/8b991e642f7278eae7e9b3ad7cca84c5/50-years-of-mizoram-forest.pdf

9.2.6 Decline in Mizoram's forest area

In the context of the decadal change in forest cover from 2013 to 2023, Mizoram has demonstrated a significant shift. According to the data presented in the Indian State Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, Mizoram, with a geographical area of 21,081 km2, has experienced a decrease in forest cover. In 2013, the forest cover was recorded at 18,978.16 km2, which reduced to 17,990.46 km2 by 2023. This reduction amounts to 987.70 km2, representing a decline in forest area of 5.20% over the decade, as compared to a rise of 2.38% for all India average. (ISFR, 2023: Table 9.4)

The decline in forest cover over ten years could be attributed to various factors, including deforestation for agricultural expansion, urbanization, and possibly adverse climatic impacts. The reduction in forest area in Mizoram is significant because it not only affects biodiversity and ecological balance but also impacts the socio-economic aspects of local communities reliant on forest resources.

Another alarming fact is that Mizoram lost the maximum proportion of growing stock of trees in recorded forest areas (RFA), in the country. The proportion for Mizoram was -36.54% as compared to +7.32% for all India average. Partly this was because the RFA in Mizoram reduced drastically from 16,717 km2 in 2013 to 7,479 km2, or 55.3%, which seems to be a definitional issue. (ISFR, 2023: Table 9.10 Decadal Change of Growing Stock in RFA of State/UTs between 2013 to 2023). This definitional confusion in forest cover is a matter of concern as it indicates potential challenges in forest conservation and management in the state.

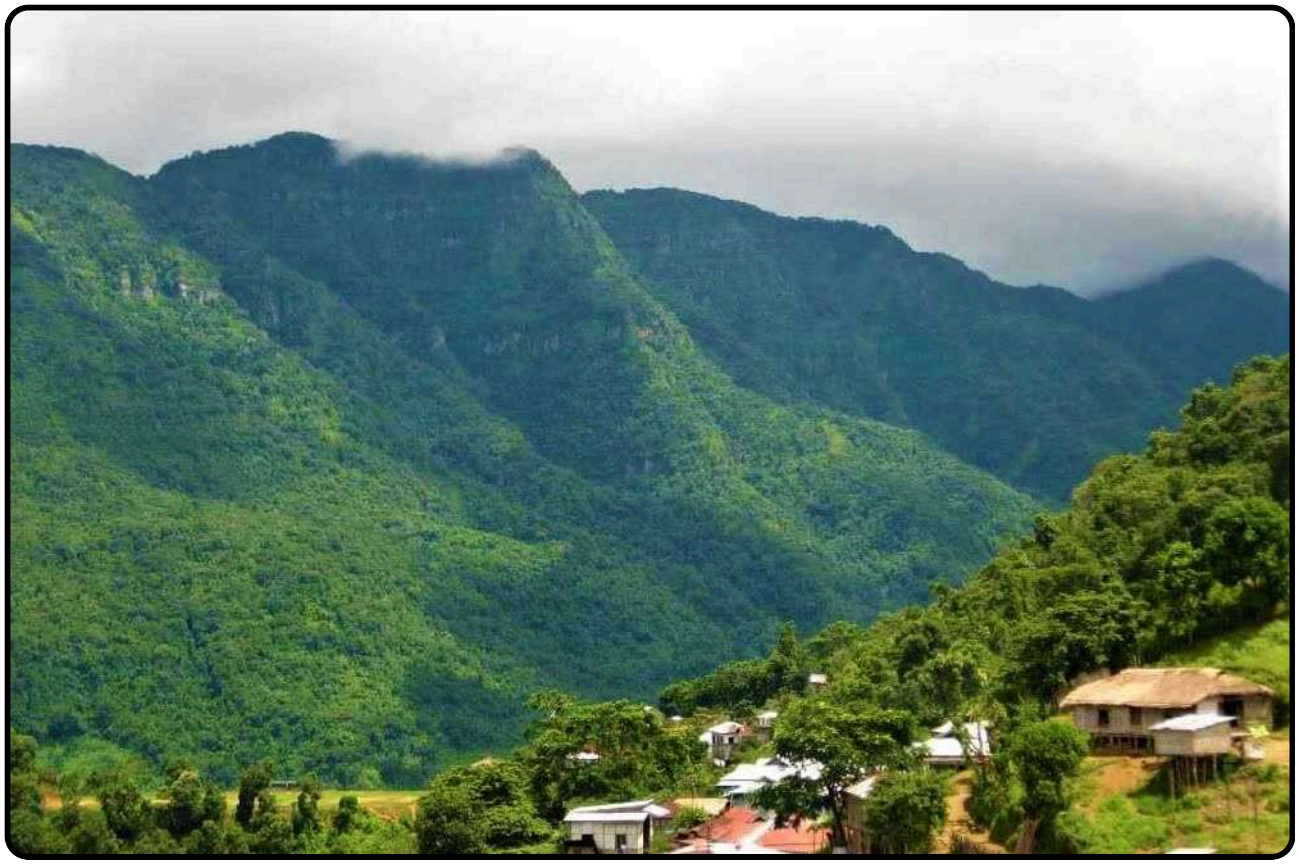


Image Source

9.3 Jameen: State of land in Mizoram

Table 14 Land Use Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, GOI, (2021-22)

Land Use Types	Area (in '000 ha)	Percentage
Geographical Area	2108	
Reporting area for land utilization	2038.99	100
Forests	1585.3	77.75
Not available for land cultivation	75.25	3.69
Permanent pastures and other grazing lands	11.11	0.55
Land under misc. tree crops and groves	41.31	2.03
Culturable wasteland	7.44	0.36
Fallow land other than current fallows	127.32	6.24
Current fallows	46.56	2.28
Net area sown	144.7	7.1

9.3.1 Land use patterns in Mizoram

Mizoram's total geographical area stands at 2,108,000 hectares, with 2,038,990 hectares officially recorded for land utilization reporting. Land use statistics for Mizoram reveal a region predominantly covered by forests, which constitute 77.75% of the total reported land utilization area (1,585,300 hectares). This highlights the state's strong ecological footprint, with forest coverage being a major environmental and economic asset.

Despite its rugged terrain and extensive forest cover, only 3.69% (75,250 hectares) of the total land area is categorized as not available for cultivation. This suggests that much of the non-forested land remains accessible for agricultural and allied activities, albeit with terrain and soil suitability constraints.

9.3.2 Agricultural land use and cultivation patterns

Agriculture in Mizoram is limited yet diverse, with 144,700 hectares (7.1%) of the land designated as net sown area. This figure represents active agricultural practices, though the share of cultivated land remains relatively low compared to other states due to the dominance of forests and shifting cultivation.

A distinctive feature of Mizoram's land use is miscellaneous tree crops and groves, covering 41,310 hectares (2.03%). This category includes plantation crops such as oil palm, rubber, orange, banana, and other fruit orchards, reflecting an increasing shift toward high-value horticulture and perennial cropping systems.[75]

9.3.3 Shifting cultivation and fallow land management

Mizoram's traditional rotational farming system, locally known as jhum cultivation, significantly influences land use dynamics. Large portions of land are left fallow, allowing soil fertility regeneration between cultivation cycles. Fallow land other than current fallows accounts for 127,320 hectares (6.24%), while current fallows occupy 46,560 hectares (2.28%). The combined fallow land percentage (8.52%) underscores the persistence of shifting cultivation despite government efforts to transition farmers toward more sustainable settled agriculture.

9.3.4 Grazing land and wasteland

Permanent pastures and grazing lands are scarce, covering only 11,110 hectares (0.55%) of the state's land area. This is due to Mizoram's limited livestock-rearing practices, which mainly consist of stall-fed or backyard farming rather than extensive grazing. Similarly, culturable wasteland land that is presently uncultivated but has the potential for agricultural use accounts for just 7,440 hectares (0.36%), reflecting efficient land use and limited areas of unproductive land.

These land use characteristics underscore Mizoram's delicate balance between conservation and agriculture, where land-use policies must accommodate both ecological preservation and rural livelihoods. The New Land Use Policy (NLUP) and other government initiatives aim to improve sustainable farming practices while maintaining forest cover, ensuring long-term agricultural viability without excessive deforestation.

[75] https://www.ceicdata.com/en/india/agricultural-land-type-of-use-mizoram/mizoram-agricultural-land-type-of-use-cropping-intensity?

9.3.5 Agroclimatic zones in Mizoram

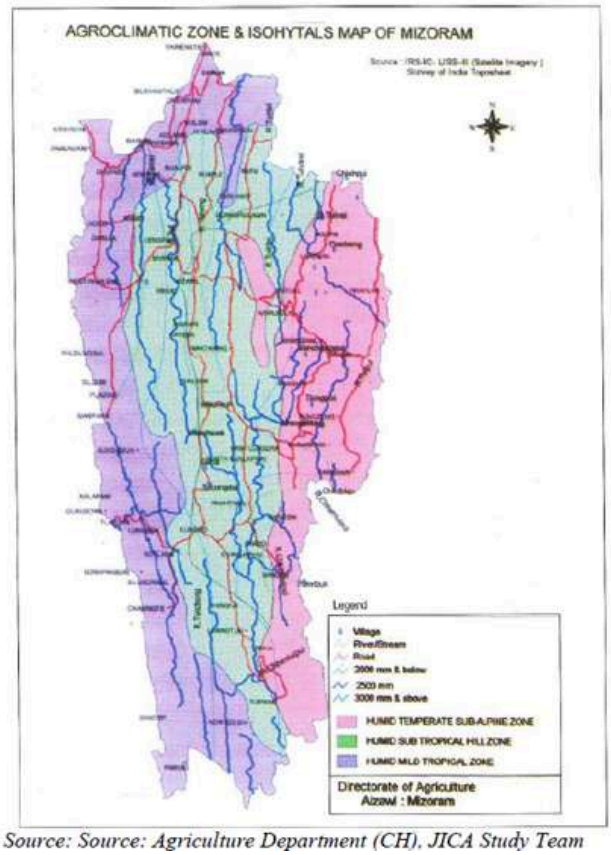
Mizoram is divided into three distinct agro-climatic zones, each shaped by its unique topography and climatic conditions.

The Humid Mild Tropical Hill Zone, located in the western part of the state, experiences moderate temperatures and heavy rainfall, making it suitable for crops like rice, maize, and pulses.

The Humid Subtropical Hill Zone, covering the central region, is marked by high humidity and significant precipitation, supporting diverse horticultural crops such as oranges, bananas, and pineapples.

In the eastern part of the state lies the Humid Temperate Subalpine Zone, characterized by cooler temperatures and a mountainous landscape, where crops like apples, walnuts, and certain temperate vegetables thrive.

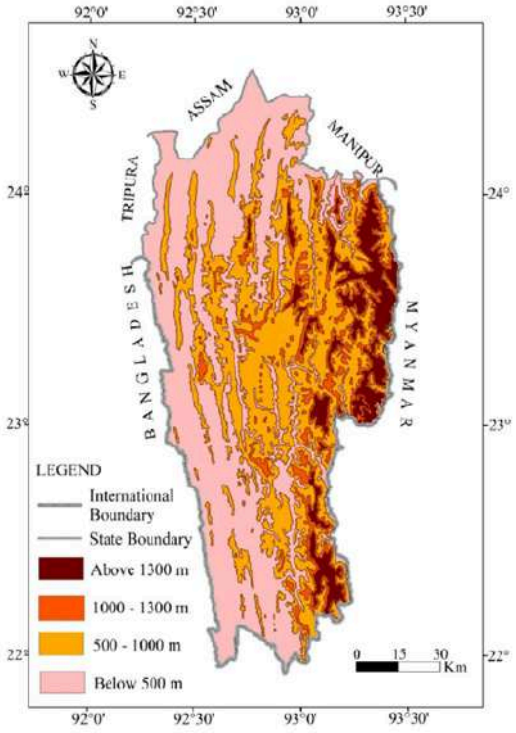
These agro-climatic variations influence Mizoram's agricultural productivity, biodiversity, and adaptation strategies for sustainable farming (Agency, 2015).



Source: Source: Agriculture Department (CH), JICA Study Team

Map 6 Mizoram State Agroclimatic Zones

9.3.6 Hills of Mizoram



Map 7 Mizoram State Altitude Zones

Mizoram's landscape is primarily characterized by its varied elevations, which span from as low as 21 meters to as high as 2,157 meters, deeply influencing its ecological and land use patterns. The state is segmented into different geographical units based on altitude, each supporting diverse ecological and human activities.

The highest regions of Mizoram, mainly comprising the high structural Hills over 1,200 meters, cover approximately 8.2% of the area. These regions, including a large part of the Champhai district and smaller portions of Saiha, Lawngtlai, Serchhip, and Aizawl districts, sit above 1,300 meters. They encompass steep, rugged terrains less suited for agriculture but crucial for biodiversity and forestry. This zone also includes areas above 1,300 meters, representing about 6.96% of the state, indicative of its minor but significant high-altitude range.

Surrounding these high peaks are the Medium Structural Hills, with altitudes ranging from 800 to 1,200 meters, making up about 20.6% of Mizoram. These areas are transitional zones where the terrain begins to support a mix of forest and agricultural activities, thanks to more moderate slopes and elevations. This range notably includes regions between 1,000 to 1,300 meters, which account for about 9.32% of the state, providing a blend of uses from dense woodland to arable farming areas.

The most extensive geographical feature of Mizoram is the low structural Hills, under 800 meters, which cover about 61.7% of the state. This broad category includes the vast stretches of land from the lowest plains at 0–500 meters, which constitute over half of Mizoram's total area (50.10%), to the slightly elevated areas from 500 to 1,000 meters (33.62%). These lower hills and valleys are where most of Mizoram's agricultural activities occur, particularly in the fertile valley fills and floodplains. Valley fills, covering 2.7% of the land, and flood plains, making up just 0.4%, are vital for their rich, alluvium-deposited soils that support intensive agricultural use.

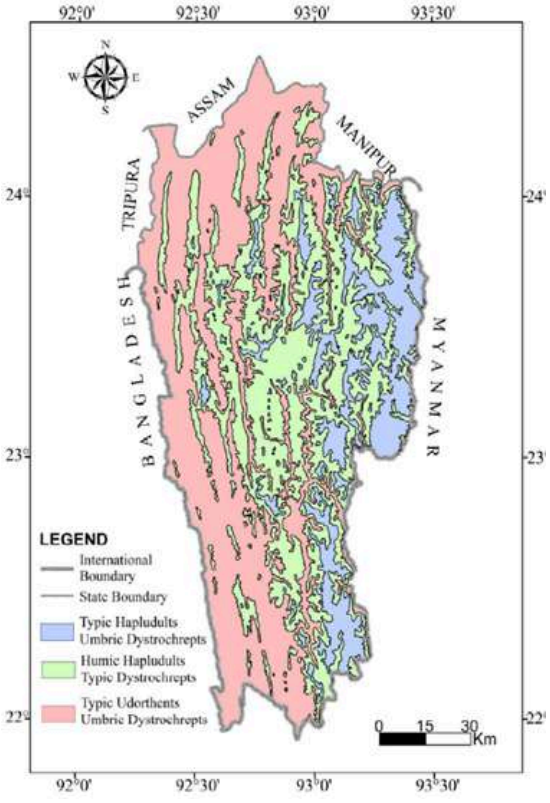
Lastly, the Linear Ridges, stretching along the western and southwestern edges of the state, make up 6.4% of Mizoram. These ridges present a unique landscape of low-dissected, parallel linear forms that are less prominent in elevation but significant in their distinct ecological and agricultural implications.

Overall, Mizoram's diverse topographical features dictate its land use patterns, from high conservation areas in the elevated regions to intensive agriculture in the lower, more fertile valleys. This altitudinal variation not only defines the state's physical landscape but also its economic activities, particularly in agriculture and forestry.

9.3.7 State of soil condition

Soil across Mizoram varies considerably due to its diverse topography and sedimentary geological formations, predominantly developed from sandstone and shale. The soils are generally young and immature, often highly leached and rich in iron, with pH values typically acidic, ranging from 4.5 to 5.5. These soils are dark and deep, especially in the valleys, where they are rich in organic carbon and capable of retaining moisture, which is beneficial for crop growth.

The state experiences substantial soil erosion, exacerbated by heavy rainfall during the summer and monsoon seasons. Soil taxonomy in Mizoram identifies three main types: Typic Udorthents Umbric Dystrochrepts, which cover the majority of the state (50.47%), Humic Hapludults Typic Dystrochrepts (33.33%), and Typic Hapludults Umbric Dystrochrepts (16.20%). These soil types vary by location, affecting their use for agriculture and their susceptibility to erosion, shaping the landscape and agricultural practices across Mizoram.



Map 8 Mizoram State Soil Types

9.3.8 Landholdings by size and ownership patterns

Size Distribution:

Agriculture in Mizoram is dominated by smallholders. According to the latest Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2022, Mizoram had 89,774 operational land holdings in Over 80% of these are small or marginal holdings (below 2 hectares). The table below summarizes the number and area of holdings by size class:

Table 15 Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2022

Size of Holding	No. of Holdings (% of total)	Area Operated (% of total)
Marginal (below 1 ha)	44,963 (50.1%)	27,167 ha (24.1%)
Small (1–2 ha)	27,483 (30.6%)	35,064 ha (31.2%)
Semi-medium (2–4 ha)	13,834 (15.4%)	31,672 ha (28.2%)
Medium (4–10 ha)	3,209 (3.6%)	14,909 ha (13.3%)
Large (10 ha & above)	285 (0.3%)	3,653 ha (3.2%)
Total	89,774 (100%)	112,465 ha (100%)

The vast majority of Mizoram's farms are small or marginal. Marginal holdings alone account for about 50% of all farms but operate only 24% of agricultural land. In contrast, the few medium/large holdings (>4 ha) under 4% of farms control roughly 16.5% of the farmland. The *average holding size* in 2015–16 was about 1.25 hectares, slightly above the all-India average of 1.08 ha.

Ownership Patterns:

Historically, land in Mizoram was held under community-based tenure. Prior to independence, village chiefs ("Lal") allocated jhum (shifting cultivation) land to families, and no individual had permanent ownership (Mizoram, 1954). After the abolition of chieftainship in 1954, land administration shifted to elected Village Councils, though the state government retained ultimate ownership of land (Mizoram, 1954). Today, farmers operate their plots under land permits or titles issued by the government, but *most agricultural land is effectively owned and worked by local tribal families*.

Nearly all holdings are operated by individual tribal households, as institutional or corporate farms are negligible in Mizoram.[76]Scheduled Tribe farmers form the bulk of landholders in Mizoram, given the state's demographic composition.

[76] Agricultural Census 2015-16

Trends in Land Ownership and Land Reforms in Mizoram

Over the past few decades, Mizoram has seen a rising number of landholdings alongside a modest increase in cultivated area indicating fragmentation into smaller farms. The number of operational holdings grew from about 43,000 in 2005–06 to 50,000 in 2010–11 (a 16% increase), and then surged to ~89,774 by 2015–16.[77]

Land Reform Policies:

Mizoram's unique land tenure history has shaped recent reforms:

- Abolition of Chieftainship (1950s): The first major reform was the *Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act, 1954*, which ended the hereditary chiefs' control over land (Government of Mizoram, 1954).

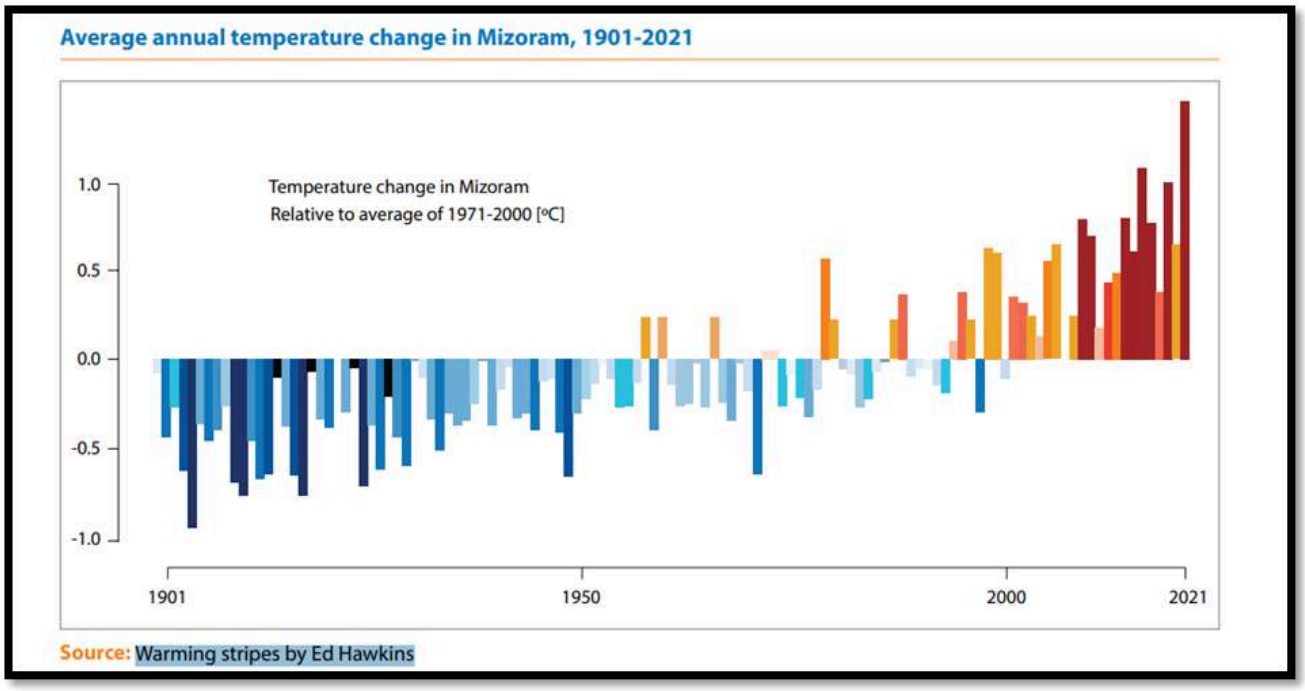
- Mizoram (Land Revenue) Acts: The state has enacted laws to formalize land rights. The Mizoram Land Revenue Act, 2013 (and earlier, the 1956 Act) laid down the framework for land titling and revenue (Government of Mizoram, 2013). An important *recent development* is the Mizoram (Land Revenue) Amendment Act, 2022, which introduced Property Cards for land holders (Government of Mizoram, 2022).

- New Land Use Policy (NLUP): A cornerstone of Mizoram's land-related reforms is addressing *jhum* cultivation. The New Land Use Policy (NLUP), launched in 2011, aims to "wean away" jhum farmers from shifting cultivation and promote sustainable settled agriculture (Government of Mizoram, Department of Agriculture, 2011).

- Forest Rights Act (FRA): The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 has been implemented in Mizoram to recognize land rights of tribal families traditionally cultivating in forest areas (Government of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2006).

[77] Ibid

9.4 Jalvayu Parivartan - Climate change in Mizoram



Pic 1 Average annual temperature change in Mizoram 1901 - 2021

9.4.1 Climate change trends in Mizoram

Temperature Trends (1901-2021)

Historical temperature data for Mizoram (1901-2021) indicates a significant warming trend over the past century. As illustrated in the temperature anomaly chart (Source: Warming Stripes by Ed Hawkins), Mizoram experienced predominantly cooler-than-average years in the early 20th century.

However, from the late 20th century onwards, particularly post-2000, there has been a noticeable and consistent rise in annual temperatures.

Key observations from the dataset:[78]

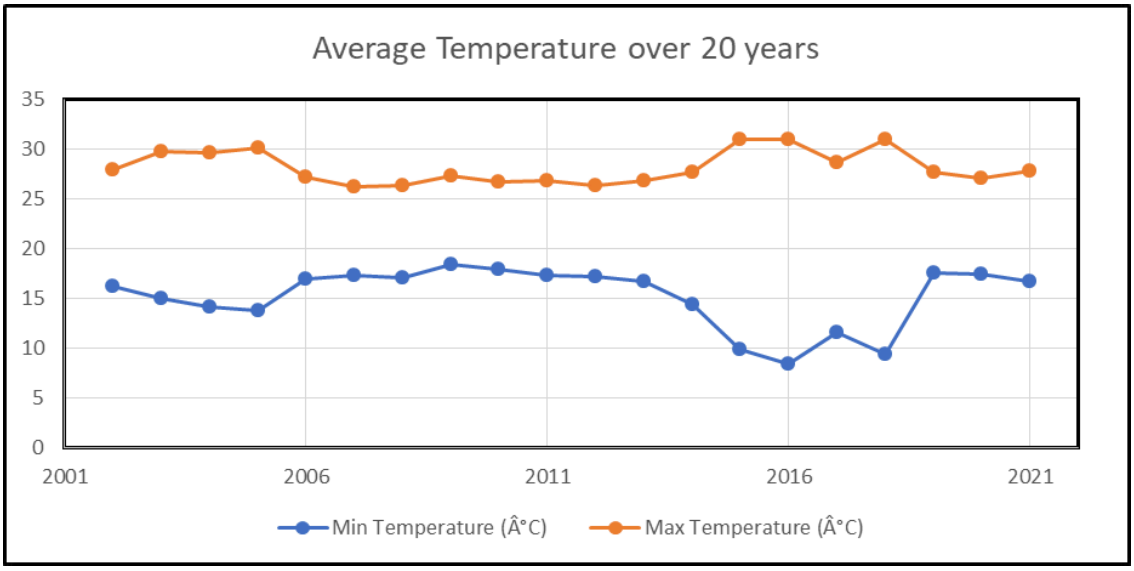
1. **Early 20th Century (1901-1950)**: The majority of years recorded below-average temperatures (relative to the 1971-2000 baseline), shown by shades of blue, indicating a generally cooler climate.

2. **Mid to Late 20th Century (1950-2000)**: This period saw temperature fluctuations, with intermittent warmer years beginning to emerge, signaling a transition phase.

3. **21st Century (2000-2021)**: A sharp and consistent rise in temperatures is observed, marked by deep red hues, reflecting a strong warming trend.

[78] https://ncdc.mohfw.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/20_SAPCCHH_Mizoram_21-10-24.pdf

This warming trend is consistent with global climate change patterns and has significant implications for Mizoram. Rising temperatures can impact agricultural productivity, biodiversity, and water availability while also contributing to an increase in extreme weather events such as prolonged dry spells and intense rainfall. These trends necessitate climate-resilient strategies in agriculture, water management, and urban planning to mitigate potential socio-economic and environmental risks.



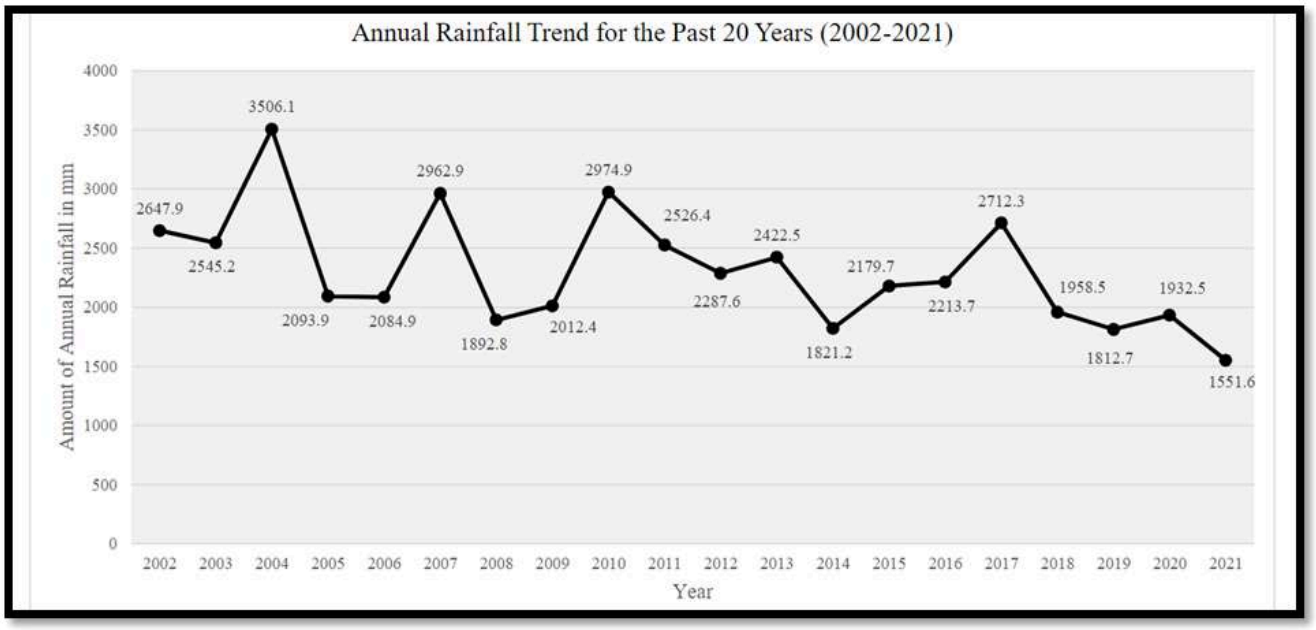
Graph 1 Mizoram State Average Min and Max Temperature, Source: Meteorological data of Mizoram 2021

Above graph shows the average temperature over 20 years from 2002 to 2021 as documented in the Meteorological Data of Mizoram, 2021, published by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Planning & Programme Implementation Department, Government of Mizoram. The average temperature trend over the past 20 years in Mizoram reveals distinct patterns of rising maximum temperatures and fluctuating minimum temperatures. The maximum temperature, represented by the orange line, shows a gradual increase over the years, with occasional dips around 2005 and 2017, but it generally follows an upward trajectory. Notably, a sharp rise in maximum temperature is observed around 2015, exceeding 30°C, indicating warmer summers and extended heat periods in recent years.

Conversely, the minimum temperature, depicted by the blue line, demonstrates greater fluctuations. Between 2002 and 2013, minimum temperatures remained relatively stable, hovering around 15-18°C. However, from 2013 to 2017, a sharp decline is visible, with minimum temperatures dropping significantly, reaching as low as 8°C around 2016. This suggests colder nights and potentially stronger winter cooling effects during this period. Interestingly, after 2018, minimum temperatures show a sudden increase, rising back to around 16-18°C, which could indicate a return to warmer nighttime temperatures or reduced winter severity.

These climate variations highlight a warming trend overall, with hotter summers and fluctuating winter temperatures. Such trends could affect agriculture, biodiversity, and energy consumption, as rising temperatures lead to increased demand for cooling while temperature inconsistencies impact crop cycles. The gradual increase in maximum temperatures suggests an overall warming climate, which may necessitate adaptive measures in urban planning, agriculture, and disaster preparedness to mitigate climate-related risks in Mizoram.

9.4.2 Annual rainfall trend (2002 -2021)



Graph 2 Mizoram State Annual Rainfall, Meteorological Data of Mizoram 2021

The annual rainfall trend in Mizoram over the past 20 years (2002-2021), as documented in the Meteorological Data of Mizoram, 2021, published by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Planning & Programme Implementation Department, Government of Mizoram, highlights significant fluctuations in precipitation levels.

In 2002, Mizoram received 2647.9 mm of rainfall, which slightly declined in 2003 (2545.2 mm). The year 2005 saw a sharp drop to 2093.9 mm, marking a period of relatively lower precipitation. However, 2006 recorded one of the lowest rainfall levels (1892.8 mm) in the two-decade span.

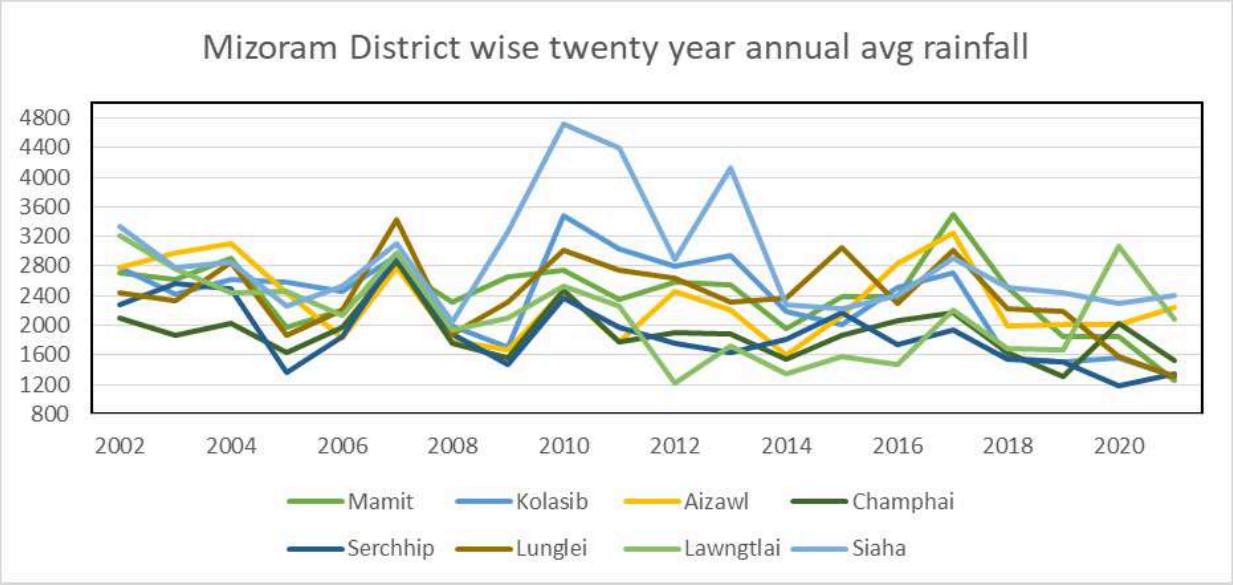
The state experienced a peak in 2007 (3506.1 mm), the highest recorded rainfall in this dataset, indicating extreme monsoonal activity that year.

Between 2010 and 2015, annual rainfall continued to fluctuate significantly, with 2010 receiving 2974.9 mm, followed by 2526.4 mm in 2011, and further reducing to 2287.6 mm in 2012. The period 2013 to 2015 showed a moderate trend, with rainfall ranging between 2422.5 mm (2013) and 2179.7 mm (2014).

From 2016 onward, the state saw another erratic trend, with 2017 recording 2712.3 mm, marking the highest for the latter half of the dataset. However, this was followed by a decline to 1958.5 mm in 2018 and 1812.7 mm in 2019, indicating an overall decreasing trend in recent years. The year 2021 saw the lowest recorded rainfall (1551.6 mm), reflecting a worrying shift toward drier conditions.

These trends indicate increasing climate variability in Mizoram, with significant year-to-year fluctuations that could have serious implications for agriculture, water security, and disaster management.

The decreasing trend in recent years suggests a potential shift in monsoonal patterns, emphasizing the need for adaptive measures in water resource management and sustainable agricultural practices.

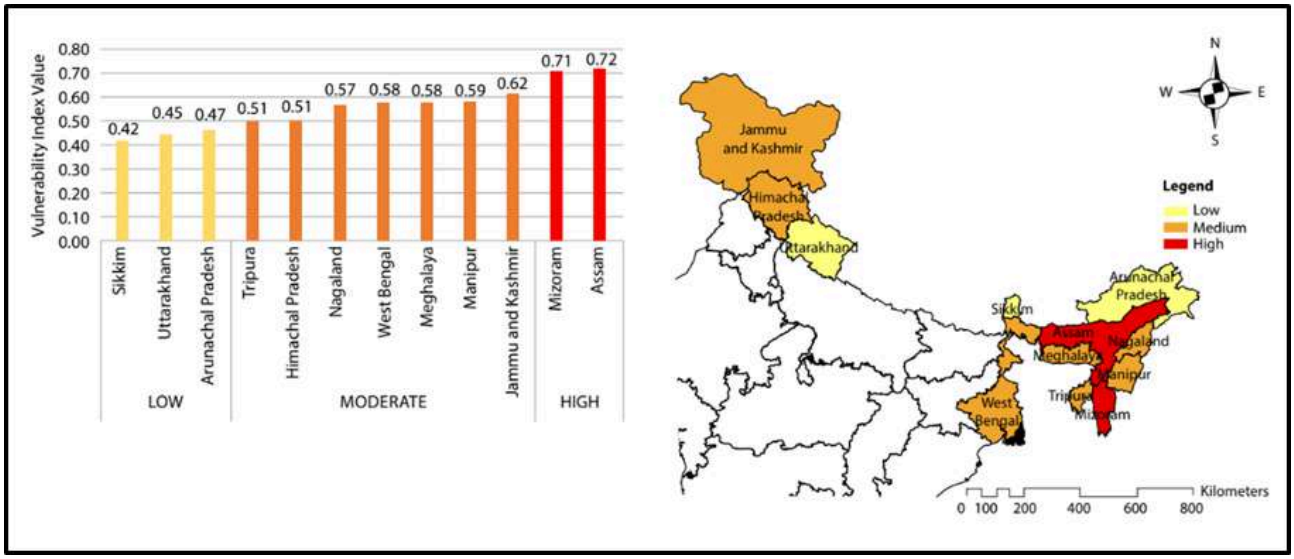


Graph 3 Mizoram State District Wise Annual Rainfall, Meteorological data of Mizoram 2021

Over the past two decades, Mizoram has experienced notable fluctuations in annual rainfall, with significant inter-annual variability posing challenges for water resource management and agricultural planning. Certain districts, particularly in the southern regions like Siaha and Lawngtlai, consistently receive higher rainfall compared to northern districts such as Aizawl and Kolasib.

For instance, in 2021, Siaha recorded 2,401.4 mm of rainfall, whereas Saitual received only 862.9 mm. This geographical disparity highlights the influence of regional topography and climatic factors on precipitation patterns. Additionally, some districts have observed a declining trend in annual rainfall over the years, which may be attributed to changing monsoon patterns and land-use alterations. These inconsistencies underscore the need for adaptive strategies in agriculture and water management to mitigate the impacts of erratic rainfall.

9.4.3 Climate change vulnerability



Pic 2 Climate Change Vulnerability index. Source: http://www.ihcap.in/resources.html

Mizoram ranks among the highest in vulnerability to climate change within the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), with a vulnerability index of 0.71, second only to Assam (Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, 2019). This ranking underscore significant concerns related to environmental and socio-economic sensitivity within the state.

Key factors driving Mizoram's high vulnerability include:

1. Agricultural Sensitivity: Mizoram exhibits the highest yield variability in agriculture, severely impacting food security and livelihoods dependent on farming. Furthermore, the state lacks any coverage under crop insurance schemes, exacerbating vulnerability to climatic shocks.

2. Environmental Challenges: Mizoram has the largest area under open forests and steep terrains, with significant areas exceeding slopes of 30%. This topography makes the state particularly susceptible to soil erosion, landslides, and reduced agricultural productivity.

3. Limited Infrastructure and Connectivity: The state records the third-lowest road density among the IHR states, significantly impacting accessibility, emergency response, and the efficient distribution of resources during climate-induced disasters.

4. Limited Irrigation Facilities: Mizoram holds the second-lowest percentage of irrigated area among the IHR states, heightening its vulnerability to drought conditions and variability in rainfall patterns.

These factors collectively illustrate Mizoram's limited adaptive capacity to climate change, driven primarily by agricultural sensitivity and poor infrastructure. Policy interventions must prioritize improving agricultural resilience through crop diversification, promoting sustainable forestry practices, enhancing irrigation infrastructure, expanding insurance coverage, and investing in better road networks and connectivity. Addressing these vulnerabilities is critical for enhancing the state's resilience to the growing impacts of climate change.

10. Annexure 2 - Status of the health, education, and participatory institutions

10.1 Demographic

According to the 2011 Census, Mizoram's population was 1,091,014, comprising 552,339 males and 538,675 females. The state's sex ratio stood at 976 females per 1,000 males, surpassing the national average of 940 females. With a population density of 52 individuals per square kilometer, Mizoram is sparsely populated. The literacy rate in Mizoram is an impressive 91.33%, higher than the national average of 74.04%, making it the second most literate state in India after Kerala. According to NHM data, the[79] estimated population in 2024 was 1.27 million persons.

According to National Family Health Survey-5 data,[80] in Mizoram, 55 percent of households are located in the urban areas, with an average household size of four members. Approximately 23 percent of households are headed by women, with 19 percent of the population living in female-headed households. A majority of households in Mizoram, about 91 percent, are Christian, while 7 percent follow Buddhism/Neo-Buddhism. Additionally, 95 percent of household heads belong to a scheduled tribe, and 3 percent belong to a scheduled caste. Most households (65%) are nuclear, yet 44 percent of the population resides in non-nuclear households.

More than one-quarter (27%) of Mizoram's population is under age 15, and only 7 percent are aged 65 and over. The overall sex ratio of the population is 1,018 females per 1,000 males, while the sex ratio for the population under 7 years of age is slightly lower, at 1,007 females per 1,000 males. Concerning family dynamics, 8 percent of children under 18 years of age have experienced the death of one or both parents. About 76 percent of children under 18 years live with both parents, 17 percent live with one parent (predominantly with their mother), and 7 percent live with neither parent.[81]

Table 16 Mizoram State Demographic Data

State	Estimated number of households (00) (rural)	Estimated number of households (00) (urban)	Estimated number of households (rural + urban)	Average household size (rural + urban)	Sex ratio (rural + urban)
Mizoram	1189	992	2181	4.7	986
All India	1957710	958113	2915823	4.1	981

[79] https://www.nhmmizoram.org/upload/Mizoram%20Profile.pdf

[80] https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR374/FR374_Mizoram.pdf

[81] Ibid

Based on the data from the Annual Report PLFS 2023-24,[82] as shown in above table, Mizoram has an estimated total of 218,100 households, comprising 118,900 rural and 99,200 urban households. Mizoram's average household size in rural areas (4.8) is higher compared to the all-India rural average (4.4), reflecting the state's tendency towards larger rural family units. Urban households in Mizoram also have a notably larger average size (4.7) compared to the national urban average (3.7), indicating that Mizoram's urban families, unlike many other Indian states, continue to maintain larger family structures similar to their rural counterparts.

Interestingly, Mizoram's sex ratio exhibits a distinct urban-rural contrast: rural Mizoram has a sex ratio of 948 females per 1000 males, slightly lower than the national rural average of 989. However, Mizoram's urban sex ratio is significantly higher at 1034, exceeding the national urban average (962), suggesting female migration towards urban areas within the state. Overall, Mizoram's combined sex ratio (986) is slightly above the national average (981), highlighting relatively better gender balance statewide, driven primarily by a higher urban sex ratio.

Comparing Mizoram to states like Kerala (rural sex ratio 1071, urban 1087), which has achieved gender balance, highlights Mizoram's potential for improvement, particularly in rural gender dynamics and demographic management. This divergence suggests greater gender equity in urban areas compared to rural regions within Mizoram, which warrants policy attention to address rural disparities. It highlights Mizoram's potential for improvement, particularly in rural gender dynamics and demographic management.

A significant majority, 92 percent of residents, possess an Aadhaar card. Nearly all children under 5 years of age (99%) had their births registered with civil authorities, and 98 percent of these children have a birth certificate. At current fertility rates, women with no schooling will have an average of 1.4 more children than women with 12 or more years of schooling.

---

[82] https://www.nhmmizoram.org/upload/Mizoram%20Profile.pdf

10.2 Education

Mizoram boasts one of the highest literacy rates in India, at 91.33% (Census 2011), reflecting its strong emphasis on education. This achievement is largely attributed to community-driven initiatives and active collaboration between the government, churches, and organizations like the Young Mizo Association (YMA).

10.2.1 Rural Literacy

In rural Mizoram, literacy rates are exceptionally high compared to the broader national figures. For individuals aged 7 and above, the literacy rate for males is an impressive 99.3%, while females achieve 96.7%, resulting in an overall literacy rate of 98.1%. The figures for those aged 5 and above are similarly robust, with 98.9% for males and 96.2% for females.

In stark contrast, the All-India rural averages are considerably lower, with male literacy at 84.7% and female literacy at just 70.4% for the 7+ age group, leading to an overall rate of 77.5%. This remarkable performance in rural Mizoram not only highlights the state's effective educational policies and outreach programs but also demonstrates a strong commitment to equitable education across genders, setting a high benchmark for rural literacy nationwide.

10.2.2 Combined (Rural + Urban) Literacy

When both rural and urban populations are combined, Mizoram continues to showcase nearly universal literacy. The combined figures indicate a male literacy rate of 99.2% and a female literacy rate of 97% for persons aged 7 and above, resulting in an overall literacy rate of 98.2%. Similarly high levels are observed in the 5 and above category, with literacy rates slightly trailing but remaining exceptionally high. In contrast, the All India combined data are substantially lower, with overall literacy at 80.9%, and a marked gender gap where male literacy is 87.2% while female literacy lags at 74.6%. These disparities underscore Mizoram's outstanding performance in educational outreach and its success in achieving a high standard of literacy across both urban and rural areas, as well as a relatively small difference between male and female literacy outcomes.

The analysis of the literacy data reveals that Mizoram has achieved a level of educational excellence that far exceeds the national averages. The state's near-universal literacy in both urban and combined settings is indicative of robust educational policies, effective school infrastructure, and widespread community support for learning. Importantly, the minimal gender disparities observed where the literacy gap is only a few percentage points in Mizoram as opposed to a gap of over 10–15 percentage points nationally suggest that both male and female citizens have equitable access to quality education.

The state has implemented programs such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and partnered with local bodies to ensure widespread access to education.

In Mizoram, 36 percent of boys and 30 percent of girls aged 2-4 years attend preschool. Preschool attendance is slightly lower among children in non-nuclear households than nuclear households.

Preschool attendance is higher in households headed by Christians (34%) than Buddhist/Neo-Buddhist (19%). Preschool attendance is highest among Scheduled tribe households (34%). Preschool attendance is higher in households with 6 or more members (35%).

Overall, urban households show slightly higher preschool attendance than rural households. Preschool attendance is highest in Kolasib district (39%) and lowest in Saiha district (22%). Ninety-three percent of children aged 6-17 years in Mizoram attend school. School attendance is almost universal (97%) at age 6-14 years but drops sharply to 79 percent at age 15-17 years. There is no gender disparity in school attendance in the 6-14 years age group. In the age group 15-17 years, 77 percent of girls compared with 80 percent of boys are attending school.[83]

From above Mizoram literacy data, we can see notable progress in education. Looking at the recent data from national surveys provide insight into its school education system (primary to higher secondary) and higher education landscape. The key indicators from the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) 2021-22 for school education, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) for primary-level learning outcomes, and the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020-21 for tertiary education will provide some more insights into education system.

10.2.3 Status of education system in Mizoram

School Education

According to UDISE+ (2023-24),[84] Mizoram has approximately 3,941 schools serving about 293763 students. The state exhibits excellent access at primary levels with a Net Enrolment Rate (NER) at 100%, indicating universal enrolment.[85] However, the Mizoram secondary and higher secondary NER drops drastically to 61.7% and 35.8%.

The drop is slightly more in boys than girls. Mizoram's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the elementary level exceeds 100% for all social groups however the is slight drop at secondary level but at higher secondary level just like NER, GER drops significantly in fact it is lower than national average. The GER for boys at higher secondary is 49.4% and for girls is 57.5% totalling to 53.3%. [86]

The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) in Mizoram's primary schools is impressively low at about 15:1, significantly better than the national average (21:1), ensuring smaller class sizes and individual attention.[87] Infrastructure-wise, 100% of Mizoram's schools have essential facilities such as girls' toilets and electricity, far above national averages, reflecting strong government commitment to education quality.

---

[83] National Family Health Survey 5

[84] https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/udise_report_existing_23_24.pdf

[85] Ibid

[86] Ibid

[87] Ibid

Dropout rates remain a concern, especially at the primary level (4.5% versus the national 1.9%) and upper-primary dropout rate (5.9%) than the national average (5.2%), indicating successful retention through middle school. However, the secondary drop out (14.8%) is slightly more than national average (14.1%) due to girls drop out (14.4%) been significantly higher than boy drop out (15.2%) compared to national average at 12.6% and 15.5% respectively.[88]

According to ASER (2024),[89] Mizoram has shown significant improvements in foundational literacy and numeracy post-COVID-19. By 2024, 67.5% of Class V students could read Class II texts, substantially higher than the national average (44.8%). Numeracy skills improved notably, with 55.3% of Class III students able to solve basic arithmetic[90] tasks, outperforming national figures significantly.

Higher Education

As per AISHE (2021-22)[91] the state's higher education average enrolment is 669 compared to all India average enrolment of 709. Mizoram displays commendable gender equity with a slightly higher female enrolment compared to males, exceeding national gender parity norms. GER stands at 32.3% slightly better for females than males and lot better compared to compare to all India 28.4%. For Mizoram the gender parity index is 1.06 slightly better to all India at 1.01. The student-teacher ratio in Mizoram's higher education institutions is exceptional at approximately 17:1, considerably lower than the national average (23:1).[92]

As of the 2021-2022 academic year, Mizoram's educational infrastructure comprises 1,935 primary schools, 1,544 middle schools, 715 high schools, and 204 higher secondary schools. In higher education, the state has approximately 64 colleges, including institutions like Pachhunga University College and Mizoram College of Nursing. Additionally, Mizoram houses several universities and specialized institutions, such as Mizoram University and the National Institute of Technology Mizoram, contributing to its robust educational framework.

[88] Ibid

[89] https://asercentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ASER_2024_Final-Report_13_2_24.pdf

[90] https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s392049debbe566ca5782a3045cf300a3c/uploads/2024/02/20240719952688509.pdf

[91] https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s392049debbe566ca5782a3045cf300a3c/uploads/2024/02/20240214825688998.pdf

[92] Ibid

10.3 Health

10.3.1 Health status of Mizoram

The health status of Mizoram's population, as reflected in the NFHS-5 (2019-20)[93], reveals a complex scenario marked by improvements in some health indicators alongside persistent challenges. Nutritional deficiencies remain significant, with 28.9% of children under five years exhibiting stunted growth, and 12.7% classified as underweight. Anaemia is notably prevalent, affecting 46.4% of children aged 6-59 months and 34.8% of women aged 15-49 years, indicating widespread nutritional inadequacies. Moreover, adult nutritional status is characterized by a dual burden, with 24.2% of women and 31.9% of men classified as overweight or obese, highlighting emerging lifestyle-related health issues.

The prevalence of non-communicable diseases is evident, with 13.8% of women and 15.4% of men showing elevated blood sugar levels, and 17.7% of women and 25.2% of men experiencing elevated blood pressure. This suggests an increasing risk and burden of chronic conditions within the population. Furthermore, behavioural factors such as high tobacco use 61.6% among women and 72.9% among men contribute significantly to the overall health risk profile of the region. These indicators underscore a complex health landscape in Mizoram, characterized by nutritional challenges, increasing chronic health conditions, and lifestyle-related risks, necessitating targeted public health interventions.

According to NFHS 5,[94] In Mizoram 47% households have any kind of health insurance that covers at least one member of the household. Health insurance coverage is somewhat higher in rural areas (53%) than in urban areas (41%). In Mizoram, one types of programmes dominate: Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), especially in rural areas (88%), followed by the State Health Insurance Scheme (5%). Forty percent of women and 42 percent of men aged 15-49 in Mizoram are covered by any health insurance/financing scheme.

The Mizoram Universal Healthcare Scheme (MUHCS) was introduced in the state from 1st April 2025 to address the state's healthcare challenges and provide comprehensive medical coverage to all residents. The decision to implement this scheme stemmed from a thorough evaluation of Mizoram's healthcare progress over the past five years, which highlighted the need for a more inclusive and efficient system.

Despite financial constraints, the state government prioritized the MUHCS, with assurances of cooperation from financial institutions to ensure its viability.[95] The government has set aside Rs 14.5 crores for first month to settle outstanding healthcare bills.[96]

---

[93] https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR374/FR374_Mizoram.pdf

[94] https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR374/FR374_Mizoram.pdf

[95] https://www.digitalhealthnews.com/mizoram-to-launch-universal-healthcare-scheme-with-inr-5-lakh-annual-cover?

[96] https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/policy/cm-lalduhoma-launches-mizoram-universal-healthcare-scheme-in-aizawl/119279658?

Key Features of the MUHCS:

- **Comprehensive Coverage:** The scheme offers healthcare coverage up to ₹5,00,000 per family, encompassing pre-existing conditions and hospitalization expenses.

- **Cashless and Paperless Transactions:** Beneficiaries can avail themselves of cashless treatment at state-run hospitals, primary healthcare centres, and empanelled private or church-run hospitals. The system is designed to be paperless, enhancing efficiency and reducing administrative burdens.

- **Eligibility and Enrolment:** All bona fide residents of Mizoram are eligible. The annual registration fee is set at ₹2,500 per family, with government employees and civil pensioners contributing through deductions from their monthly income.

- **Implementation Strategy:** The scheme is set to commence on April 1, 2025. Preparations include upgrading government health facilities, recruiting additional medical personnel such as doctors, specialists, nurses, and technicians, and ensuring the functionality of intensive care units (ICUs) that were previously non-operational.

- **Institutional Framework:** The Mizoram State Health Care Society (MSHCS), which currently manages the AB PM-JAY, will oversee the MUHCS. A Universal Health Coverage Council (UHCC) will be established to provide policy direction and coordinate between different departments.

10.3.2 Status of healthcare in Mizoram

The state witness rapid growth of private healthcare facilities mostly in the urban areas while rural areas are simply dependent on public sector healthcare facilities which are generally poor in infrastructure and services. One important finding is that blocks located in the northern part of the state are generally better off than blocks located in the south. This is mainly due to early start of healthcare in the north and unequal distribution of population.

Dispensaries and Primary Health Centres in Mizoram started as early as in 1890s when the British came to Mizoram and over the last two centuries it has undergone several changes to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services. After attaining statehood in 1987 the emphasis was on the expansion of the healthcare establishment. However, it was realised that mere expansion of healthcare services across the state did not provide adequate facility. It required also sound geographical distribution of healthcare facilities, ideal location and population coverage of health centre and quality rather than quantity especially on healthcare services. (Lalmalsawmzauva, 2014)

Eighty-six percent of births take place in a health facility (mostly a government facility) and 14 percent take place at home. The percentage of births in a health facility increased in the 4 years, from 80 percent (NFHS-4) to 86 percent (NFHS-5).

The infant mortality rate in Mizoram in NFHS-5 is estimated at 21 deaths before the age of one year per 1,000 live births, down from the NFHS-4 estimate of 40, the NFHS-3 estimate of 34, and NFHS-2 estimate of 37.

The under-five mortality rate (U5MR) in Mizoram is estimated to be 24 deaths before the five years of age per 1,000 live births, down since NFHS-4 (46 deaths per 1,000 live births).

Sixty-four percent of children under 6 years received services of some kind from an anganwadi centre in the 12 months preceding the survey. The most common services that age-eligible children receive are supplementary food (64%), growth monitoring (62%), health check-ups (49%), and early childhood care or preschool (57%). The service that is least likely to be accessed is immunizations (28%). Seventy percent of men, and slightly less than half of women (48%), age 15-49 use some form of tobacco. In Mizoram, among adults aged 15-49, 1 percent of women and 30 percent of men drinks alcohol.

10.3.3 Healthcare infrastructure in Mizoram

The healthcare system[97] in Mizoram consists of a mix of government and private institutions spread across its districts. The infrastructure data from the provided table highlights the availability of medical facilities such as hospitals, health centres, and clinics, which serve as the backbone of public health services in the state.

Table 17 Healthcare Infrastructure in Mizoram Source: SAPCCHH Mizoram

District	Private Hospitals	Medical College	District Hospital	Sub-District Hospital	CHC	PHC	UPHC	Sub Centres	Clinics
Aizawl East	9	1	1	1	2	3	3	41	31
Aizawl West	7	0	1	0	1	3	3	34	26
Champhai	2	0	1	0	0	5	1	32	15
Hnahthial	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	16	5
Khawzawl	0	0	0	0	1	4	0	19	10
Kolasib	1	0	1	0	1	5	0	26	9
Lawngtlai	2	0	0	0	1	6	0	35	18
Lunglei	4	0	1	1	0	6	2	57	16
Mamit	0	0	1	0	1	10	0	40	10
Saitual	0	0	1	0	1	5	0	27	9
Serchhip	1	0	1	0	1	5	0	28	7
Saiha	1	0	1	0	0	4	0	24	14
Total	27	1	9	2	9	61	9	379	170

[97] https://ncdc.mohfw.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/20_SAPCCHH_Mizoram_21-10-24.pdf

Key Observations

1. District Hospitals: Mizoram has 12 district hospitals, ensuring that each district has at least one major government-run healthcare facility.

2. Medical College: The state has only one medical college, located in Aizawl East, making it a central hub for medical education and advanced healthcare services.

3. Private Hospitals: There are 27 private hospitals, with the highest concentration in Aizawl East (9) and Aizawl West (7), indicating that private healthcare is more developed in urban areas.

4. Primary Healthcare Centres (PHC) and Community Health Centres (CHC): Mizoram has 61 PHCs and 9 CHCs, playing a crucial role in primary healthcare delivery, particularly in rural areas.

5. Urban Primary Health Centres (UPHCs): There are 9 UPHCs, mostly located in urban districts like Aizawl East, Aizawl West, and Lunglei.

6. Sub-Centres: The state has 379 sub-centres, which are vital for providing last-mile healthcare services to remote populations.

7. Clinics: A total of 170 clinics operate across the state, supplementing hospital-based healthcare services.

Regional Disparities in Healthcare Infrastructure

- Aizawl East and Aizawl West have the highest number of hospitals, clinics, and advanced healthcare facilities, reflecting urban concentration.

- Districts like Khawzawl, Hnahthial, and Saitual have very limited private healthcare options and depend primarily on government-run facilities.

- Champhai, Lawngtlai, and Lunglei have a relatively higher number of sub-centres and PHCs, indicating an emphasis on rural healthcare outreach.

- Saiha and Mamit have the least developed healthcare facilities, with no private hospitals or UPHCs, making accessibility a challenge.

In addition to public healthcare, private institutions like the Synod Hospital in Durtlang, managed by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod, play a critical role.

Synod Hospital, founded in 1928, has a capacity of 355 beds and offers a range of medical services, significantly contributing to the state's healthcare infrastructure.

Health Services *and Hospital Medical & Medical Education* was bifurcated in the year 2004 from the Health & Family Welfare Department. It is controlling rural health institutions i.e., Principal Medical Office, Kulikawn, Community Health Centres (CHCs), Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Sub-Centres (SCs) and Rural Hospital, Tlabung and all District Medical Offices.

At present, two cities are covered under National Urban Health Mission with no metro & no million plus city in the state. Mizoram has been able to provide RMNCHA+N services with major focus on primary and secondary care services under the NHM.

To improve healthcare services, the Mizoram Health Systems Strengthening Project (MHSSP), launched in 2021 with World Bank support, focuses on enhancing management capacities and improving service quality. Despite these efforts, challenges remain, especially in rural areas, where healthcare facilities are less accessible, leading to disparities in service availability.

Further developments include Mizoram's upcoming healthcare scheme, initiated through a loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank, aimed at providing universal healthcare coverage for residents, including government employees and pensioners.

Image Source

10.4 Social capital, institutional inclusions, and inclusivity in Mizoram

Mizoram's unique social capital is deeply influenced by various institutions that have played pivotal roles in shaping its socio-political and cultural landscape. Central to this are the church, the Young Mizo Association (YMA), and the Mizoram People's Forum (MPF), alongside significant transformations brought about by colonial and missionary interventions in education and healthcare.

10.4.1 The Role of the Church and Missionaries

Historically, the church has been a cornerstone in Mizoram, initiating peace negotiations during insurgencies and integrating modern values through the spread of Christianity. This integration has significantly altered traditional practices and community structures, introducing a new social order where traditional and modern practices coexist and interact (Singh, Invented Scripts, Missionaries and Officials in Colonial Mizoram, 2021).

Currently the Mizoram social, political and economic life is influenced directly or indirectly by the church and the biggest amongst them is the presbyterian church. The Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod, boasts a membership of 628,719 individuals, with women slightly outnumbering men (324,415 females to 304,304 males). Its extensive organizational structure includes 1,140 local churches, grouped into 298 pastorates and governed by 47 presbyteries. Leadership within the Synod is composed of 588 ministers and 5,816 elders, ensuring a well-organized system to guide its spiritual and community activities.

The church places significant emphasis on youth and women's participation, evidenced by its 165,089 Youth Fellowship members and 192,490 Women Fellowship members. Additionally, it is deeply involved in spiritual education through its Sunday School programs, which cater to 444,059 students under the guidance of 56,815 teachers. These figures reflect the church's substantial role in shaping the moral and educational development of its members.

The Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod actively contributes to social services. Its healthcare initiatives are led by the Synod Hospital, employing 342 workers to provide medical care to the community. The church also operates educational institutions, such as Aizawl Theological College and Mizoram Christian College, which play a pivotal role in higher education and leadership training. Social welfare activities include managing rescue homes for vulnerable individuals, orphanages, and family counselling centres, highlighting its commitment to addressing societal challenges.

Missionary efforts also led to the establishment of the first schools and healthcare facilities in the region, which were pivotal in transitioning from traditional to modern practices. These institutions not only provided new forms of knowledge but also redefined health and education paradigms within the community. The introduction of modern healthcare and educational institutions catalysed a shift from traditional healing and educational practices to more structured forms, significantly affecting the social capital of Mizoram (Singh, Invented Scripts, Missionaries and Officials in Colonial Mizoram, 2021).

Other prominent denominations, like the Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army, also contribute to social and spiritual development.

Collectively, these churches influence elections (through organizations like the Mizoram People's Forum), education (running schools and colleges), and welfare (supporting orphans, widows, and those in need). Churches also serve as unifying institutions, fostering community cohesion and historically, preserving Mizo culture and language. For instance, missionaries and colonial officials introduced the Lushai script, which played a crucial role in educational and religious developments, thereby creating a new linguistic and religious identity within the community (Singh, Invented Scripts, Missionaries and Officials in Colonial Mizoram, 2021).

10.4.2 Role of Young Mizo Association

The Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizoram's largest voluntary organization established in 1935, has been actively addressing pressing social, cultural, and environmental concerns in recent years. It has prioritized education by implementing literacy initiatives and skill enhancement programs, such as free computer training and vocational courses, to equip the youth with employable skills.

On the environmental front, YMA has been a key contributor to the "Green Mizoram" campaign, organizing annual tree-planting events to promote afforestation since 1974. The organization has also played a crucial role in tackling substance abuse through partnerships with law enforcement and other agencies to curb drug and alcohol issues.

Culturally, YMA has taken strides in preserving traditional practices by revitalizing festivals like Chapchar Kut and encouraging the use of Mizo language and traditional attire through workshops and community efforts.

The YMA has played a significant role in addressing migration and refugee-related challenges in Mizoram, particularly concerning the influx of Chin refugees from Myanmar. Following the Myanmar coup in 2021, thousands of Chin refugees fled to Mizoram seeking safety and support. The YMA, as the largest non-governmental organization in the state, took proactive measures to accommodate these refugees, despite the absence of a formal policy for refugee management.

The YMA actively monitors the work permits of individuals employed in Mizoram, ensuring compliance with state regulations. They collaborate with central government agencies to oversee and regulate migration, maintaining a balance between welcoming migrants and safeguarding local interests.

The role played by YMA is varied and numerous. Their influence can be felt in different spheres of life. These varied roles played by YMA is said to have been carried out by the ideology of tlawmngaihna. It is a Mizo term which literally means helping others who need help. When practised in its true sense it unites the community (Ralte, 2017).

[98] In villages like Khawbung and Farkawn, the YMA facilitated the settlement of refugees through different approaches. In Khawbung, the YMA integrated refugees into village life by housing them in shared or rented accommodations, allowing them to participate in local cultural practices and rituals, fostering a sense of belonging. In contrast, the YMA in Farkawn established a dedicated refugee camp to efficiently manage resources, ensure health services, and provide better protection for children

Furthermore, YMA serves as a mediator between the government and the public, often advocating for policies that safeguard Mizo identity and addressing governance challenges. These reflect YMA's significant role in promoting development, cultural preservation, and social reform within Mizoram.

10.4.3 Role of Mizoram People's Forum

The Mizoram People's Forum (MPF), established in 2006 by prominent churches and civil society organizations in Mizoram, is a vital institution promoting ethical governance and social harmony. MPF plays a pivotal role in ensuring free and fair elections by collaborating with political parties to enforce a strict code of conduct, prohibiting extravagant campaigns, bribery, and unethical practices. It emphasizes issue-based discussions and informed voter participation, helping maintain Mizoram's reputation for peaceful and corruption-free elections.

Beyond electoral reforms, MPF acts as a mediator, fostering unity and addressing social conflicts among communities, thereby contributing to Mizoram's social stability. Its close association with church institutions grants it significant moral authority, amplifying its influence in advocating for transparency, inclusiveness, and ethical political practices. The MPF's initiatives have strengthened democratic processes in Mizoram while promoting governance rooted in justice and social equity.

10.4.4 Impact of the Young Mizo Association and Mizoram People's Forum

Institutions like the YMA and MPF have been instrumental in shaping governance and political culture in Mizoram. The MPF, backed by the church, has established a unique form of governance where electoral integrity is closely monitored to ensure fair practices, reflecting a model where religious directives significantly influence political processes (Singh, Politics of divine edict and reverse secularism, 2012). Similarly, the YMA acts as a socio-political bridge, supporting community initiatives and serving as a cultural custodian, which underscores its role in reinforcing Mizo identity and solidarity.

10.5 Village Councils and Autonomous District Councils

10.5.1 Village Councils in Mizoram – Structure and Role

Mizoram's rural local governance is built on Village Councils (VCs), which function analogously to Panchayati Raj institutions in other states. Thus, Mizoram did not implement the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (Panchayati Raj) – instead, traditional Village Councils have been constituted in all districts to serve as the grassroots administrative bodies. Village Councils were introduced in the 1950s (replacing hereditary chiefs) under the Assam Lushai Hills District (Village Councils) Act, 1953 and continue under Mizoram's legislation. They are one-tier elected bodies (no intermediate panchayats) directly responsible for village governance.

Each Village Council consists of a president, vice-president, and members elected by the villagers (the number of members varies by village population). Elections are now held regularly under the oversight of the State Election Commission (since reforms in 2014) to ensure democratic functioning.

As of 2017, Mizoram had a total of 812 Village Councils – 536 VCs in areas outside the Sixth Schedule ADCs and 276 VCs within ADC jurisdictions. (The Sixth Schedule areas have their own Village Councils under the respective ADCs.) Notably, urban areas are administered separately; for example, Aizawl city has Local Councils at the locality level and an elected municipal corporation (established 2010, upgraded to corporation in 2015).

Village Councils are responsible for local administration and community welfare. By law, key functions include allocation of land for jhum (shifting) cultivation each year among households and enforcement of "hnatlang", the Mizo tradition of community labour for the common good. VCs also look after village sanitation, maintenance of paths, and can mediate minor disputes using customary norms. They coordinate implementation of rural development schemes at the village level (e.g. verifying beneficiaries for government programs) and mobilize community participation.

Recent amendments introduced the concept of Village Assemblies to improve citizen engagement VCs must hold open village meetings at least three times a year (with 10% quorum) to involve residents in planning and overseeing development projects. Despite these responsibilities, the actual powers of Village Councils are limited by their dependence on state departments for funds and approval.

Many development functions (aside from programs like MGNREGA) are handled by line agencies, with VCs mainly in a supervisory or advisory role. Moreover, Village Council decisions and even existence can be influenced by higher authorities – the state government retains the ability to dissolve or reconstitute VCs, reflecting a hierarchical relationship.

Financially, VCs have very narrow revenue sources and rely on grants (State Finance Commission recommendations apply, but Mizoram's VCs lack independent taxation powers beyond token fees). In summary, VCs form the base of grassroots governance in Mizoram, providing local administration and a forum for participatory decision-making, albeit with constrained autonomy and capacity challenges.

10.6 Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) – Structure and Functions

Mizoram contains three Autonomous District Councils constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution: the Chakma ADC, Mara ADC, and Lai ADC. All three were created in 1972 (when Mizoram became a Union Territory) to give tribal minorities self-governing powers in their traditional areas. The Sixth Schedule framework grants these councils legislative, executive, and limited judicial authority over specified subjects.

Each ADC has a council composed of members elected from constituencies in the autonomous district, along with a few nominated members (to represent unrepresented communities or expertise). Elections are held every five years. The council elects a Chief Executive Member (CEM) who heads an Executive Committee (akin to a cabinet) responsible for day-to-day administration of the district. The ADCs in Mizoram govern the following areas:

- **Chakma ADC (CADC)** – for the Chakma tribe, headquartered at Kamalanagar in southwestern Mizoram.
- **Mara ADC (MADC)** – for the Mara (Lakher) tribe in Siaha district (southern Mizoram).
- **Lai ADC (LADC)** – for the Lai (Pawi) tribe in Lawngtlai district (southern Mizoram).

Each ADC has various departments (e.g. education, forest, rural development, etc.) to administer services in its jurisdiction. They also oversee Village Councils within their district (village administration in Sixth Schedule areas is subject to ADC laws).

Under the Sixth Schedule provisions, Mizoram's ADCs exercise considerable autonomy in local matters:

- **Legislative powers** – ADCs can make laws on topics like land use and allotment, management of forests (other than reserved forests), agriculture, village administration, inheritance and customary law, and social customs of the tribes. They can also establish village-level rules and regulations (e.g., market management, sanitation, village courts) in alignment with traditional practices. Any laws passed by an ADC require the assent of the Governor of Mizoram to take effect.

- **Executive powers** – ADCs administer their districts with control over departments of local governance. They implement development schemes (schools, healthcare centres, roads, etc.) funded through budget allocations or grants. They have the authority to allocate resources, sanction projects, and manage staff for subjects under their jurisdiction. Law and order and major development programs are generally handled in coordination with the state government, but ADCs play a leading role in tribal welfare and area-specific projects.

- **Judicial powers** – ADCs can establish village courts or district courts (not part of the regular state judiciary) to adjudicate minor cases arising from customary law or local disputes. These traditional courts handle issues like petty civil disputes, inheritance cases, or disputes over customary practices among tribal members, using the tribe's customary laws. More serious criminal or civil cases are dealt with by state courts, but the existence of ADC courts ensures accessible justice in local languages and customs for small matters.

Importantly, ADCs serve as vehicles for cultural and identity preservation. They promote tribal languages, festivals, and social institutions through official support. For example, curricula in ADC-run schools can incorporate local history and language. This autonomy has helped protect minority tribes from being culturally assimilated by the majority Mizos.

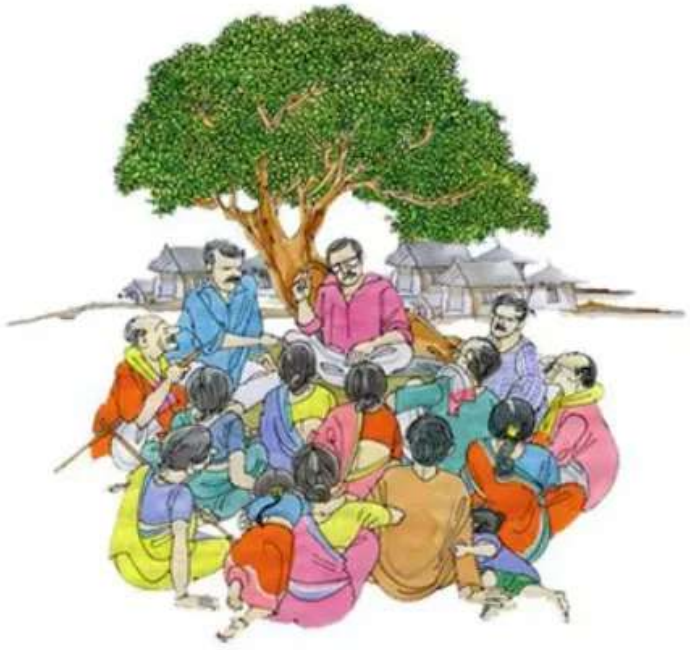
10.6.1 Relationship with state government

Autonomous District Councils in Mizoram operate in a semi-independent manner within their territory, but they are still under the aegis of the state. The Mizoram government (through the District Council Affairs Department) channels funds to the ADCs and can guide broad policy. Coordination mechanisms exist to align ADC laws with state and national laws where needed.

In practice, the ADCs handle local affairs while the state handles overarching matters (like law & order, major infrastructure, etc.) even in ADC areas. There are occasional jurisdictional frictions for instance, overlaps in subjects or disputes over the extent of ADC authority have occurred. The Governor of Mizoram has special oversight in Sixth Schedule areas and can mediate or approve certain ADC actions, reinforcing accountability.

Financially, ADCs depend on allocations from state and central governments; they have limited taxation powers (they may levy local taxes like land revenue, market fees, etc., but these are modest). This dependency can constrain their autonomy, as insufficient funds often hamper projects. Despite challenges, the ADCs are a critical layer of governance: they bring administration closer to people in remote tribal areas and ensure that governance is culturally sensitive and participatory at the local level.

The existence of Village Councils under ADCs means that even in those tribal regions, there is a two-tier local self-governance: the village level and the district (ADC) level. Overall, Mizoram's ADCs exemplify decentralized governance aimed at empowering ethnic minorities, while functioning within the constitutional framework of the state.



10.7 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Mizoram

The Self-Help Group (SHG) movement, particularly among women, has gained significant momentum in Mizoram over the last decade. Supported by government livelihood programs like the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, and National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), thousands of rural women have been organized into SHGs focused on savings, credit activities, and entrepreneurship.

As per official NRLM data,[99] Mizoram has 9,023 SHGs, 64,027 members. This indicates that tens of thousands of rural households are now engaged in SHGs for mutual financial support. Notably, 1,796 SHGs predated NRLM, with the rest formed or revived in the past decade, showing the rapid expansion of the movement. Each SHG in Mizoram typically has 7–10 members and is federated into higher-level bodies such as Village Organizations (VOs) and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs). These federations provide additional training, credit access, and institutional support. Government support and financial inclusion play a crucial role in strengthening SHGs. Under NRLM, locally implemented by the Mizoram State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MzSRLM), SHGs receive multi-stage financial and technical support. Eligible SHGs receive a Revolving Fund (RF) of ₹15,000–₹20,000 as seed money to build their corpus and start internal lending. They also gain access to the Community Investment Fund (CIF) through their federations, which can be used as low-interest loans for livelihood activities.

A major goal is linking SHGs with banks for loans. Out of 10,195 SHGs mentioned at DAY-NRLM website[100] about 3,821 SHGs, or 37.5% of the total, have been credit-linked with banks. Approximately 4,072 SHGs have their loan details mapped, indicating that many have completed at least one loan cycle. These loans are used for activities such as piggery, poultry farming, handicrafts, tailoring, and running small businesses. The relatively low percentage of credit-linked SHGs compared to other states is due to banking access challenges in remote areas and the fact that many SHGs are still building financial capacity. The Mizoram Rural Bank and other institutions are working to expand access, with over 99% of SHGs now having bank accounts.

Mizoram's SHGs have mobilized significant savings, creating a self-sustaining internal lending system. Many have benefited from interest subvention schemes that lower loan interest rates to 0% or 4% under NRLM.

The PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprise (PM FME) Scheme,[101] launched by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), provides financial, technical, and business support for upgrading micro food processing enterprises. The scheme supports SHGs in capital investment, GST registration, FSSAI hygiene standards, and branding. Under this scheme, ₹84,09,451 has been released in Mizoram to support SHGs under MzSRLM and SLTI/MFPRTC.

---

[99] https://nrlm.gov.in/shgOuterReports.do?methodName=showDistrictPage&encd=22&stateName=MIZORAM

[100] https://uatbanklinkage.lokos.in/UI/AnalyticalReports/nrlmshgmapped.aspx#:~:text=21%20MIZORAM%2010195%2010189%2099,25%202450

[101] https://planning.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2024/02/6818f21601fe2820611f0f80b7fe3037/economic-survery-of-mizoram-2023-24.pdf

SHGs have also been supported under the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM), which has extended SHG-based livelihood models to urban poor communities, particularly in Aizawl. Since inception, 1,648 SHGs have been formed under DAY-NULM, including 75 new SHGs in 2023-24.
A revolving fund of ₹10,000 has been provided to 39 SHGs older than three months, while 67 Area Level Federations (ALFs) have been formed, of which 25 ALFs received ₹50,000 in financial support.[102]

Skill training has been an essential component of SHG development. Members have been trained in food processing, cane and bamboo craft, mushroom cultivation, baking, handicrafts, and vermicomposting. Since 2020, SHGs have also been able to sell their products on Flipkart and Amazon, expanding their market reach. The Self-Employment Programme (SEP) under NULM provides interest-subsidized loans to individuals and groups for setting up self-employment ventures. In 2023-24, 14 SHGs received loans under SEP, while 250 SHGs have benefited since the scheme's inception.[103] SHGs have transformed rural and urban communities by improving livelihoods, financial inclusion, and women's empowerment.

In Mizoram, SHGs have helped women start income-generating activities such as weaving traditional Mizo puan, tailoring, food processing, piggery, poultry farming, horticulture, and running small grocery shops. These activities provide financial independence and reduce reliance on traditional jhum agriculture. Access to SHG credit has helped women avoid dependency on moneylenders, breaking cycles of debt. Women's empowerment has been one of the most significant achievements of the SHG movement. Traditionally, while Mizo women have been active in society, leadership roles were dominated by men. SHGs provide women with platforms for leadership at the grassroots level.

Image Source

[102] Ibid

[103] Ibid

Each SHG has a woman leader (President or Secretary) managing finances and interfacing with officials. This experience is helping women develop skills in bookkeeping, decision-making, and public speaking. Federations of SHGs also give women a louder voice to demand village improvements and address social issues such as domestic violence and alcoholism. The Mizoram government actively tracks SHG performance through MzSRLM, with thousands of SHGs receiving revolving funds and cumulative credit mobilization exceeding several crores of rupees. Special projects like the Northeast Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP), a World Bank-funded initiative that operated from 2012 to 2019, helped form SHGs in targeted districts, laying the groundwork for NRLM's expansion.

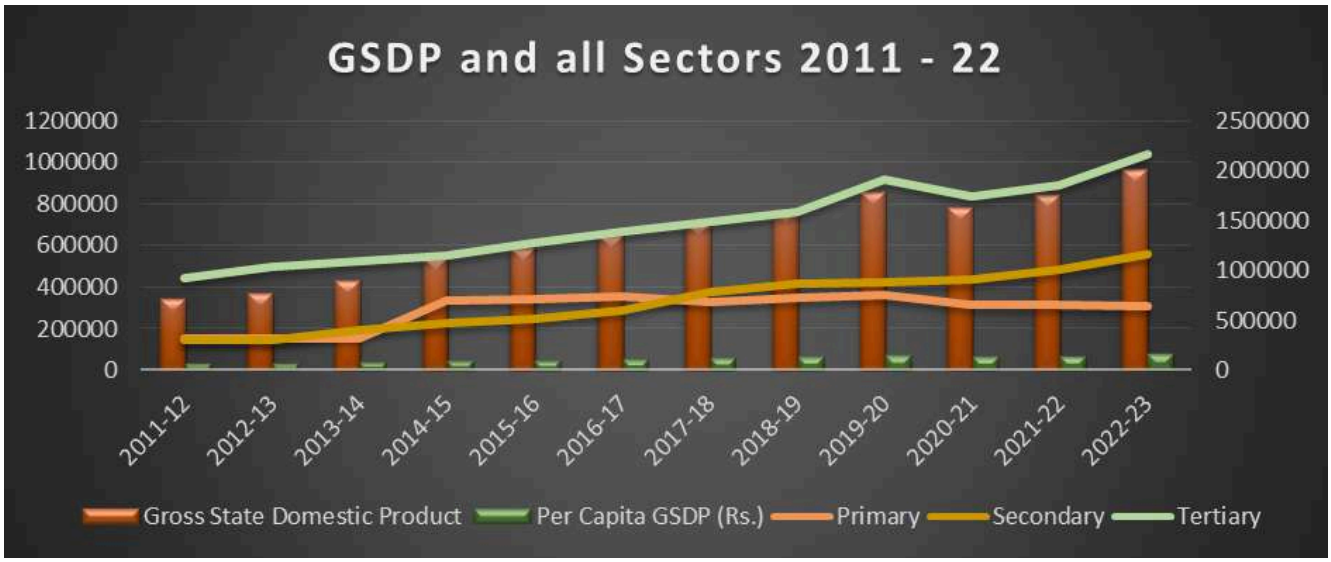
Table 18 Summary of Financial and Institutional Support for SHGs in Mizoram (2023-24)

Scheme	Support Provided	Amount/Beneficiaries
PM FME Scheme	Financing for SHG capital investment	₹84,09,451
DAY-NULM SHG Formation	New SHGs formed in 2023-24	75
Bank Linkage (NRLM)	SHGs linked to banks for micro-loans	3,821 SHGs

Image Source

11. Annexure 3 - Status of the Economy

11.1 GSDP overall and by Sector



Graph 4 All Sector GSVA Performance, overall GSDP, per capita GSDP from 2011 to 2022
Source: https://mospi.gov.in/GSVA-NSVA

The above graph 4 provides the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)[104] of Mizoram at 2011-12 prices shows a consistent upward trend from 2011-12 to 2022-23, indicating steady economic growth. The GSDP increased from ₹7258.7 crore in 2011-12 to ₹20,173 crore demonstrating significant expansion over the years. The growth trajectory appears smooth, with notable jumps in 2014-15, 2017-18, and 2022-23, suggesting periods of heightened economic activity, possibly due to increased government spending, infrastructure development, or improved productivity in key sectors.

The Tertiary sector, beginning at ₹4500 crore in 2011-12, maintains consistent growth, exceeding ₹8000 crore by 2022-23, highlighting its dominant role in economic expansion. Likewise, the Secondary sector demonstrated substantial progress, rising from ₹1500 crore to ₹4000 crore during the same period.[105] In stark contrast, the Primary sector, particularly agriculture, has remained largely stagnant, fluctuating around ₹3000 crore post-2015, without any significant growth. This persistent stagnation in agriculture signals a concerning structural imbalance, wherein economic growth is increasingly driven by industry and services, while agriculture the backbone of rural livelihoods fails to achieve proportionate development.

Mizoram has a lot more potential, but connectivity is a major issue. Strategic infrastructure projects are set to catalyze further economic expansion. The Bairabi–Sairang railway line, a 51-km railway project, slated for completion by July 2025, will integrate Mizoram more effectively with regional and national markets, reducing logistical bottlenecks and lowering transportation costs for goods and services.

[104] https://mospi.gov.in/GSVA-NSVA

[105] Ibid

Enhanced connectivity is expected to stimulate industrial activities, boost trade flows, and generate employment, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, small-scale manufacturing, and logistics. As Mizoram strengthens its economic foundations, these infrastructural advancements signal a shift toward greater market integration, investment inflows, and enhanced economic resilience, positioning the state as a regional growth hub in Northeast India.

11.1.1 Economic Overview

Over the past 15 years, Mizoram's economy has expanded consistently, with its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) reaching ₹39,356 crore in 2023–24 and projected to rise to ₹48,038 crore in 2024–25.[106] This 22% annual growth reflects economic resilience and post-pandemic recovery, driven predominantly by the service sector. Among the three main economic sectors, the Tertiary Sector continues to dominate, maintaining the highest share of GSDP and underscoring Mizoram's service-oriented economic structure, which accounts for over 54% of GSVA.[107]

While economic expansion has remained steady, Mizoram's fiscal landscape is shaped by expenditure control, debt management, and reliance on central transfers. The state successfully reduced its fiscal deficit from 7% of GSDP in 2022–23 to an estimated 2.8% in 2024–25,[108] but a slowdown in capital outlay and public investments raises concerns about long-term growth sustainability.

Mizoram's economic future hinges on sectoral diversification, infrastructure investment, and policy-driven modernization. Strengthening industrial capacity, addressing agricultural inefficiencies, and enhancing transport connectivity will be essential for sustained and inclusive growth. Mizoram current government perhaps understanding the issues with regards to stagnation of primary sector has put forward their flagship program – 'Handholding Scheme for Sustainable Livelihood'.

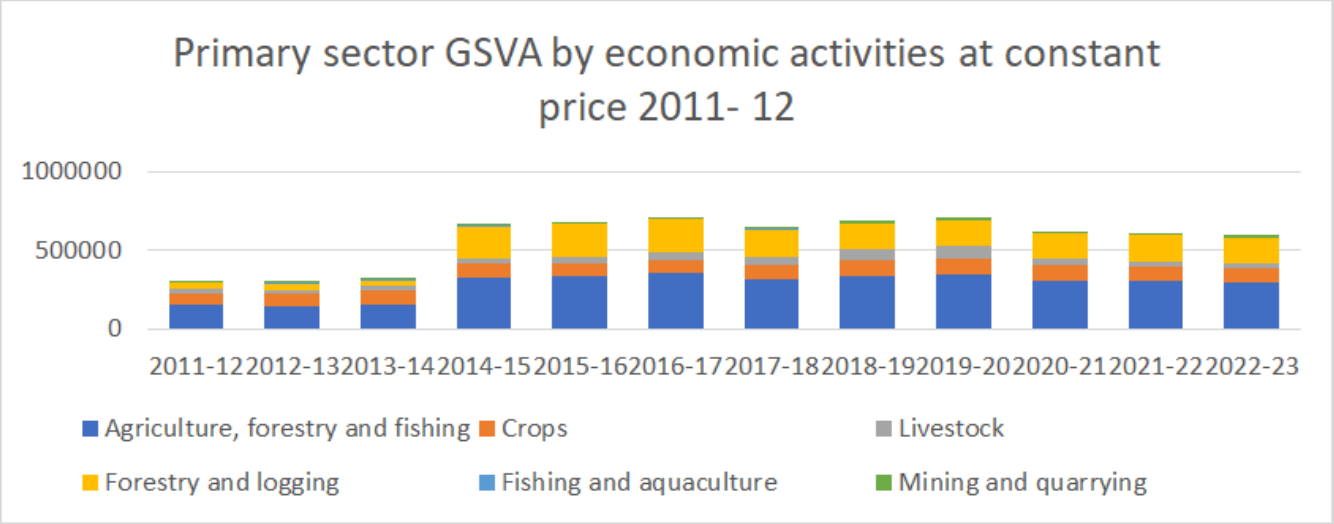
A significant number of farmers lack access to modern agricultural techniques and face difficulties in adapting to changing climatic conditions, resulting in lower yields and income instability. All this while Mizoram is naturally endowed with geo-climatic conditions favourable for agriculture, horticulture and floriculture production with forward linkages in the agro processing industry, coupled with very low crime rates and high social harmony which has the potential to scale up the State fast in the development ladder.

[106] https://prsindia.org/budgets/states/mizoram-budget-analysis-2024-25

[107] https://mospi.gov.in/GSVA-NSVA

[108] Ibid

11.1.2 Primary Sector: Agriculture, Forestry, and Allied Activities



Graph 5 Primary Sector GSVA By Economic Activities at constant price 2011 -12
Source: https://mospi.gov.in/GSVA-NSVA

With over half of the population relying on agriculture as their primary source of income, accelerating agricultural growth is essential for raising rural incomes and stimulating non-agricultural activities, thereby addressing the rural-urban economic divide. In recent years, horticulture and floriculture have gained momentum, demonstrating notable improvements in production levels.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) in agriculture saw a dramatic shift, improving from a negative 2.36% in 2012-13 to a peak of 30.09% in 2014-15, before slowing to 6.76% in 2022-23. While the crops, livestock, and forestry sectors exhibited fluctuating growth patterns between 2014-15 and 2018-19, the fisheries sector maintained steady expansion from 2013-14, only to decline after 2017-18. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this downturn, with fisheries recording a historic low growth rate of -1.63% in 2020-21 the worst performance in the past eleven years.

The agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector's contribution to GSVA experienced a gradual rise, growing from 20.12% in 2011-12 to 25.93% in 2020-21, before showing a slight decline afterward. This increase was largely driven by Forestry & Logging, whose share in GSVA expanded from 5.17% in 2011-12 to 11.78% in 2022-23, peaking at 18.83% in 2014-15. In contrast, the Crops and Fisheries sectors have steadily declined, with their shares dropping from 10.21% and 0.65% in 2011-12 to 6.35% and 0.25% in 2022-23, respectively. Similarly, the livestock sector saw a sharp contraction, with its GSVA share falling from 4.08% in 2011-12 to just 1.77% in 2022-23.[109]

About 55% of the total workforce engaged either directly or indirectly in agriculture however, agriculture & allied sector contributed about 25% of GSVA.[110] This structural decline in key agricultural sub-sectors, despite the resilience of forestry, underscores the urgent need for modernization, diversification, and investment in agricultural sustainability.

[109] Ibid

[110] NABARD State Focus Paper Mizoram 2024 - 25

Despite occasional spikes, the sector has also experienced flat or negative growth in certain years, demonstrating its susceptibility to climatic challenges and traditional farming practices, such as shifting (Jhum) cultivation.

A review of the data underscores the Primary Sector's dual role as a key economic contributor and a highly vulnerable segment due to climate variability, market fluctuations, and policy shifts. Crops, largely reliant on Jhum cultivation, form the sector's backbone, but limited modernization and climate-related risks have constrained expansion.

Livestock, once on an upward trend until 2019–20, suffered sharp contractions post-2020, highlighting supply chain inefficiencies and market instability.

Table 19 GSVA in the Primary Sector (₹ lakh) at Constant (2011–12) Prices in Rs lakh

Year	Crops	Livestock	Forestry & Logging	Fishing & Aquaculture	Mining & Quarrying	Total Primary
2011–12	75,876	30,336	38,403	4,853	5,073	154,541
2016–17	86,893	44,296	213,970	6,787	3,940	355,886
2020–21	104,552	35,878	161,704	4,187	6,609	312,930
2021–22	96,423	32,298	167,952	4,450	10,800	311,924
2022–23	96,734	30,997	158,244	4,892	15,994	306,860

Source: The Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Mizoram; figures are in **₹ lakh** at constant (2011–12) prices.
Source: https://mospi.gov.in/GSVA-NSVA

Meanwhile, fishing and aquaculture have shown gradual growth as shown in table below, supported by government initiatives to boost domestic production and reduce import dependency, though their scale remains insufficient to counteract broader agricultural stagnation.

The primary sector's long-term sustainability depends on enhancing productivity, improving resource management, and diversifying agricultural output. While forestry, horticulture, and aquaculture offer potential, the persistent use of low-input, climate-sensitive farming methods continues to undermine stability.

The decline in forestry revenues post-2015, coupled with livestock contractions in 2021–22 and 2022–23, has further slowed momentum. Additionally, soil degradation, erratic rainfall patterns, and the absence of large-scale modernization efforts have hindered agricultural resilience.

Without systematic intervention in mechanization, climate adaptation, and infrastructure development, the sector's ability to support Mizoram's low-income and vulnerable populations remains constrained.

Horticulture

Recently, horticulture has gain momentum and shown marked increase in their production, with over 70% of the population engaged in land-based livelihoods.[111] According to Economic survey 2022 – 23 submitted by department of Horticulture, while 11.56 lakh hectares are suitable for horticulture, only 1.5 lakh hectares (11.96%) are under cultivation.

Fruits dominate the sector, contributing 41.51% of the area and 46.72% of production, followed by vegetables (29.90%) and spices (18.25%). Key crops like dragon fruit and pineapple have shown remarkable success.

Dragon fruit cultivation generated ₹6.96 crore in 2022-2023, while pineapple exports to the UAE in 2022 highlighted the sector's potential for global reach.

Technology integration, such as polyhouses and greenhouses, has shifted farmers away from traditional jhum cultivation.

Protected cultivation (e.g., polyhouses) covered 26,100 sqm in 2023-2024 and 60,000 sqm in 2022-2023.[112] This enables year-round farming and has shifted some farmers away from jhum (slash-and-burn) cultivation.

Protected cultivation now covers over 60,000 square meters, providing consistent production and reducing losses. The development of ripening chambers, solar dryers, and cold chain systems has improved post-harvest quality.

Vegetable cultivation has increased with 1300 MT of tomatoes produced and processed, 1400 MT of off-season cabbage generating Rs. 490.00 lakh, and 930 MT of watermelon earning Rs. 4.65 crore.

Fruit production has also grown, with dragon fruit cultivation bringing over Rs. 6.96 crore in earnings from 400 hectares, mandarin orange rejuvenation spanning 159 hectares, and 5027 hectares of pineapple production yielding 29,023 MT, some of which is exported to the UAE.[113]

Spice and medicinal crop cultivation has expanded, with ginger and turmeric benefiting hundreds of growers, and Mizo Chilli and Ginger securing GI registration.

Additionally, hybrid vegetable varieties, JICA-supported sustainable farming systems, and NABARD-backed collection centres have enhanced market connectivity, enabling Mizoram's farmers to boost their incomes and support economic growth.

---

[111] https://planning.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2024/02/6818f21601fe2820611f0f80b7fe3037/economic-survery-of-mizoram-2023-24.pdf

[112] Department of Horticulture, Economic survey 2022 -23

[113] https://planning.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2024/02/6818f21601fe2820611f0f80b7fe3037/economic-survery-of-mizoram-2023-24.pdf

Table 20 Area and Production for Major Fruits, Spices, Vegetables, Flowers, Plantation Crops

Crop	2019-2020 Area ('000 Ha)	2019-2020 Prdn ('000 MT/lakh Nos)	2021-2022 Area ('000 Ha)	2021-2022 Prdn ('000 MT/lakh Nos)	2022-2023 Area ('000 Ha)	2022-2023 Prdn ('000 MT/lakh Nos)
Fruits	63.762	344.91	66.451	345.36	66.471	345.36
Vegetables	36.485	181.634	36.606	224.529	-	224.559
Aromatics	0.76	0.78	0.765	0.777	0.765	0.777
Plantation Crops	13.23	10.99	21.452	33.642	21.452	33.642
Spices	27.58	10.99	27.58	100.87	27.58	100.87
Roots/Tubers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Flowers	0.082	131.4	0.082	131.4	0.082	131.4

Source: Economic Survey of Mizoram 2023 -24

Over the years, vegetables and spices have seen the most significant growth in production, with vegetables increasing from 181.63 thousand MT in 2019-20 to 224.56 thousand MT in 2022-23, despite the cultivated area remaining nearly constant at 36.5-36.6 thousand hectares. This suggests higher productivity or improved farming practices. Mizoram is a major producer of ginger and turmeric. Spices maintained a stable cultivation area of 27.58 thousand hectares, yet production surged from 10.99 thousand MT to 100.87 thousand MT, indicating improvements in yield and better crop varieties.

Plantation crops saw a major expansion in 2020-21, where the cultivated area jumped from 13.23 to 21.45 thousand hectares, leading to a proportional increase in production from 10.99 to 33.64 thousand MT, possibly driven by policy support or market demand. Mizoram is a major producer of arecanut and more recently has seen palm oil plantations. Fruits remained stable with a gradual increase in cultivated area from 63.76 to 66.47 thousand hectares, while production held steady at 345.36 thousand MT, hinting at a well-established sector with limited yield expansion. Mizoram is the second largest producer of strawberries in India. The other important fruit are banana and oranges.

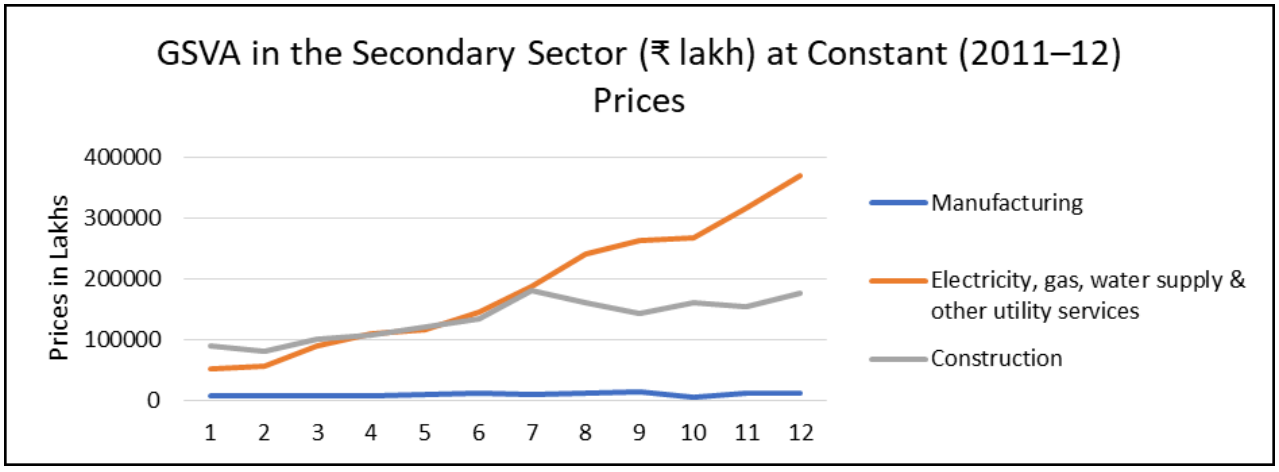
In contrast, aromatic crops and flowers remained niche segments, maintaining a constant area and production, which could indicate limited market demand or controlled farming practices. The data suggests that while certain crops have seen dramatic improvements in productivity and expansion, others have remained stable, highlighting differences in market trends, investment focus, and agronomic advancements.

The State has expanded bamboo plantations, covering 1053 hectares under its SEDP initiative in 2022-2023, while advanced processing units and training programs have enabled the production of high-quality bamboo products, including those used in the G-20 Summit.

The National Bamboo Development Agency has set up 8 bamboo handicraft clusters, 11 bamboo furniture clusters, 3 bamboo agarbatti clusters and 5 other bamboo clusters, to date, under the cluster development programme in the state.

The climatic conditions in the state provide a conducive breeding ground for commercial exploitation of all kinds of silkworms. Sericulture remains one of the state's key industries. Raw silk production in Mizoram stood at 59 metric tonnes in FY22 and 84 MT in FY23.[114]

11.1.3 Secondary Sector: Industry, Manufacturing, and Construction



Graph 6 GSVA in the Secondary Sector (₹ lakh) at Constant (2011–12) Prices

Mizoram's Secondary Sector, though traditionally the smallest of the three economic sectors, has maintained steady long-term growth. A close look at figure above and Table below reveals that total GSVA in this sector rose from approximately ₹1469.30 crore in 2011–12 to ₹5583.56 crore in 2022–23, indicating a substantial expansion over the past decade.

Table 21 GSVA in the Secondary Sector (₹ lakh) at Constant (2011–12) Prices in Rs lakhs

Year	Manufacturing	Electricity, Gas, Water, etc.	Construction	Total Secondary
2011–12	6,578	51,024	89,328	146,930
2016–17	10,578	145,337	133,065	288,980
2020–21	5,741	267,950	159,852	433,542
2021–22	12,253	316,996	153,760	483,009
2022–23	11,842	370,798	175,715	558,356

[114] https://www.ibef.org/states/mizoram

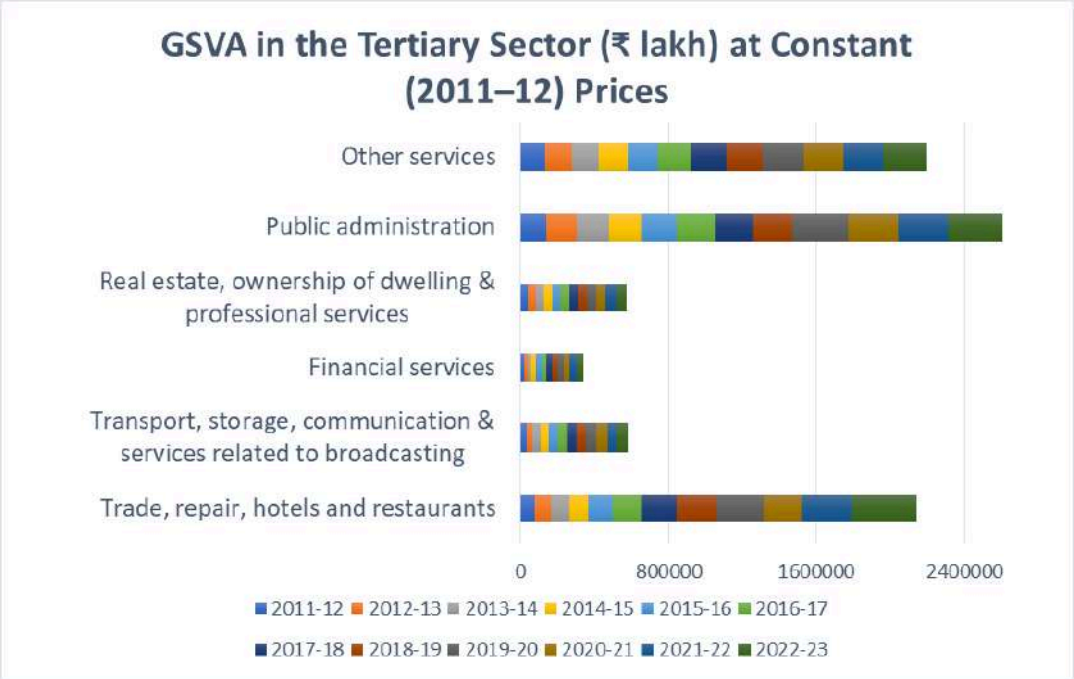
Within this sector, construction has consistently acted as the primary growth engine. Large-scale public works, road development, and other infrastructure projects have fuelled increases in construction's contribution, surging from about ₹893.28 crore to ₹1757.15 crore during the same period. Meanwhile, manufacturing remains comparatively modest, reflecting a continued reliance on small-scale activities such as handloom, handicrafts, and food processing rather than large-scale industrial production.

By contrast, electricity, gas, water supply, and other utilities underwent one of the most impressive expansions, demonstrating both the sector's potential and Mizoram's untapped hydropower resources. Construction and energy, has seen substantial growth, driven by public infrastructure projects, hydropower development, and urban expansion. However, manufacturing remains weak, as Mizoram lacks large-scale industries, skilled labour, and a strong industrial base.

The state government has recently identified agro-processing as an important step forward. Under the One District, One Product scheme, the following districts have been identified:

Product for agro-processing	Focus Districts
Mizo Chilly	Aizawl
Passion fruit	Champhai
Pineapple	Khawzawl and Sechhip
Mango	Lawngtlai
Ginger	Saitual
Turmeric	Lunglei, Mamit, Saiha, Hnathial

11.1.4 Tertiary Sector: Services, Trade, and Public Administration



Graph 7 GSVA in the Tertiary Sector (₹ lakh) at Constant (2011–12) Prices

The Tertiary Sector remains Mizoram's largest economic contributor, consistently surpassing the Primary and Secondary Sectors in output. As evidenced in the graph above and the table below, its Gross State Value Added (GSVA) expanded significantly from ₹4415.37 crore in 2011–12 to ₹10,396.15 crore in 2022–23, reflecting broad-based growth across trade, hospitality, transport, communication, financial services, real estate, public administration, and various service activities. Notably, trade, repair, hotels, and restaurants nearly quadrupled over this period, indicating rising commercial activity and emerging tourism potential. Similarly, transport, storage, communication, and broadcasting have exhibited steady growth, though limited rail and air connectivity continue to impede broader business expansion.

Table 22 GSVA in the Tertiary Sector (₹ lakh) at Constant (2011–12) Prices in Rs lakhs

Year	Trade, Hotels & Restaurants	Transport, Storage, Communication	Financial Services	Real Estate & Professional	Public Admin	Other Services	Total Tertiary
2011–12	76,482	31,917	20,053	41,471	139,286	132,328	441,537
2016–17	160,617	50,742	26,711	46,554	203,704	176,229	664,558
2020–21	207,396	58,323	35,003	51,694	268,612	213,111	834,139
2021–22	273,801	47,505	36,346	53,565	265,227	213,181	889,624
2022–23	348,145	59,212	37,865	56,349	301,073	236,971	1,039,615

Government expenditures in public administration have played a stabilizing role, stimulating local demand and employment, while financial services have shown moderate progress, constrained primarily by low rural banking penetration. Moving forward, strengthening tourism infrastructure, improving connectivity, and expanding financial inclusion are critical to sustaining and accelerating tertiary sector growth.

Diversifying into hospitality, IT services, and professional sectors could further cement the Tertiary Sector's position as the backbone of Mizoram's economy. The sector has witnessed a post-2022 acceleration, driven by increased public administration spending and a commercial resurgence following the pandemic. However, transportation and logistics remain key bottlenecks, restricting further expansion in trade and tourism.

11.2 Per capita income and poverty

Table 23 Per Capita Income of Mizoram (2011-2022)

Year	Per Capita Income (₹)
2011-12	57,654
2016-17	127,107
2021-22 (Provisional)	198,962
2022-23 (Advanced Estimate)	232,126

The per capita income of Mizoram for the year 2022-23 was projected at ₹232,126,[115] reflecting a significant increase from the previous year's estimate of ₹198,961 This upward trend underscores sustained economic growth, despite periodic fluctuations. Over the past decade, Mizoram's per capita income has more than quadrupled, rising from ₹57,654 in 2011-12 to ₹232,126 in 2022-23. Notably, the state experienced a sharp increase between 2014-15 and 2017-18, with per capita income jumping from ₹103,049 to ₹155,222, driven by expanding service and industrial activities. However, the period 2020-21 marked a temporary contraction, with per capita income declining to ₹173,520 from ₹195,365 in 2019-20, primarily due to the economic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this setback, growth rebounded in 2021-22, reaching ₹198,961, and further accelerated in 2022-23 with a projected rise to ₹232,126, indicating strong post-pandemic recovery.

According to the Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey (CAMS) for 2022-23, Mizoram shows significant gender disparities in average monthly incomes. Overall, the average monthly income was ₹8,115, with males earning substantially higher at ₹12,111 compared to females at just ₹4,002. Urban males earned ₹13,170 monthly compared to urban females earning ₹7,716, resulting in an urban average of ₹10,402, while rural males averaged ₹12,576 compared to rural females at ₹5,687, resulting in a rural average of ₹9,136 monthly. The data highlight stark gender differences in earnings.

Between 2015-16 and 2019-21, Mizoram saw substantial progress in poverty reduction. The state's multidimensional poverty rate decreased significantly from 9.78% to 5.30%, lifting approximately 54,665 people out of poverty. Mizoram's MPI score nearly halved, from 0.046 to 0.024, signifying strong performance in multidimensional poverty reduction relative to national averages. The intensity of poverty (average deprivation score among the poor) also improved from 47.42% to 45.62% during this period, indicating that not only are fewer people poor, but those remaining poor are less deprived than before.[116]

In Mizoram, 64 percent of households own a house (81% of rural households and 51% of urban households).[117]

---

[115] https://planning.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2024/02/6818f21601fe2820611f0f80b7fe3037/economic-survery-of-mizoram-2023-24.pdf

11.3 Household consumption expenditure

In the latest Survey on Household Consumption Expenditure (2023–24),[118] households in Mizoram are shown to enjoy a substantially higher standard of living compared to the national average. Overall, the Average Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE) in Mizoram is markedly higher rural households spend about ₹5,963 while urban households spend approximately ₹8,709. By contrast, the All-India averages stand at ₹4,122 for rural areas and ₹6,996 for urban areas. This distinct urban premium and the elevated rural spending in Mizoram likely reflect better economic conditions, higher income levels, or different consumption patterns that are possibly linked to the state's strong educational and social development indicators.

month compared to ₹1,677 nationally, while those in the top bracket (95–100%) spend ₹13,338 versus ₹10,137 across India. Overall, the rural average MPCE in Mizoram is ₹5,963 significantly higher than the national average of ₹4,122 indicating that even the poorest rural households enjoy greater consumption levels, though the wider gap across fractiles suggests some intra-regional disparities.

Similarly, urban households in Mizoram exhibit higher spending, with the lowest fractile at ₹4,254 compared to ₹2,376 nationally, the 40–50% bracket at ₹7,671 versus ₹5,622, and the 90–95% bracket at ₹13,499 versus ₹12,817, even though the very top (95–100%) is slightly lower (₹19,832 vs. ₹20,310). Overall, the urban average in Mizoram stands at ₹8,709, well above the national urban average of ₹6,996. Collectively, these findings show that Mizoram's higher MPCE across nearly all fractile classes both rural and urban reflects a higher standard of living, suggesting better economic conditions and greater consumption capacity compared to the national average, despite some underlying disparities.

An analysis of the expenditure breakdown into food and non-food categories provides further insight into Mizoram's consumption patterns. In rural areas, households in Mizoram spend approximately ₹2,801 on food and ₹3,1612 on non-food items, compared to national averages of ₹1,938 and ₹2,183 respectively. Urban households show a similar trend, with Mizoram households allocating around ₹3,592 to food and ₹5,117 to non-food consumption, whereas the corresponding urban figures across India are ₹2,776 for food and ₹4,220 for non-food items. The elevated non-food expenditure, which often includes spending on durable goods, education, health, and other services, suggests that households in Mizoram are investing more in quality-of-life improvements a factor that contributes to long-term human development.

A closer look at consumption expenditure by household type further underscores the economic advantage enjoyed by Mizoram's residents. In rural areas, households engaged in self-employment in agriculture spend an average of ₹5,035, while those in non-agriculture spend about ₹6,482 figures that are significantly higher than the All-India rural averages of ₹4,033 and ₹4,407, respectively.

---

[116] https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2023-08/India-National-Multidimentional-Poverty-Index-2023.pdf

[117] National Family Health Survey 5

[118] https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Final_Report_HCES_2023-24L.pdf

Similarly, rural households in the regular wage/salaried category report MPCE levels of ₹6,449 in agriculture and ₹6,869 in non-agriculture, again outpacing the national figures of ₹3,972 and ₹5,005. Even households relying on casual labour in agriculture (₹4,344) and non-agriculture (₹5,646) in Mizoram spend more than their national counterparts. A similar pattern is evident in urban areas, where self-employed households in Mizoram average ₹8,530, regular wage/salaried households spend ₹8,937, and even those in casual labour spend ₹7,918 substantially higher than the All-India urban averages. Although the 'Others' category shows a slight exception in urban areas, the overall urban MPCE in Mizoram is still significantly higher at ₹8,709 compared to the national figure of ₹6,996.

Finally, the survey also provides measures of inequality in consumption, as indicated by the Gini Coefficient. In Mizoram, the rural MPCE of ₹5,963 is associated with a Gini coefficient of 0.220, while the urban MPCE of ₹8,709 has an even lower Gini coefficient of 0.200. In contrast, the All-India rural sector, with an MPCE of ₹4,122, has a Gini coefficient of 0.237, and the urban sector, with an MPCE of ₹6,996, has a significantly higher Gini coefficient of 0.284. These figures imply that not only do households in Mizoram spend more, but the distribution of consumption expenditure is more equitable than the national average particularly in urban areas.

11.4 Status of Livelihoods and Employment

11.4.1 Economic Context

Mizoram's economy is undergoing rapid expansion and structural transformation, with its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for 2025-26 projected at ₹36,089 crore, marking a ₹2,086 crore increase from the previous year. This growth trajectory underscores sectoral diversification, with the primary sector expected to contribute 20.55% to the Gross State Value Added (GSVA) in 2024-25, reflecting the continued significance of agriculture, forestry, and allied activities. The secondary sector, comprising manufacturing, construction, and industrial output, is anticipated to contribute 34.21% to the GSVA, demonstrating an expanding industrial base and investment in processing industries. Meanwhile, the tertiary sector remains the dominant driver of economic activity, accounting for 45.24% of GSVA, signifying Mizoram's growing service-oriented economy, particularly in trade, transport, communication, and financial services. These figures reflect a balanced economic structure, fostering sustainable growth through multi-sectoral development.

11.4.2 Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) & Worker Population Ratio (WPR)

Summary & insights: The analysis of LFPR data below indicates distinct labour market dynamics in Mizoram, characterized by moderate prime-age workforce participation contrasted with significantly lower engagement among youth and older populations. The notably higher urban female participation in prime working ages in Mizoram presents a progressive contrast to national trends. Policy measures should focus on enhancing youth participation through improved education-to-employment pathways, vocational and skills training aligned with local economic opportunities, and proactive job creation initiatives. Additionally, continuing support for women's economic engagement, particularly in urban areas, through gender-sensitive employment policies could further enhance workforce inclusivity and overall economic development in Mizoram.

Table 24 Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for Mizoram for Age group from 15 - 29 years; 15 - 59 years

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for Mizoram									
age group:15-29 years (Youth	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	female	person	male	female	person	male	female	person
Mizoram	32.4	22.8	28.3	24.6	21.8	23.3	29	22.3	26
All India	65.1	30.8	48.1	59.9	23.8	42.6	63.5	28.8	46.5
Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for Mizoram									
age group:15-59 years (working age)	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	female	person	male	female	person	male	female	person
Mizoram	74.1	48.7	62.2	71.3	45.3	58.4	72.9	47.1	60.5
All India	84.3	51.2	67.6	81.9	31.2	57	83.5	45.2	64.3

Youth (15–29 Years) In Mizoram, the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for youth aged 15–29 years in rural areas stands at 28.3% (32.4% males, 22.8% females), considerably below the All-India rural average of 48.1% (65.1% males, 30.8% females). The lower participation among rural youth in Mizoram suggests delayed entry into employment, possibly due to extended educational commitments, cultural factors, or limited local employment opportunities. Urban Mizoram displays an even lower LFPR at 23.3% (24.6% males, 21.8% females), significantly beneath the national urban average of 42.6% (59.9% males, 23.8% females). This further underscores the possibility of urban youth prolonging education or awaiting formal sector employment aligned with their educational aspirations. Combining rural and urban areas, Mizoram's LFPR for youth is 26% (29.9% males, 22.8% females), markedly below the All-India average of 46.5%, highlighting a widespread issue of limited youth engagement in the workforce.

Prime Working Age (15–59 Years) For individuals in the prime working age of 15–59 years, Mizoram demonstrates an LFPR in rural regions at 62.2% (74.1% males, 48.7% females), which is lower than the All-India rural average of 67.6% (84.3% males, 51.2% females). While male participation remains strong, female participation in rural Mizoram, though lower than national averages, indicates active engagement possibly in agriculture and informal sectors. In urban areas, LFPR for this age group in Mizoram is 58.4% (71.3% males, 45.3% females), significantly higher than the national urban average of 57% (81.9% males, 31.2% females), reflecting progressive trends towards women's economic empowerment in urban Mizoram. Aggregated across rural and urban regions, Mizoram's overall LFPR for this age group stands at 60.5% (72.9% males, 47.1% females), slightly below the All-India combined average of 64.3%, suggesting moderate workforce engagement during prime working years.

Table 25 Worker Population Ratio (WPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for Mizoram for Age group from 15 - 29 years; 15 - 59 years

Worker Population Ratio (WPR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for Mizoram									
Age group:15-29 years	Rural			Urban			Rura + Urban		
	male	female	person	Male	female	person	male	female	person
Mizoram	29.3	21.2	25.8	19.8	17.5	18.7	25.1	19.4	22.5
All India	59.5	28.3	44	52.2	19	36.3	57.3	25.6	41.7
Age group:15-59 years	Rural			Urban			Rura + Urban		
	male	female	person	male	female	person	male	female	person
Mizoram	72.9	48.1	61.3	69	43.4	56.3	71.2	45.9	59
All India	81.7	50	65.7	78.1	28.8	53.9	80.6	43.7	62.1

Worker Population Ratio (WPR) Analysis for Mizoram (Usual Status: ps+ss)

Youth (15–29 Years) The Worker Population Ratio (WPR) among youth aged 15–29 years in rural Mizoram is relatively low at 25.8% (29.3% males, 21.2% females), significantly below the national rural average of 44% (59.5% males, 28.3% females). This suggests that many rural youths either delay their entry into the workforce, possibly due to prolonged education, limited local employment opportunities, or engagement in unpaid family tasks. In urban Mizoram, the WPR among the youth is even lower, recorded at 18.7% (19.8% males, 17.5% females), considerably beneath the national urban average of 36.3% (52.2% males, 19% females). The combined rural and urban WPR for Mizoram's youth stands at 22.5% (25.1% males, 19.4% females), notably lower than the national average of 41.7%, highlighting a pervasive trend of delayed employment entry among young individuals.

Prime Working Age (15–59 Years) Within the prime working-age group (15–59 years), rural Mizoram exhibits a substantial WPR of 61.3% (72.9% males, 48.1% females), although this remains somewhat below the national rural average of 65.7% (81.7% males, 50% females). The data points to robust employment levels, particularly among males, likely driven by agricultural and informal rural economic activities. Urban areas show a slightly lower WPR of 56.3% (69% males, 43.4% females), still significantly higher than the national urban average for females (28.8%), indicating relatively progressive trends towards women's economic involvement. Aggregated across rural and urban settings, Mizoram's overall WPR in this age group is 59% (71.2% males, 45.9% females), slightly behind the national average of 62.1%, reflecting consistent but moderately lower employment engagement.

Insights and Policy Implications Mizoram's Worker Population Ratio analysis reveals consistently lower workforce engagement across all age groups compared to national averages, particularly pronounced among youth. Rural areas display relatively robust employment among prime-age individuals, primarily driven by agriculture and informal economic activities, though youth participation remains a critical area needing intervention.

Urban Mizoram shows moderate employment levels, with notably higher female participation compared to national urban trends. To boost workforce participation and economic productivity, targeted initiatives including youth-focused employment schemes, vocational training aligned to local job markets, strengthened support for women's economic participation, and employment-generation programs in both rural and urban sectors are recommended. Such measures could significantly uplift workforce engagement and foster sustained economic growth in Mizoram.

11.5 Status of unemployment

Table 26 Unemployment Rate (UR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for Mizoram Mizoram for Age group from 15 - 29 years; 15 - 59 years

Unemployment Rate (UR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for each State/UT									
age group:15-29 years	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	male	female	person	male	female	person	male	female	person
Mizoram	9.7	7	8.8	19.6	19.6	19.6	13.4	13	13.3
allIndia	8.7	8.2	8.5	12.8	20.1	14.7	9.8	11	10.2
Table (18): Unemployment Rate (UR) (in per cent) according to usual status (ps+ss) for each State/UT									
age group:15-59 years	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	male	female	person	male	female	person	male	female	person
Mizoram	1.6	1.1	1.4	3.3	4.1	3.6	2.3	2.5	2.4
allIndia	3	2.3	2.8	4.6	7.6	5.4	3.5	3.4	3.5

Rural Areas:
For the 15–29 age group, rural Mizoram's unemployment rate is 8.8% overall (9.7% for males and 7% for females), which is slightly higher for males and comparable for females when set against the All-India rural average of 8.5%. In the working-age category (15–59 years), rural unemployment in Mizoram is exceptionally low at just 1.4% overall (1.6% for males and 1.1% for females), outperforming the national rural unemployment average of 2.8%.

Considering all ages, rural Mizoram maintains an unemployment rate of 1.3%, suggesting a strong absorption of the rural workforce into economic activities, possibly reflective of a robust informal or agricultural sector that efficiently utilizes available labour.

Urban Areas:
Urban Mizoram tells a more nuanced story. For the 15–29 age group, the unemployment rate is quite high at 19.6% for both males and females, resulting in a combined rate of 19.6% substantially higher than the All-India urban average of 14.7% for this age group. This indicates significant challenges for young urban job seekers. However, in the working-age group (15–59 years), urban unemployment drops to 3.6% overall (with 3.3% for males and 4.1% for females), which is well below the national urban average of 5.4%.

For all ages, urban Mizoram's unemployment is 3.4%, which, while still lower than the national average of 5.1%, suggests that the difficulties observed among the younger population do not persist once individuals move into the established working-age group. This duality implies that while urban Mizoram's economy is effective at employing its mature workforce, it faces challenges in transitioning younger individuals from education or training into stable employment.

Based on data from the Comprehensive Annual Modular Survey (NSS 79th Round, July 2022 – June 2023), Table 9 presents the percentage of persons not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in Mizoram for two age groups, broken down by rural, urban, and combined areas, and further by gender.

For the 15–25 years age group, the rural figures indicate that only 1.2% of males and 6.5% of females are classified as NEET, resulting in an overall rural NEET rate of 3.9%. In urban areas, these percentages rise to 4.2% for males and 7.7% for females, with an overall urban NEET rate of 6.0%. When both rural and urban areas are combined, the overall NEET rate for this age group stands at 4.9%, with 2.7% for males and 7.1% for females.

For the 15–29 years age group, the rural NEET percentages are 1.1% for males and 8.6% for females, yielding an overall rate of 4.9%. In urban settings, the NEET rates are 4.2% for males and 9.3% for females, with an overall urban rate of 6.7%. When combining both rural and urban data, the overall NEET rate for the 15–29 age group is 5.8%, with 2.5% for males and 8.9% for females.

These findings suggest that while NEET rates in Mizoram are relatively low overall, there is a clear gender disparity females exhibit higher non-engagement rates than males and urban areas tend to have higher NEET percentages compared to rural areas.

11.5.1 Distribution of workers across employment categories

Rural Employment

Table 27 Percentage distribution of workers in usual status (ps+ss) by broad status in employment for Mizoram - Rural Male; Rural Female, Rural Person

Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Mizoram - Rural Male						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	55.8	10.7	66.4	25	8.6	100
All India	47	12.4	59.4	15.8	24.9	100
Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Mizoram - Rural Female						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	Helper household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	52.5	42	94.5	5.5	0	100
All India	31.2	42.3	73.5	7.8	18.7	100
Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Mizoram - Rural Person						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	54.6	22	76.6	17.9	5.5	100
All India	41	23.7	64.7	12.7	22.5	100

The employment distribution in rural Mizoram exhibits distinctive characteristics compared to the national averages. Among rural males in Mizoram, self-employment (66.4%) significantly surpasses the national average (59.4%), reflecting a stronger reliance on entrepreneurial activities or family-run enterprises, accompanied by a lower proportion engaged in casual labour (8.6% compared to 24.9% nationally). For rural females, this trend is even more pronounced, with an overwhelming majority (94.5%) involved in self-employment, primarily as helpers in household enterprises (42%), starkly higher than the national figure (73.5%).

Notably, there is virtually no participation of rural females in casual labour in Mizoram, unlike the substantial 18.7% nationally. These insights underline Mizoram's unique rural economic structure, heavily centred on family enterprises and self-reliant economic activities, suggesting the importance of policies supporting small-scale entrepreneurship and enhancing productivity within household enterprises to sustain and improve rural livelihoods.

Urban Employment

Table 28 Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Mizoram - Urban Male; Urban Female; Urban Person

Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Mizoram - Urban Male						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper in household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	43.2	4.2	47.3	42.1	10.6	100
All India	35.1	4.7	39.8	46.8	13.4	100
Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Mizoram - Urban Female						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper in household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	55.3	19.8	75.1	24.4	0.5	100
All India	28.5	13.8	42.3	49.4	8.3	100
Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Mizoram - Urban Person						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper in household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	47.9	10.2	58.1	35.2	6.7	100
All India	33.4	7	40.4	47.5	12.1	100

Urban employment patterns in Mizoram distinctly contrast with national averages, characterized by a relatively high degree of self-employment, especially among females. Urban males in Mizoram have a significant share engaged in self-employment (47.3%), slightly higher than the national average (39.8%), with notably fewer involved in casual labour (10.6%) compared to the All-India figure (13.4%).

For urban females, the reliance on self-employment is particularly pronounced at 75.1%, far exceeding the national rate of 42.3%, primarily driven by own-account work and contributions to household enterprises.

Remarkably, casual labour among urban females in Mizoram is negligible (0.5%), contrasting sharply with the 8.3% seen nationally. Collectively, urban Mizoram demonstrates a substantial emphasis on entrepreneurial and household enterprise activities, indicating a potential avenue for policy interventions aimed at enhancing business skills, providing financial support for micro-enterprises, and strengthening formal sector linkages to improve sustainable urban livelihoods.

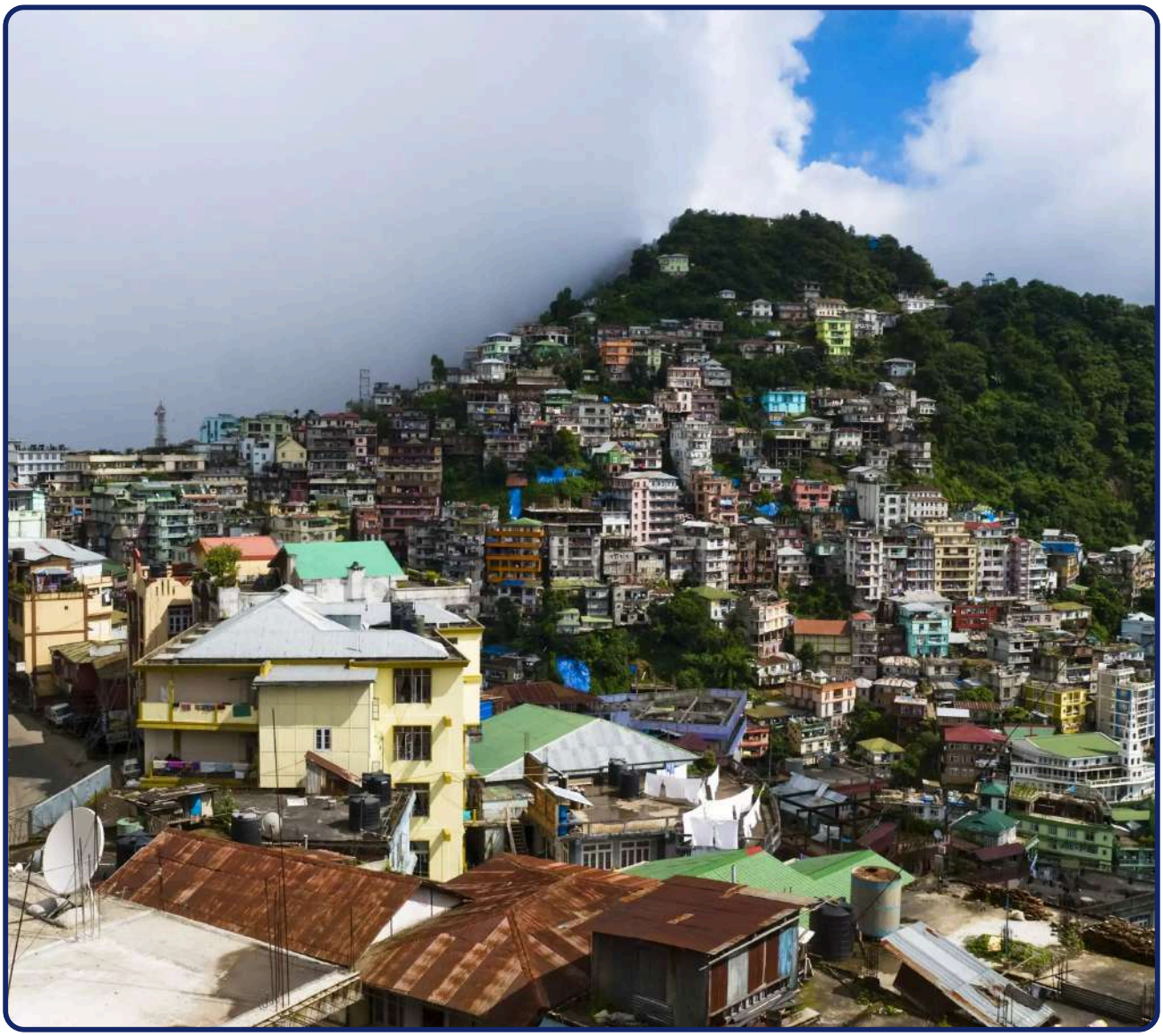


Image Source

Combined (Rural + Urban) Employment

Table 29 Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Each State/UT - Rural+Urban Male; Rural+Urban Female; Rural+Urban Person

Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Each State/UT - Rural+Urban Male						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper in household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	50.4	7.9	58.2	32.3	9.4	100
All India	43.5	10.1	53.6	24.9	21.5	100
Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Each State/UT - Rural+Urban Female						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper in household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	53.8	31.9	85.7	14.1	0.2	100
All India	30.7	36.7	67.4	15.9	16.7	100
Percentage Distribution of Workers in Usual Status (Ps+Ss) By Broad Status in Employment for Each State/UT - Rural+Urban Person						
State	Self employed			Regular wage/salary	casual labour	all
	Own account worker, employer	helper in household enterprise	all self employed			
Mizoram	42.6	10	52.6	16.5	30.9	100
All India	39	19.4	58.4	21.7	19.8	100

The employment data from Mizoram and the aggregate all-India figures reveal distinct patterns in workforce engagement across gender and employment categories. Among males, self-employment dominates in both Mizoram (58.2%) and at the national level (53.6%), but the nature of self-employment significantly differs.

Specifically, Mizoram reports a higher proportion (50.4%) of own-account workers or employers compared to the national average (43.5%), indicating a relatively higher incidence of entrepreneurship or independent economic activities among males in Mizoram. Conversely, males engaged in household enterprises are fewer in Mizoram (7.9%) compared to the all-India average (10.1%), implying lesser reliance on family-operated businesses in the region.

Regular salaried employment among males in Mizoram (32.3%) surpasses the national average (24.9%), whereas casual labour is less common in Mizoram (9.4%) than nationally (21.5%). This reflects better access to formal employment opportunities for men in Mizoram relative to the Indian average.

Female employment patterns exhibit sharper contrasts. Mizoram reports a markedly higher rate of female self-employment (85.7%) compared to the all-India figure (67.4%). Particularly, a notable portion of Mizoram's women (53.8%) are own-account workers or employers, significantly exceeding the national level (30.7%).

Additionally, a substantial proportion of Mizoram women are involved as helpers in household enterprises (31.9%), highlighting the prevalence of family-oriented businesses and enterprises among women in the region, which is slightly lower nationally (36.7%).

Conversely, regular wage or salaried employment for women in Mizoram is notably lower (14.1%) compared to the national average (15.9%), and casual labour participation is minimal (0.2%) compared to a significant 16.7% nationally. This starkly illustrates the restricted participation of Mizoram's women in casual labour markets, underscoring greater reliance on household-based enterprises or self-driven entrepreneurial activities.

individuals are notably more likely to be own-account workers or employers (42.6%) compared to the all-India proportion (39%). Participation in household enterprises is notably less prevalent in Mizoram (10%) than at the national level (19.4%).

Regular wage or salaried employment (16.5%) is relatively lower than the national average (21.7%), indicating limited formal employment opportunities overall in Mizoram. Notably, Mizoram experiences significantly higher participation in casual labour (30.9%) compared to the national average (19.8%), suggesting substantial dependence on temporary, informal employment opportunities for overall workforce engagement.

In summary, employment trends in Mizoram reflect significant entrepreneurial and self-employed economic activities, particularly among women, with substantial engagement in own-account enterprises. However, limited formal employment opportunities are evident, alongside minimal casual labour participation among women, sharply contrasting with the broader Indian context.

Table 30 Percentage Distribution of Households by Household Type for Rural Areas for Each State

Percentage Distribution of Households by Household Type for Rural Areas for Each State/ UT									
State/UT	Self-employed in Agriculture (%)	Self-employed in non-agriculture (%)	Self-employed Sub-total (%)	Regular Wage/Salary Earning (%)	Casual Labour in Agriculture (%)	Casual Labour in Non-Agriculture (%)	Casual Labour Sub-total (%)	Others (%)	Total (%)
Mizoram	41.2	25.2	66.5	29.1	0.4	3.6	4	0.4	100
Manipur	42.6	24.4	67	26.5	0.5	4.9	5.4	1	100
Nagaland	36.3	19	55.2	39.7	0.3	2.8	3.2	1.9	100
Assam	24.2	27.1	51.4	21	4.8	21.5	26.3	1.3	100
All India	36.2	17.1	53.3	16	8.3	15.2	23.5	7.2	100

In rural Mizoram, households predominantly engage in self-employment activities, with a high combined rate of 66.5%, reflecting substantial entrepreneurial involvement. Specifically, 41.2% of households are self-employed in agriculture, underscoring the region's dependence on agriculture-based livelihoods. Additionally, a significant proportion (25.2%) engages in self-employment within non-agricultural sectors, indicating diversified entrepreneurial activities beyond traditional agriculture.

Notably, Mizoram has a remarkably low dependence on casual labour (4%), especially in agricultural casual labour (0.4%), highlighting minimal participation in informal labour compared to the significantly higher national average (23.5%). Regular wage or salary-earning households constitute 29.1%, considerably higher than the national rural average of 16%, suggesting better formal employment opportunities in rural Mizoram compared to other states and India as a whole.

Table 31 Percentage distribution of households by household type for Urban areas for each State

State/UT	self-employed (%)	regular wage/ salary earning (%)	casual labour (%)	others (%)	Total (%)
Mizoram	49	46.5	3.6	1	100
Manipur	47.4	35.7	6	10.9	100
Nagaland	31.3	52.6	7.1	9	100
Assam	37.5	43.5	10.7	8.3	100
All India	32.1	44	10.2	13.7	100

Urban households in Mizoram display considerable economic diversity, with nearly half (49%) involved in self-employment activities, substantially exceeding the all-India urban average (32.1%). This highlights a robust entrepreneurial spirit and independent economic engagement among urban residents.

Regular wage or salary-earning households account for 46.5%, slightly higher than the national urban average of 44%, illustrating strong formal employment conditions. Furthermore, urban Mizoram has minimal reliance on casual labour (3.6%), significantly below the national urban average (10.2%), reflecting superior economic stability and reduced vulnerability to informal employment conditions compared to other Indian states and urban areas.

In summary, Mizoram's employment scenario distinctly emphasizes entrepreneurial activities and formal employment opportunities across both rural and urban contexts. Compared to national averages and other states, Mizoram stands out with substantially lower dependence on casual labour, indicative of a stable economic environment conducive to entrepreneurship and regular employment.

11.6 Status of Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance

Mizoram's banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sector has witnessed notable progress in recent years, driven by governmental initiatives, increased financial inclusion, and expansion of digital banking infrastructure.

However, key challenges such as limited credit availability, uneven rural-urban banking distribution, and relatively lower investment awareness persist. Other financial services like investment in mutual funds and insurance are still in a preliminary stage.

11.6.1 Banking Infrastructure

Mizoram's banking network has expanded in recent years but remains geographically skewed. As of March 2023, the state had 243 bank branches, up from 205 in 2019 and of which 106 are in rural areas.[119] This translates to roughly one branch less 4,500 people (2011 Census basis). However, most branches are concentrated in urban centres (especially Aizawl), while many villages lack any banking outlet within an 80–100 km radius (Mizoram Economic Survey 2019-20, 2020).

For instance, about 31 of SBI's 45 branches in the state are in Aizawl, leaving only 14 across the other ten districts (Lalruatzeli, 2021). Such dispersion makes traditional branch banking in remote areas often unviable due to small, scattered populations.[120]

Apart from the above, the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi), an NBFC, has four branches. Another NBFC namely NABFINS is also functioning in the state through its branch at Aizawl.

[119] Economic Survey of Mizoram 2023-24

[120] Ibid

To improve outreach, banks and authorities have taken initiatives. Mizoram Rural Bank (MRB) the regional rural bank now operates the largest branch network (85 branches) with somewhat better rural coverage.[121] Banks have also deployed alternate access points like business correspondents ("Bank Mitras") to serve unbanked villages. The Reserve Bank of India boosted its presence by opening a sub-office in Aizawl in 2015, housing a Financial Inclusion and Development Department and Consumer Education cell.[122] State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) meetings focus on expanding banking services and resolving gaps in coverage. As a result of these efforts (including nearly universal PMJDY account openings), Mizoram now has basic banking access in virtually all households, although improving the rural branch footprint remains a priority.

11.6.2 Credit and Deposit Statistics

Banking activity (deposits and credit) in Mizoram has grown, but credit deployment lags deposits. As of March 2019, aggregate bank deposits in the state stood at around ₹10,532 crore, while total loans and advances were about ₹4,084 crore (Mizoram Economic Survey 2019-20, 2020). This yielded a Credit-Deposit ratio (CDR) of only 38.8% in 2019,[123] markedly below the recommended 60% level for healthy credit flow. In fact, the CDR had declined from ~46% the previous year due to a drop in outstanding loans (even as deposits rose).[124] Such a low CD ratio indicates that banks were mobilizing substantial deposits in Mizoram but lending out less than half of those funds within the state, reflecting limited credit demand or cautious lending.

Encouragingly, the situation has been improving in recent years. By 2021, the CD ratio climbed into the 40–45% range, and as per RBI data it further rose from about 42.2% to 45.7% by 2022.[125] This uptick suggests credit growth started catching up with deposit growth. (For example, between Sept 2020 and Mar 2021 bank advances in the state jumped significantly, contributing to a higher CDR.[126] Despite this improvement, Mizoram's CD ratio remains among the lowest in India, far below the national average (typically ~75%)) (Lalruatzeli, 2021).

According to the recent Economic Survey 2023-24, as of September 2023, total bank deposits stood at ₹16,041 crore and loans outstanding at ₹7,708 crore, yielding a credit-deposit (CD) ratio of 48.05%. Both central and state authorities have been urging banks to boost credit flow in productive sectors (agriculture, MSMEs, etc.) to improve the CD ratio.[127]

---

[120] Ibid

[121] Ibid

[122] https://shorturl.at/dQRgO

[123] Ibid

[124] Ibid

[125] https://shorturl.at/bTQvc

[126] https://shorturl.at/FNC5z

[127] https://shorturl.at/dQRgO

In summary, Mizoram's banks are flush with deposits but are only gradually translating this into lending within the state, leading to a persistently modest CD ratio (albeit one that is now on a rising trend).

11.6.3 Sectoral Credit Distribution

The distribution of credit in Mizoram is skewed toward priority sectors to an extent, yet overall lending is dominated by personal and other services. In 2018–19, total priority sector advances (which include agriculture, small industries/MSMEs, and services) amounted to about ₹768 crore in Mizoram down from ₹871 crore the previous year, reflecting a contraction in priority lending (Mizoram Economic Survey 2019-20, 2020). Within this, the agriculture and allied sector received roughly 19.2% of total bank credit in 2018–19, meeting the RBI's 18% target for agriculture lending.[128] This was one of the few bright spots: banks actually marginally exceeded the mandated agri credit share, with agriculture loans forming about one-fifth of all lending in the state.

Credit to industry and MSMEs in Mizoram, on the other hand, is relatively limited due to the state's nascent industrial base. Apart from some small manufacturing and processing units, there are few large industries to absorb bank credit. Loans to micro and small enterprises are included in the priority sector figures (alongside services); however, the combined priority-sector credit (₹768 crore) was only ~19% of the state's total outstanding credit in 2019.[129]

This indicates that the bulk of lending (over 80%) was to non-priority sectors, primarily personal loans, trade, housing, and other services. Indeed, Mizoram's credit portfolio tilts toward retail loans e.g. consumer credit, housing loans, vehicle loans and government-sponsored loans, given the lack of corporate/industrial credit demand.

Housing finance and other personal loans have been growing segments as banks focus on retail lending opportunities. For instance, Mizoram Rural Bank reported a strong push in housing loans, achieving 107% of its annual housing loan growth target in 2022–23 (Bank, 2023).

In terms of share: agriculture roughly accounts for 18–20% of outstanding credit, industries/MSMEs (including small manufacturing, food processing, etc.) form a smaller portion, and the services/others category (which covers trade, transport, personal, professional services, etc.) makes up the remainder.

Within services, trade and personal finance likely dominate. The low level of industrial credit is reflected in priority sector data aside from agriculture, the remaining priority sectors (which would include MSME industry and some services like education, etc.) constituted only about ₹586–600 crore in 2019 (i.e. total PSL minus agri) (Mizoram Economic Survey 2019-20, 2020). Overall, the credit distribution mirrors Mizoram's economy heavy on agriculture and services, light on industry and also indicates that banks have significant headroom to expand lending to sectors like MSMEs, housing, and education.

---

[128] Ibid

[129] Ibid

Initiatives like the Mudra Yojana and other targeted lending schemes are being used to stimulate credit uptake in the micro-enterprise segment, but their scale in Mizoram remains modest. The emphasis going forward is on diversifying credit across sectors increasing MSME credit (for which banks have a 7.5% ANBC target), boosting housing loans, and sustaining agriculture credit to ensure balanced economic development.

In the Mizoram Economic survey 2023-24, the total advances under Priority Sector Lending (PSL) stood at ₹5,489 crore (71.20%) of total credit, exceeding RBI's target of 40%. Sector wise breakdown of that is as follows: Agriculture & allied activities: ₹2,337 crore (30.32% of total advances), MSME sector: ₹2,721 crore (35.31%), Other sectors including housing: ₹431 crore (5.58%). These reflect a clear positive shift toward productive sectors and MSMEs compared to previous years.

11.6.4 Investment awareness

Investment awareness and participation in capital markets in Mizoram are at nascent stages, though recent trends show improvement. Being a small and remote state, Mizoram has historically seen low penetration of investment products like mutual funds, stocks, and bonds. There is no local stock exchange and very few brokerage offices; thus, residents interested in equities must invest online or via offices in other states. Until a few years ago, knowledge of instruments beyond bank deposits or life insurance was limited mostly to educated urban residents.

However, awareness is gradually rising, aided by outreach programs and the digital revolution. One notable indicator is the rapid growth in the state's mutual fund investor base. The Assets Under Management (AUM) of mutual funds in Mizoram jumped from about ₹386 crore in March 2020 to approximately ₹907 crore by March 2024, according to ICRA Analytics.[130] Mizoram's share in India's Rs 55 lakh crore mutual fund industry is still tiny (only ~0.02%), but the 145% surge in AUM over four years points to growing investor interest.[131]

In fact, the Northeast region as a whole has seen mutual fund assets more than double, supported by increasing awareness and retail appetite for equity investing via mutual fund.[132] Mizoram contributed about 2.25% of the Northeast's mutual fund assets in 2024 (compared to bigger shares by states like Assam).[133] This uptick is partly attributed to investor education efforts and the convenience of online platforms that allow people to invest even from remote areas.

Beyond mutual funds, direct equity participation remains low. Only a small fraction of Mizoram's population holds demat accounts or actively trades stocks. Nonetheless, regulators have been focusing on the region: SEBI and stock exchanges have conducted Investor Awareness Programs in Aizawl and other towns.

---

[130] https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/mf/mf-news/mf-investing-in-northeast-states-increases-by-145-in-4-years-to-rs-40324-crore-icra-analytics/articleshow/110077150.cms?from=mdr

[131] Ibid

[132] Ibid

[133] Ibid

For example, in October 2024, a collaboration between the Mizoram Consumer's Union and SEBI hosted a one-day investor awareness training in Aizawl for local police and officials, aiming to spread knowledge about investments and financial fraud prevention.[134] Such programs often attended by educated youth and government employees indicate a push to improve financial literacy regarding investments.

Alternative investment options like post office savings, bank FDs, and small savings schemes are traditionally popular in Mizoram (the state collects funds through schemes like Post Office deposits, PPF, etc., as seen in Economic Surveys 2019. But newer avenues insurance linked investment plans, mutual funds, NPS/Atal Pension Yojana for retirement, etc. are slowly gaining ground. The Atal Pension Yojana (APY), for instance, has seen cumulative enrolment of over 15,000 in the state by 2023, reflecting growing pension investment awareness.[135]

While Mizoram's populace is still far more comfortable with traditional savings than market-linked investments, the scenario is gradually changing. The mutual fund growth figures and ongoing investor education drives highlight a positive trajectory. With high literacy (92%) and increasing internet access, Mizoram has the potential for much greater capital market participation, provided awareness continues to improve. The state authorities and financial institutions are continuing efforts seminars, workshops, and distribution of literature in the local language to encourage the habit of investing beyond just bank deposits, so that the public can benefit from diversified financial growth instruments.

11.6.5 Insurance penetration

Insurance penetration in Mizoram is relatively low when compared to national benchmarks, though government and insurers are working to increase coverage. The state has limited presence of insurance companies' offices for example, as of 2020-21 there were only about 10 11 insurance offices servicing Mizoram (including both life and non-life insurers) .[136]

Consequently, insurance product reach (be it life, health, or general insurance) in the population is modest. In terms of metrics, Mizoram's insurance density (annual premium per capita) and penetration (premium as a percentage of state GDP) are among the lowest in India.

For instance, in 2020–21, the general insurance density in Mizoram was only around ₹825 per person[137] This means an average person in Mizoram spent the equivalent of about ₹825 on non-life insurance in a year, which is roughly half of the all-India average. (By comparison, the national per capita general insurance premium was roughly ₹1,500–2,000 in that period, and even higher if life insurance is included.)

---

[134] "Investor Awareness Programme" organised at SP Aizawl Conference Hall – Mizoram Police

[135] [PDF] Content - Mizoram Rural Bank

[136] 2.1 – Statewise Snapshot – GDPI, Economic Indicators – Yearbook

[137] Ibid

Similarly, Mizoram's non-life insurance penetration stood at only 0.36% of GSDP in 2020–21.[138] In other words, general insurance premiums collected in the state amounted to just 0.36% of its economic output far below the India-wide non-life penetration (~1% of GDP) and the overall insurance penetration (~4% of GDP in 2019).[139] The state's contribution to national insurance business is negligible (Mizoram accounted for about 0.05% of India's general insurance premium income in 2020–21).[140] Life insurance usage, while slightly better, is still modest. Many families do have life insurance policies (especially with LIC, which has a strong presence in the Northeast), but the life insurance density in Mizoram is relatively low older IRDAI data indicated life premium per capita on the order of a few hundred rupees and penetration (life premium/GSDP) of around 1–2% for the state in the early 2010s.[141] This has likely improved somewhat with popular central schemes and increasing incomes, but remains much lower than the national life insurance penetration (which was ~3.2% of GDP in 2021)[142]

Several factors contribute to low insurance uptake: historically, a lack of insurance offices/agents in remote districts, lower awareness of insurance benefits, and reliance on community or government support in times of crisis. However, insurance coverage is expanding gradually. The government's push on social security schemes has made inroads e.g., under Pradhan Mantri Jan Suraksha schemes, as of 2023 Mizoram had enrolled large numbers: about 40,873 people in the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) life insurance and 57,327 in the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) accident insurance in recent years.[143] Likewise, health insurance is getting a boost through Ayushman Bharat and the state's own healthcare scheme (Mizoram State Health Care Scheme), which together cover a significant portion of households for basic hospitalization needs.

It's notable that Mizoram achieved nearly universal coverage of bank accounts (99.9% households),[144] and each of those Jan Dhan accounts comes with built-in accident insurance and life cover features. While the sums are small, this has widened the safety net. The challenge remains to encourage people to opt for higher coverages and a wider range of policies (e.g. property insurance for homes prone to landslides, crop insurance for farmers, etc.). Insurance companies, including LIC and regional insurers, have been conducting awareness campaigns. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has also identified the Northeast for special attention to improve penetration. Comparisons show room for growth: Mizoram's total (life+non-life) insurance penetration is estimated well under 4% of GSDP, versus ~4.2% nationally (2019),[145] and insurance density is likewise much lower than the national figure (India's overall insurance density was about $78 (~₹5,800) in 2019).[146]

---

[138] Ibid

[139] Indian Insurance Market - Policy Holder - IRDAI

[140] 2.1 – Statewise Snapshot – GDPI, Economic Indicators – Yearbook

[141] [PDF] handbook on indian insurance statistics 2012-13 - IRDAI

[142] Indian Insurance Market - Policy Holder - IRDAI

[143] [PDF] Content - Mizoram Rural Bank

[144] https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2023/aug/doc20238162398 01.pdf#:~:text=PRADHAN%20MANTRI%20JAN,Government%20of%20India%20as%20it

Insurance penetration in Mizoram is low but on a slow upswing. Nearly all households have some basic coverage now (through Jan Dhan or government schemes), and the next step is to increase the depth of coverage i.e. higher sums insured and more types of insurance (life, health, motor, etc.). With rising incomes, high literacy, and concerted outreach, the state is expected to inch closer to the national average on insurance in coming years. The positive response to central schemes and the high enrolment in programs like PMJJBY/PMSBY is promising signs of improving insurance awareness in the state.

11.6.6 Digital Banking & Financial Inclusion

Mizoram has made significant strides in financial inclusion, and digital banking is gradually becoming a part of daily life, especially in urban areas. Under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) – India's flagship financial inclusion program – Mizoram achieved near-universal coverage. As of August 2023, 99.92% of households in Mizoram had a bank account under PMJDY,[147] one of the highest coverage rates in the country. Out of ~1.82 lakh households in the state, over 1.81 lakh now have at least one basic banking account.[148]

In total, more than 3.3 lakh Jan Dhan accounts have been opened in the state, with about ₹163 crore in deposits and 1.39 lakh RuPay debit cards issued to beneficiaries (as of 2023) providing previously unbanked citizens with debit cards and access to digital payments. This massive inclusion drive has brought practically the entire population into the formal banking system, laying the foundation for digital banking uptake. Digital banking usage is on the rise, though it varies by region and demographic.

In Aizawl and other towns, a growing number of customers use internet banking, mobile banking apps, and UPI (Unified Payments Interface) for transactions. The state's banks have been upgrading their digital offerings: notably, in January 2023, Mizoram Rural Bank launched full internet banking facilities (with transaction capabilities) for its customers,[149] allowing easy online fund transfers and account management.

Likewise, mobile banking and UPI have gained popularity, especially among youths and urban merchants many shops in Aizawl accept UPI payments via QR codes, and government offices promote digital payments for fees.

The volume of digital transactions in Mizoram, while still lower than more developed states, has seen robust growth year-on-year in terms of UPI payments and IMPS/NEFT transfers. Connectivity has improved with telecom expansion, enabling more people to use these services.

---

[145] Indian Insurance Market - Policy Holder - IRDAI

[146] Ibid

[147] https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2023/aug/doc2023816239801.pdf#:~:text=PRADHAN%20MANTRI%20JAN,Government%20of%20India%20as%20it

[148] Ibid

[149] https://mizoramruralbank.in/public/assets/forms/ar2223.pdf#:~:text=In%20addition%2C%20our%20Bank%20has,System%20for%20disposal%20of%20fixed

In rural and remote areas, financial inclusion is supported by digital channels combined with on-ground assistance. Banks have appointed Banking Correspondents (BCs) equipped with micro-ATM devices or tablets to service villages without branches. These BCs facilitate account openings (e-KYC via Aadhaar), withdrawals/deposits, and payments. In FY 2022–23, bank mitras (BCs) opened 1,841 new accounts in unbanked villages and carried out over 6.5 lakh transactions for residents through micro-ATMs and other digital means.[150] This shows how doorstep banking is being enabled digitally, reducing the need for villagers to travel to town for services. Aadhaar-enabled Payment Systems (AePS) are also used in fair measure allowing fingerprint-authenticated cash withdrawals from Jan Dhan accounts via the BC's device.

Microfinance and credit inclusion are also seeing a digital push. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the National Rural Livelihood Mission are linked to banks, and many SHG members now receive credit into bank accounts and repay via digital channels. The number of MUDRA loans (small micro-enterprise loans up to ₹10 lakh) sanctioned in Mizoram has crossed several thousands; these accounts are created in the formal system, often with RuPay cards issued for withdrawals. The relatively lower presence of traditional microfinance institutions in Mizoram has been offset by banks' direct lending to small borrowers and joint liability groups, often leveraging the Micro Units Development (MUDRA) portal and credit camps. For instance, Mizoram Rural Bank – which is the largest lender in the state – has become a key conduit for micro-loans; it even received a government award for financial inclusion efforts. The bank, along with others, organized special credit outreach programs and a festival loan campaign to extend personal and micro loans, contributing to a sharp rise in advances in 2021–22.[151]

Financial literacy programs underpin these inclusion and digital initiatives. Banks and NABARD conduct frequent literacy camps across Mizoram's villages. In 2022–23 alone, nearly 850 Financial Literacy camps were held in the state, with over 50,000 participants these camps teach people how to use ATMs, UPI apps, manage accounts, and understand credit/insurance products.[152] NABARD has financially supported many of these programs.[153]

Mizoram Rural Bank has also trained Community Resource Persons (CRPs) to act as village financial guides, who help villagers open accounts and enrol in insurance/pension scheme.[154] Furthermore, the RBI itself observed Financial Literacy Week 2025 in Mizoram with events focusing on women's financial empowerment.[155] The state's Governor inaugurated the campaign, underlining the importance of digital and financial literacy for inclusive growth.[156] Such high-level advocacy, combined with grassroot outreach, has improved the understanding of banking services among the public.

---

[150] [PDF] Content - Mizoram Rural Bank

[151] [PPT] Slide 1 - SLBC |NE

[152] https://mizoramruralbank.in/public/assets/forms/ar2223.pdf#:~:text=Financial%20Literacy%20Campaigns%20were%20conducted,assistance%20for%20all%20the%20programmes

[153] Ibid

[154] [PDF] Content - Mizoram Rural Bank

[155] Governor Gen (Dr) Vijay Kumar Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM (Retd ...

Overall, Mizoram's financial inclusion is a success story almost every adult now has a bank account, and basic financial services are accessible widely. The challenge ahead is to deepen usage: encouraging more savings, more borrowings for productive purposes, and migration from cash to digital modes. The trend is positive: ATM networks have spread (every district has ATMs now), and mobile internet penetration allows even rural youths to adopt digital wallets and payment apps.

The government's Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system has further pushed digital inclusion wages for MGNREGA, scholarships, and social pensions are credited directly to bank accounts, compelling beneficiaries to engage with formal banking. As a result, even in villages, people are becoming familiar with ATM cards, PINs, and biometric authentication.

Digital banking and financial inclusion in Mizoram have made remarkable progress, supported by strong institutional efforts. High literacy and community-oriented culture have helped the adoption of new banking technologies.

While some hurdles remain (such as patchy telecom connectivity in deep rural pockets and the need for continued hand-holding of first-time users), the state is firmly on the path toward an inclusive, digitally-enabled financial ecosystem.

Mizoram's experience exemplifies how a combination of policy push (PMJDY, digital India), institutional initiatives (RBI sub-office, SLBC campaigns), and local outreach (financial literacy camps, BC network) can bring an isolated region into the financial mainstream.[157]

[156] Ibid

[157] https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2023/aug/doc20238162398 01.pdf#:~:text=PRADHAN%20MANTRI%20JAN,Government%20of%20India%20as%20it

11.7 Logistics – the key to Mizoram's economic development

In 2022 Mizoram had announced a Logistics Policy[158] aimed at developing rail and waterways and opening trading points with Myanmar and Bangladesh with Integrated Logistics Parks at these points.

11.7.1 Railway

The railroad under construction from Bairabi to Sairang will trail 55 kms south ward from Bairabi with the proposed station a little above Sairang town, about 20 kms west of Aizawl. This railway link is likely to be commissioned in mid-2025 and will serve to connect the State for internal trade as well as export promotion.

11.7.2 Inland Waterways

Inland waterways which are the most cost-efficient mode of transport could be used for economic development of the state for inter-state and cross border transport of trade items. The benefits of inland waterways could be harnessed by reviving the inland waterways and boosting the infrastructure for promotion of trade activities with setting up of jetties, shipway, go-down and warehouse in the vicinity of the trade routes.

Mizoram is endowed with 13 rivers which can serve as inland waterways to transport goods and people. These 13 include Tlawng River which connects North of Mizoram to Assam. River Tlawng runs from Aizawl to Silchar covering a distance of 185 Km and used from the time of colonial British days till modern day.

Chhimtuipui also known as Koladyne river in the south of Mizoram runs along the border of Myanmar is being used in transportation of goods between Mizoram and Myanmar. Khawthlangtuipui also known as Karnafuli River is yet another inland waterway that runs along the border of Bangladesh. This was an excellent waterway between Chittagong in Bangladesh and Demagiri in Mizoram through the Karnafuli River before partition of India in 1947.

Apart from these major trade points, Border Haat at Hnahlan, Pangkhua, Vaphai and Zote along India-Myanmar Border have been approved and along India-Bangladesh Border-Marpara, Nunsuri, Tuipuibari and Silsury were identified for border Haat and approval by the Central Government.

11.7.3 Border trade Facilities

Mizoram shares a long international boundary with Myanmar and Bangladesh. Various trade points have been identified, developed and yet few of them were being developed along Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh border. The Land Custom Station is located at Zokhawthar to facilitate e trading with Myanmar since 2015. Next, a Land Custom station at Zorinpui is proposed.

---

[158] https://industries.mizoram.gov.in/uploads/attachments/2022/08/43cfed31d3ebdcc9e36142f71d64670f/pages-150-the-mizoram-state-logistics-policy-2022.pdf

The Koladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project Road (KMMTTR) links with the Sittwe sea port of Myanmar through this Land Custom Centre. This port was built by India and opened in May 2023, as part of Indo-Myanmar Friendship Project. India will export cement, steel and bricks to Myanmar from here and import rice, fish, seafood and timber from Myanmar.

In the long run the Sittwe port will open up an export route for Mizoram. An Integrated Check Post at Kawrpuichhuah for trade with Bangladesh. Land Port Authority of India was taking necessary steps for development of necessary infrastructures, but recent tensions have slowed that down.

11.8 Summary of the livelihood situation

Economic Growth & Sectoral Contributions: Mizoram's economy shows steady growth driven largely by the tertiary sector, contributing over 54% to GSVA by 2023. The secondary sector has risen steadily, expanding from ₹1.47 lakh crore in 2011–12 to ₹5.58 lakh crore in 2022–23, driven by construction and utilities. However, agriculture remains stagnant around ₹3 lakh crore since 2015, highlighting a critical sectoral imbalance risking inclusive growth and rural stability.

Agricultural Sector: Challenges and Opportunities Agriculture, despite employing about 55% of the state's workforce, remains stagnant with its share dropping from 10.21% to 6.35% of GSVA between 2011 and 2023. Declines in crops, livestock, and fisheries underline productivity challenges, worsened by traditional Jhum practices. Forestry experienced temporary expansion, notably peaking at 18.83% of GSVA in 2014–15 but has since declined, emphasizing sustainability concerns and underscoring the urgent need for sector modernization.

Horticulture as an Emerging Livelihood: Alternative Horticulture emerges strongly, with production surging notably in recent years; vegetables increased from 181.63 thousand MT in 2019–20 to 224.56 thousand MT by 2022–23, despite minimal area expansion. Successful exports, particularly pineapple and dragon fruit, earning ₹6.96 crore in 2022–23, demonstrate significant commercial potential. Technological adoption through polyhouses, covering 60,000 sqm in 2022–23, indicates a positive shift from traditional Jhum cultivation, promising improved rural incomes and environmental benefits.

Industrial Sector: Infrastructure-led Growth Construction and utilities underpin secondary sector expansion, with GSVA rising significantly from ₹89,328 lakh in 2011–12 to ₹175,715 lakh by 2022–23, driven by public infrastructure and hydropower projects. Manufacturing, however, remains modest, fluctuating between ₹6,578 lakh and ₹13,004 lakh over the decade, highlighting a need for targeted policy support, skilled labour development, and better connectivity to strengthen industrial growth.

Service Sector Dominance & Emerging Opportunities: The tertiary sector remains dominant, growing steadily from ₹4.41 lakh crore in 2011–12 to ₹10.39 lakh crore in 2022–23, reflecting Mizoram's pronounced economic shift towards services. Trade, hospitality, and public administration have grown robustly, yet limited transport infrastructure significantly curtails full sector potential. Enhancements in logistics, IT services, and tourism infrastructure could further accelerate and diversify sectoral growth.

Logistics as the Key to Mizoram's Development: Though Mizoram is land-locked, its extensive rivers can be the gateway both to the rest of the Northeast through the Barak Valley and to the rest of the world through the seaports of Chittagong in Bangladesh and Sittwe in Myanmar. We have already explained the geography of this in section 3.1.1. It requires the active leadership of the Government of India to convert these potential waterways.

Income Trends & Poverty Reduction: Per capita income in Mizoram increased significantly from ₹57,654 in 2011–12 to ₹2,32,126 in 2022–23, underscoring robust economic growth and effective poverty reduction, with the multidimensional poverty rate declining from 9.78% to 5.30% between 2015 and 2021. Despite these gains, stark gender income disparities persist, as females earn only ₹4,002 monthly compared to males' ₹12,111, calling for targeted empowerment and gender-equitable economic policies.

Consumption Patterns & Living Standards: Household consumption expenditure surpasses national averages, with rural households spending ₹5,963 monthly against the national rural average of ₹4,122, and urban spending at ₹8,709 compared to ₹6,996 nationally. Balanced expenditure on food and non-food categories highlights improved socio-economic conditions, yet expenditure disparities across fractiles suggest ongoing intra-regional inequalities, necessitating inclusive growth strategies.

Labour Market Participation Trends: Overall labour participation in Mizoram stands moderate at 40.4%, significantly lower among youth (26%), suggesting prolonged educational engagement or limited employment opportunities. Encouragingly, urban female participation is relatively progressive at 45.3%, substantially higher than the national urban female average (31.2%), indicating potential avenues for inclusive economic growth if supported by effective employment policies.

Employment Distribution: Informality and Entrepreneurship Employment in Mizoram strongly emphasizes entrepreneurial and self-employment activities, especially among women, with 85.7% involved in self-employment compared to the national average of 67.4%. The notably low reliance on casual labour, only 4% rural and 3.6% urban, underscores robust informal economic stability. However, limited formal sector opportunities highlight an urgent need for targeted support towards small enterprises and formal job creation to ensure sustainable livelihoods.

Unemployment & NEET Status: Youth Challenges Youth unemployment in Mizoram, particularly urban, is notably high at 19.6%, well above the national urban average of 14.7%, highlighting significant transition challenges from education to employment. Though overall unemployment remains low (2.3%), considerable NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) rates persist among young females at 8.9%, pointing towards gender-specific vulnerabilities and the urgent requirement for targeted youth-oriented employment and training programs.

Mizoram's banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sector has witnessed notable progress in recent years, driven by governmental initiatives, increased financial inclusion, and expansion of digital banking infrastructure. However, key challenges such as limited credit availability, uneven rural-urban banking distribution, and relatively lower investment awareness persist. Other financial services like investment in mutual funds and insurance are still in a preliminary stage. Thus, it will be a while before the state is able to mobilise the investment resource it needs.

12. References

Agency, J. I. (2015). *The Study On Development And Management Of Land And Water Resources For Sustainable Agriculture In Mizoram In The Republic Of India.* Aizwal: Minor Irrigation Department, Mizoram Government.

Ambekar, A. A. (2019). *Magnitude of Substance Use in India.* New Delhi: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

Bank, M. R. (2023). *Mizoram Rural Bank Annul Report 2023-23.* Aizawl: Mizoram Rural Bank.

Bhavsar, D., Chakroborty, K., Mohapatra, J., Sarma, K. K., & Aggarwal, S. (2023). Role of Climatic Variables on Forest Fire in the State of Mizoram. In *Disaster Management and Risk Reduction: Multidisciplinary Perspectives and Approaches in the Indian Context* (pp. 283-#09). doi:10.1007/978-981-99-6395-9_20

Biswas, B., & Azyu, A. (2021). Water resources and management system of the Himalayan region: Case study of Mizoram, India. *Nature Environment and Pollution Technology, 20*(1), 193-201. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.46488/NEPT.2021.v20i01.020

Biswas, S., Ghosh, P., Chakraborty, D., Kumar, A., Aggarwal, S., & Saha, M. K. (2020). Variation in Injecting Drug Use Behavior across Different North-eastern States in India. *Indian Journal of Public Health*, 71-75.

Das, J. N. (1990). *A Study of the land system of Mizoram.* Guwahati: Law Research Institute. Eastern Region., North Eastern Council (India).

Devi, C. N. (2024). Empowering Young Women Entrepreneurs for Economic Growth in Mizoram, North East India. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 1045-1051.

Haokip, L. (2019). *Religion and politics in Mizoram: Role of the church.* Mizoram University, Aizawl.: Doctoral dissertation, Mizoram University.

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, I. I. (2019). *Climate Vulnerability Assessment for the Indian Himalayan Region using a Common Framework.* New Delhi: Department of Science & Technology Government of India, in collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC.

Kulkarni, H. (2023, February). Himalayan plunder: Save the springs of the region. *Down To Earth*(1- 15), 1 - 15. Retrieved from https://www.downtoearth.org.in/urbanisation/himalayan-plunder-save-the-springs-of-the-reg

Lalhming Sangi, Z. R. (February 2025). Preliminary investigation on Cyclone Remal-induced landslides in Aizawl, Mizoram, Northeast India, on the 28th of May 2024.

Lalmalsawmzauva, D. K. (2014). *Disparities of Healthcare Facility in Mizoram, India.* Aizawl: Researchgate. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327745772

Lalramnghinglova, H. (2024). Usage and preservation of Mizo traditional medicine by the people of Chungtlang village in Mizoram. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 15.

Lalruatzeli. (2021). *AN ANALYSIS OF CREDIT DEPOSIT RATIO OF MIZORAM RURAL BANKS FOR THE PERIOD 2015 TO 2020.* Department of Management, Government J. Thankima College.

(2020). *Mizoram Economic Survey 2019-20.* Aizawl: Government of Mizoram.

Mizoram, G. o. (1954). *The Assam Lushai Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act, 1954.* Aizwal: Mizoram Law and Judicial Department.

Monsang, N. &. (2021). Climate Change and Mizoram: Vulnerability Status and Future Projections. In *Mizoram: Environment, Development, and Climate Change* (pp. 33-40). New Delhi: Today and Tomorrow's Printers and Publishers.

N.Pautunthang. (2024). Levels and Patterns of Urbanization in Mizoram. *The Review of Contemporary Scientific and Academic Studies, 4*(3). doi:https://doi.org/10.55454/rcsas.4.03.2024.001

Naulak, T. (2021). Internal migration in Mizoram: HIghlights of cesus data. *Jounal of Civil & Legal Sciences, 10*(9). doi:https://doi.org/10.4172/2169-0170.1000288

Ralte, L. (2017). Towards Understanding Civil Society–Government Relationship:the Study of Young Mizo Association (YMA) in Mizoram. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, 24-32.

Ramhnehzauva, C. (2023, Jan - Feb). Assessment of availability of water at various domestic water sources in Aizawl City, Mizoram (India). *SSRG International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 10*(1), 1- 7. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.14445/23942703/IJHSS-V10I1P101

Renthlei, L. (2019). Socio-Economic Conditions of Handloom Weavers: A Case Study of Weavers in Zuangtui Cluster, Aizawl, Mizoram. *Senhri Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 54–62.

Sailo, M. L., & Laldinliana, P. (2024). Handloom and Master Weavers Operation in Mizoram: A Case Study of Thenzawl Handloom Cluster. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 799–805.

Singh, A. (2017). Urbanization in Mizoram: Characteristics and correalates. *The Geographer*, 21-31.

Singh, N. W. (2012). Politics of divine edict and reverse secularism. *Economic & Political Weekly*(52), 23-24. Retrieved from https://www.epw.in/journal/2012/52/mizoram-states-columns/politics-divine-edict-and-reverse-secularism.html

Singh, N. W. (2021). Invented Scripts, Missionaries and Officials in Colonial Mizoram. *Economic & Political Weekly, 56*(3), 27-29.

Zarzosanga. (2016). The Mizo Cultural Society: Its role and influence in the insurgency movement. *Contemporary Social Scientist*, 59-65.

An Analysis of the Current Status of the Environment, Society and Economy of Mizoram and a NEW Strategy for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth of Mizoram

Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies
Jawahar Bhawan, Dr Rajendra Prasad Road,
New Delhi 110 001 India
T- 011 2331 2456, 2375 5117 / 118

RAJIV GANDHI
INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY STUDIES

Visit us at- www.rgics.org |