CHAPTER 4

IMPACT OF STATE AND DISTRICT LIBRARIES ON SOCIO-CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
4.1 Introduction

Man is human by distinctive culture within the society. ‘Without culture, we would not be human at all’. (Giddens;1997;18). Society and culture are two complementary terms that go hand-in-hand. It is difficult to separate one from the other. There can be different sub-cultures within a society that may change from time to time. Culture is not changed by itself but by certain factors that influence the society. Library is one of the factors that changed the culture of certain groups within a society. Impact of State and District libraries on Socio-cultural development particularly on Mizo society is being discussed below to aware the importance of library services for the community.

4.2 Meaning of Socio-Culture

Men, as social animal, have always sought to examine themselves and their social life. Several intellectual disciplines such as theology, economics, political science, history, psychology and ethics were developed to explain different aspects of human enterprises. In the mean time, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), known as father of sociology, felt the need to create new discipline to deal with social institutions as marriage, family and community as well as the numerous social structures and processes. Thus, Comte combined two terms ‘socius’, Latin for society, and ‘logos’, Greek for studying, and coined ‘sociology’ which literally means ‘study of society’.

He suggested that sociology’s most important job would be to study the small unit of society such as the family and community to find out how these groups produce self-sacrifice, loyalty, mutual respect, and all the other basic kinds of social bonds needed to tie members of a large, complex society together. (Denisoff and Wahram; 1983;17). Some other theorists on sociology, namely, Karl Marx(1818-1883); Herbert Spencer (1820-1903); Emile Durkheim (1858-1917); and Max Weber (1864-1920) came up after Auguste Comte having coined their views and ideas on sociology. Many development have came up under sociology but not devised far from its original path. It can be argue that sociology is one of the groups of social sciences, that studies human groups and societies concerning social interactions, social groups, and social behavior. Society and culture are very important
phenomena of sociology and as such sociological knowledge is a knowledge of
causal connections, or connections of interdependence among wide range of
phenomena such as the conduct of individuals in institutions like families, churches
and sects, workshops, armies, civic and political associations, territorial, ethnic and
national communities; the patterns of relationship among individuals; the role of
structure and authority in the working of institutions and communities; the
stratification of societies; communities and institutions with respect to income and
status or difference; the role of cognitive and normative beliefs in the actions of
individuals and in the functioning of communities, institutions and societies. (Kuper
and Kuper; 1985; 799-800).

All human societies have a religion, a spoken language, a kinship system, and
considerable technology. Edward B. Taylor defined culture as, ‘The complex whole
which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other
capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society’. (Abraham;
2006; 53). Culture covers the way of life of a social group consisting of belief,
values, standards, practice, language, and technology shared by members of a social
group. Culture refers to the ways of life of the members of a society, or of groups
within a society. It includes how they dress, their marriage customs and family life,
their patterns of work, religious ceremonies and leisure pursuits. (Giddens; 1997; 18).
A society may be big or small, but the social group may have distinct culture within
the society. Culture is not static; but elements of culture change from time to time.
The society has abandoned many belief systems and cultural practices which are not
consistent with the present scientific evidence. Many myths and numerous
superstititious are now exploded and the way of life, like cooking and eating habits,
dress and marriage system are also changed. ‘No cultures could exist without
societies. But equally, no societies could exist without culture’. (Giddens; 1997; 18).

A socio-cultural approach is the roles of different ethnic groups, gender and the
culture; with all these elements combined it forms a personality. Socio-culture is the
way of people act and develops based on around their surroundings. Socio-cultural
factors involve self-concept and self-esteem. It is based upon people’s belief and
what they stand for. There can be many different things that can make a person
popular. Such things can be a persons’ values, belief, language, norms or
technology. These entire factors are part of culture. They may be small but influence personal life of a society. Therefore, socio-culture is the actions that we choose to do, to become what we are.

4.3 Role of Public Library in the Socio-cultural Development

The purpose of a library in modern society is to educate the community in the widest sense. Society consists of various groups of community belonging to one or other social group, such as shopkeepers, businessmen, technicians, bureaucrats, clerks, students, educationists, teachers, engineers, doctor, intellectuals, mechanics, agriculturists, farmers, labours, etc. The interest of knowledge of these different groups of people within the society is very much varied according to their human needs. The primary role of public library, such as State Library, District Library, Block Library, Tehsil Library, Taluka Library, Village Library and others is to provide the best information facilities to all those library users in the community. Library and society are interlinked and interdependent. Society without libraries has no significance, and libraries without society has no origin….it is regarded as ‘social institution’, a product of society for its cultural advancement. (Khanna;1987;7).

IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto stated that:

“The Public library is the local center of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users. The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status”. (IFLA/UNESCO;1994;1).

Public library as a local center of information has to be organized effectively by the authority by ensuring its accessibility to all the sections of the society. “The public library service acts as an intellectual catalyst for socio-cultural development by providing facilities for the purposes of acquiring education and information as well as recreation, aesthetic appreciation and research”. (Rath;1996;15). It should serve the users with free of cost to all age groups at everywhere with the best possible means. The collection of public library should focus all the sections of the society to provide their information needs in educating their personal life and social attitudes as well. G.L.Trehan stated that, “It is the social function of the library to provide
book service to the community. Library is the only organized social institution which fosters the reading of books”. (Trehan:1980;44).

Public library exists to serve the community. It has a very important role to play in the future development of the country particularly in the socio-cultural and educational enlightenment. Role of public library on social-cultural development can be narrate as below:

4.3.1 Cultural Center for the Society

A public library functions as a cultural center of the society. It provides and focuses for cultural and artistic development in the community and helping to shape and support the cultural identity of the community. Public Library Mission stated that, “promotion awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations”. (IFLA/UNESCO;1994;3). The public library collects all documents related to different cultural fields and promotes awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of arts and scientific innovations through its services. It does not only preserve documents of cultural heritage, but also organized cultural programmes through its audio-visual services and inter-cultural activities as well. It also provides access to cultural expressions of all visual and performing arts. These can be achieved by collaborating with other organizations or partnership within the local, national or international level by organizing cultural programmes and by ensuring the interest of the local community. Rath said that, “If national and university libraries are the barometer of a country’s erudition, public libraries are the barometer of its general culture”. (Rath:1996:26). The description of library as ‘mind of society’, the ‘community’s intellectual center’ reflects its influence in moulding the life of the community. (Khanna:1987:xxii). It should be a key agency in the local community for the collection, preservation and promotion of local culture in all its diversity. Public libraries in a developing society should:

- preserve cultural heritage;
- provide access to all form of cultural expression;
- make efforts to foster inter-cultural dialogue;
- favour cultural diversity; and
- support oral tradition. (Venkatappaiah;2007;72-73).
4.3.2 Community Information Center

In an information age, the key function of the public library is to provide up-to-date facts and information to all the sections of the community. The Public Library Manifesto mission stated that, “ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information”. (IFLA/UNESCO;1994;3). Information needs of various citizens may vary from person to person, but public library by its nomenclature should serve its best to provide and quench the users information desire. Some of the roles in providing information are:

- providing access to information at all levels;
- collecting information about the local community and making it readily accessible, often in co-operation with other organizations;
- training people of all ages in the use of information and the associated technology;
- guiding users to the appropriate information sources;
- providing opportunities for disabled people to have independent access to information; and
- acting as a gateway to the information world by making it accessible to all, thus helping to bridge the gap between ‘the information rich’ and ‘the information poor. (IFLA/UNESCO;2001;30-31).

Public library, besides its reference and information services, may organize community information service considering the local situation. In organizing community information service, social, cultural, economic, educational level, racial, employment opportunities, religious differences, etc. may be considered since it may different from one community to the other within the locality. The community information service attend the following two types of information requirements of the society:

1) Information requirements of an individual related to food, clothing, health, shelter, education savings, investment, material problems, legal right, employment, travel, environment, business, etc.
2) Information related to social, economic and political responsibilities and duties of citizens, functioning of local self-government, pollution control, developmental project, etc.

3) Information related to birth control, childcare, nutrition, immunization, infertility, sanitary and health care services and special training on cooking, interior decoration, embroidery, sewing, social and ethical responsibilities, etc. may be organized for local women. (Kaula;2006;12).

Public library is for the community and is the community agency to provide local information needs in various forms. It should provide those information by documents or oral, printed or electronic devices. For arranging free access to information, the public libraries should:

- provide basic information for the down trodden people;
- provide access to all citizens for all types of information at all levels;
- develop local histories;
- develop community information service;
- utilize the service of National Informatics Centers; and
- introduce computer skills for achieving speed, accuracy and bulk in service.

Diana Formway, who lives in New York and organizes a stack of multicolored children’s novel said that, “Libraries showed me what was out there in the world as well as connected me to other people and places outside my small town in upstate New York”. (McVey and Long;2006;2). This simple statement affirmed that library give us information about what’s happening in and around the world.

4.3.3 Recreation Center

Public library services provide creativity development to the children and local young adults by providing recreational reading books for their personality development and spiritual growth in their leisure time. Recreation in library discussion denotes ‘such of leisure time as will promote personal happiness and social well being’. (Khanna;1987;39). Public Library Manifesto in its mission stated that, “stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people”. 

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(IFLA/UNESCO;1994;3). Children and young adults basically need special care in their personality development to meet the challenges of the society. “Young people between childhood and adulthood develop as individual members of the society with their own culture”. (IFLA/UNESCO;2001;27). The library should know their information needs and should develop good collection for leisure readings like biographies, sports and games, travel books, religious books, audio-visual materials, magazines, popular novels, etc. including electronic information resources. Story hours, puppet shows, dramas, and other events like book discussion may also be organized in a library. Collection of reading materials that suffice local youth information needs may help them to feel that the library is mean for them and help them to overcome a feeling of alienation from the library or even from the society as well.

In order to facilitate local youths by this library service, special training may be essential for the library staff to cover customer care service. Young adults are feel shy and need care and help in different areas of activities. This is the best period to guide them in the right direction to become good citizen and sociable in the society. Children’s Club or Youth Club may also be formed to organize cultural programmes, such as, art competition, concerts, film shows, story hour, etc. The public library must aware of the cultural and social changes in the community and develop flexible services to meet the challenges in these situations.

4.3.4 Knowledge Center for Disadvantaged People of the Society

Public Library Manifesto in its missions statement stated that, “Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospitals or prison”. (IFLA/INESCO;1994;3). The public library services have no limitation. It covers even the remotest area of the country. All people in the society should have equal opportunity to access information from the library to develop their knowledge in one way or the other. Prisoners, patients in the hospital bed, blind persons, inmates of the rehabilitation centers, etc. should also have an opportunity to access information at their respective places with free of charge. This accessibility can be achieved by extension services. Book-mobile/mobile library, audio-visual programme, concerts or extension lending
services may be adopted to provide such facilities to those disadvantaged persons. Special training programmes on information and communication technology may also be organized to the physically handicapped persons for their rehabilitation.

4.3.5 Creativity Center for Children

One common saying is that, “Children are the future leader of the nation”. This depicts importance of care and teaching to the children. The Bible says, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it”. (Proverbs 22:6). We cannot ignore our children to guide and give training for their future in the society. Children borne with different creativity mind that needs to be explore and developed. The children’s section of the public library is organized and operated in such a manner that it takes special care for creating and reading habits in children from an early age. This section may be equipped with picture, children book, toys, etc. that can develop and stimulate children’s attitudes and personal growth and programmes, like film shows, fancy dress, story hours, dramas, recitation, etc. may be organized to bring awareness among children. If our children are provided with their creativity developmental sets, they will bear in mind and will follow when they grow old and can behave as good citizen of the community. They have the same right to access library services since they are within the society. We can, therefore, organize public library as a play center as well as creativity development center of the child.

4.3.6 Center of Communal Harmony and National Integration

A nation’s prime role is cordial relationship among the citizens of different cultures within the society. No country stand with single community, race, religion, caste, rituals, etc. As common saying stated, ‘United we stand, divided we fall’, every nation want to have united citizen in every respect. At the same time, every country has its own diplomacy to the other to construct cordial relationship in one way or the other.

As communal harmony and national integration are prime problems of today, meeting between the social leaders and local community in order to build up confidence and remove misunderstandings and prejudices would be advisable. Library could arrange such meetings by its own or in collaboration with other organizations providing wholesome recreation to all. Public libraries having served
the nation with equal treatment play an important role for the unity, co-operation and national integration of a country. Through its provided services it can lead the people to the common front. There may be different castes/tribes within in a society having their own culture, but library services may bring together to the same integrity. This service is very clear in the case of India. India is a vast country, comprising different culture, religion, castes/tribes, etc. It is said that India is a land of diversity. In this situation, the prime importance of India is national integration. Library is the best agent for the national integration in India through its innumerable services.

4.3.7 Community Resource Center
Former Prime Minister, Mr. P V Narasimha Rao, while inaugurating the first “Chief Ministers Conference on Rural Development” on 8 October 1992, he urged the Chief Ministers to take personal interest in rural development programme by stating there is “no other programme which is more important than rural programme. Out of Rs.30,000 crores outlay during Eight Five Year Plan, 6-8 was to be earmarked for the establishment and maintenance of Rural Library and Community Resource Center(RLCRC). The local community can develop their personal intellects through the library services, namely, reading, film shows, seminars/workshops, lectures, etc. Public library is the best institution of the society to learn and disseminate their knowledge. It is nit only a center of information and knowledge, but also to educate and train the other citizens to become resourceful and intellect to the society as well.

4.3.8 Bridging the Digital Divide of Local Community
Digital divide means the unequal and disproportionate pace of development in society having access to digital information, infrastructure (ICTs) and other ICT-based service. There is a wide division between those who have real access to ICT and are using it effectively, and those who don’t. Some of the factors that lead to digital divide are due to:

- poor physical infrastructure;
- unstable government;
- lack of strong ICT policy;
- higher in rural population;
• gender disability;
• poverty;
• low literacy rate; and
• linguistic diversity. (Ngurtinkhuma;2005;78).

Access of the right information at the right time at the least cost is the search of a person at this information age. Research and development increase new areas of knowledge but tainted one’s idea. New development in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), though it is a new way of development in science & technology, it creates certain problems between the community, ‘information rich’ and information poor’ or ‘who have’ and ‘who have not’. The community consists of various localities, rich and poor or educated and uneducated, all need to have the same skill to access their personal information requirements. This diversification creates exclusiveness to those who have not of the latest technology to access their information needs. Exclusiveness in the society may result anti-social activities of the people.

Public library is the only institution that can provide equal chance to the society to access information need by the latest technology with free of cost. (Ngurtinkhuma;2005;78). By accessing information need through public library services, local community can have the same opportunity and their exclusiveness may be conquered. In other words, the public library services can bridge the digital divide through its ICT services to the community with free of cost.

### 4.4 Mizoram Perspective

Historically, Lushai or Mizo are intelligent tribe of Mongoloid Hillman inhabiting parts of the wild forest-covered mountainous region forming the watershed between India and Burma. ‘The ancestral home would appear to have been somewhere in the neighborhood of S.E.Tibet and Western China, whence, by slow degrees through the centuries, they have passed southward and westward to their present habitat’. (Lorrain;1940;v).
During the administration of District Council in Mizoram, the first public library, i.e. District Library was established in Aizawl in 1968 and afterwards State Library and other four District Libraries were established during the UT Administration to serve the people of Mizoram through library services. And afterwards, the State Legislative Assembly passed the Mizoram Public Libraries Bill in 1993. The Government of Mizoram had been contributing Rs.1, 57,20,000 to the RRRLF Matching Scheme during the last twenty-six years, 1982-83 to 2007-08; average annual contributions is Rs.6,04,615.38, and 424 village/NGO libraries were also recognized.

The tribal community of Mizo has distinct social and cultural life from the rest of the people of India. There have been many changes in the socio-cultural life of the people through the ages. The researcher have conducted personal interview on the socio-cultural development of Mizoram; and describes impact of State and District Libraries on socio-cultural development of Mizoram with the support of respondents and personal interview held on various occasions; but the responses were more or less the same and stated as below:

### 4.4.1 Impact on Social Life

The contributions of the Christian Missionaries for the development of Mizo society are very wonderful. Sixty-two Christian Missionaries from United Kingdom worked in Mizoram during 1894-1977. They did not come only for Gospel evangelical work but also for social evangelism to support and strengthen the people in different ways of life. As a result, 87% of the total populations are Christian in Mizoram. According to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes Lists (Modification) Order, 1956 and as inserted by Act 81 of 1971of Indian Parliament, Mizo belongs to the Scheduled Tribe, and as such out of the total population of the state, 94.46% are Schedule Tribe, 0.03% Scheduled Caste and 5.51% are other social groups in 2001. (Census of India).

A Mizo village was independent and governed by its own chief, known as *Lal*, who was a despot in his own jurisdiction. His words were law in his territory, all that was in the village belong to him, and he could call upon his subjects to furnish him with anything that he needed. All disputes and cases were to be decided by him.
His Upa, who formed his council of advisers, assisted the Chief. The villagers had to pay taxes to the Chief called fathang. In a village, there are Ramhual, who are an agriculturist, had to pay more taxes than commoners. There were also free citizens, known as zalen, they were exempted from taxes. Zalen were respected and were friends to the chief who helped him whenever he needed to entertain guests. (Darchhawna;2007;2).

Family is one of the oldest institutions in human society. As such family occupies an important and prominent place in the history of the Mizo society. Father is head of the family, who exercise family administration. At mealtime head of the family normally gave instructions, what they should do and not to do to the other members. (Siama;78;30). It is also an important occasion to teach manners and etiquettes.

Mizo unmarried men are supposed to stayed at Zawlbuk (a bachelor’s dormitory). Men are responsible to the society, being guards of the village from enemies; so that they should be at one place at night for emergency circumstances. Zawlbuk being an important social institution has three fold functions; such as:

- It served as a sleeping place and recreational center for unmarried as well as young married men;
- It imparted training and taught discipline to young boys and even the rude people in the village were disciplined and put under control; and
- It also served as an inn for a man from another village. (Sangkima;1992;39).

Another institution in Mizo society there exists since immemorial was bawi. A person who surrenders himself to a Mizo Chief for any reason was commonly called a bawi. There are four kinds of bawi, such as,

1. *Inpuichhung bawi* – Those who had been driven by starvation to take refuge in the chief’s house. Widows, orphans and other who were unable to support themselves and had no relatives willing to do so formed the bulk of this type of bawi.

2. *Chemsen bawi* – Those criminals who, to escape from the consequences of their ill deeds took refuge in the chief’s house. Murderers and debtors who were unable to pay their creditors were in this category.
(3) **Tuklut bawi** – Those persons who, during war, had deserted the losing side and joined the victors by promising that they and their descendants would be *bawi*.

(4) **Sal** – Those persons captured in raids are called *sal*. They performed works for the *bawi* and their children were treated as *bawi*. The price of their release depended entirely on the goodwill of the owners. (Darchhawna;2007;3).

The Mizo have three important festivals, signifying different occasions, like *Chapchar Kut*, *Mim Kut* and *Pawl Kkut*. *Chapchar Kut* is spring festival celebrated after the clearing of jungles for their jhum cultivation. Particularly it is a festival of youth, to which boys and girls look forward. *Mim Kut* is especially reserved for the dead persons. The first corn of the year was offered to the dead body by his/her relatives. *Pawl Kut* is harvest festival, held at the end of harvest. It is especially for the children though grown-up people also take part in the festival. But, only *Chapcha Kut* is celebrated today, which is also very different from the original celebrations. This is due to the development of the society in various ways of life through certain means of communications and informations.

All these social impact of Mizo society has no longer existed today. Now, the elected persons representing the people of the state administered the state and villages democratically. *Zawlbuk* do not existed, there were no *bawi* system and no taxes were given to the village administrators directly.

The social life of Mizo has been changing and developing towards the progressive livelihood. In this course of time, the State and District Libraries of Mizoram also have an impact towards the development of the society. The researcher has described the following points in this regard:

1. Collections of State and District Libraries give the community information about the life and standards of other societies. The reader may have educated himself to have better livelihood and style of living through such documents. Library is a center of such information for the local communities since many
people are not afford to buy such documents from their own resources. It helps us to know social life of other community, which makes us sociable to other community.

2. The reading materials provided by the libraries has been giving knowledge and wisdom to the society. Through its provided reading materials we can learn about health, beauty care, manners, legal activities, etc.

3. It gives us awareness of other societies that brings changes of the social life of the community. It is also a center of national integration by its various services rendered to different societies of the state.

4. Man’s social life in influence by its environments. Likewise, library changes social life in positive or negative way through its various kinds of information provided to the readers. Good books impart good moral, which build societal development in the right way of livelihood.

5. It also builds up knowledge and wisdom to develop the society. Documents we read in the library changes our mind set, which may influence the society. One can have high thinking from the developed societies.

6. Library books bring good results for our day-to-day works and educational field as well, which is an important agent to develop and changes social life.

7. Library gives how a society should be and the value of different cultures. It motivates to do something useful for the society and it gives confidence in running and organizing social and cultural activities.

8. Library is the best available information center to retrieve and disseminate informations to the society and preserves cultural heritage. Library directs social life of the society. Library builds up human character and since we have these libraries, our social life has been changing in various directions.

9. Gives us environmental awareness to adapt our livelihood accordingly.
10. It gives us political awareness though its collections from which we can understand about the political situations of other nations/states. It directs us to the political consciousness of the society.

4.4.2 Impact on Cultural Life

Like other human communities, Mizo have their own distinctive culture, quite different from the Buddhists, Hindu and Islamic cultures. The Mizo had very little contact with the outside world prior to the coming of the British, as such the influence of other cultures and religion upon them was very limited. (Darchhawna;2007;2).

The Mizo have their own customary law, in which marriage occupies the central point of the law. In the Mizo society, free mixing of boys and girls is permitted, and the young man, in advance, can obtain the tacit consent of a girl to a marriage and thus pave ways for a smooth negotiation with his parents through Palai (mediator). Then the bride’s price will be fixed; basically the girl’s parents can demand anything for the brides’ price, which have two categories. Manpui and Mantang. Mantang is sub-divided into different heads, like Sunhmahruai, Pu sum, Pa lai, Ni ar, Naupuakpuan, and Sumfang that will be distributed to the relatives of the girl accordingly.

The treatment and disposal of dead bodies was another culture of the society. Before the coming of the British, the dead body was disposed of by kuangur, but it was stopped and dead body were buried in a common burial ground known as thlanmual. (Sangkima;1992;141). If a person die, all the villagers will go to the dead man’s house to condole the bereaved family and will them in different ways.

The Mizos, blessed as they are with a beautiful environment and rich culture, are a vibrant and sociable people. They love to dance, and can boast a number of folk and community dances which have been handed down from one generation to the other through the ages. Famous dances of Mizo are, Cheraw, colorful dance with the help and support of bamboo; Khuallam, normally performed by men of distant relatives attending Khuangchawi dressed with Pawndum; Chheih Lam, usually performed by men with some friend normally at evening; Chai, is a community dance at the time
of merry making; *Rallu Lam*, is a warriors’ dance; *Solakia*, a victory dance over an enemy; and *Par Lam*, colorful dance usually performed by girls to show happiness.

The department of Art & Culture occasionally organized programs, like seminar and workshop on different aspects of Mizo culture and society, like folk song competition, Mizo traditional song competition, cultural dance competition, drama competition based on Mizo stories, music festival, etc. having invaluable contribution for the preservation of Mizo culture. Most of these competitions are organized among the cultural clubs and Branch YMA. As a result, Mizo culture is rooted in the minds of the community. Mizo dress and other traditional items have become known to the generations.

As stated above, Mizo have their own culture since immemorial, but some of these cultural life were no longer existed due to certain developments within the society. These changes are basically takes place after the coming and influence of the British and other world. The establishment of State and District Libraries gave various knowledge about the culture of the other states/nations, and its impact on Mizo culture is stated below:

1. The marriage arrangement has been changing due to the influence of the other societies. In this course of time, State and District Libraries may act as center to educate the people through its collection of documents and other organized programs, like cultural exhibition, lectures, workshops, etc.

2. The cultural dances of Mizoram has been modified to be more beautiful but without losing its originality. Cultural identity is an important aspect of modern life, and the libraries can preserved our cultural identity through its services and preservation of documents in this regards.

3. Library documents gave its readers about the culture of other societies. If we know some similarities with our cultures, we can feel that our culture is not very far from them and which can give us sociable with those societies.
4. State and District Libraries acted as inventories and depositories of cultural activities through its collection of documents and extension services. It is the best means for the preservation of our culture through its collections.

5. Frequent library users equipped themselves with informations and knowledge, which help them exercise their logical thinking positively. This in turn brings gradual change in the lifestyle as well as cultural ethos.

4.4.3 Impact on Economic Condition

Economic condition is one of the factors for the development of a society. To have decent society a country must be economically developed but a societal development solely determined by its economic development. (Sangkima;1992;93). Before the coming of the British, the people used only barter economy and the economic condition was very poor. Consequent upon the coming of the British, people began to use money as well as earning it through selling of their goods especially to the English people as a result of introduction of money and traders also entered from abroad mostly Bengalis. Major H.W.G.Cole, Superintendent of Lushai Hills, started Aizawl bazaar in 1910(Liangkhaia;2002;159). This had been one of the factors that change economic conditions of the state, and as a result, now Aizawl became one of the most important market place in North East of India.

Mizoram economy had been relied on agriculture. Agriculture is the main occupation with more than 80% of the population depending upon agriculture and allied sector, and as such, most of the households engaged in jhum cultivation. Horticulture has been developing and the main products are orange, banana, pineapple passion fruit, and lemon. Due to the increase of population and growth in various fields of developments, the economy of Mizoram has been developing in Co-operative movement and industries. According to the census report of 2001, Cultivators in Mizoram are 58.1% of the total population, Agricultural laborers are 5.9%, Household industry workers are 1.5% and other workers are 34.5%. (Census of India;2001). The state per capita income (at current prices) is Rs.21,327 in 2003-04.(Mizoram;2006). Library, through its various collection, can act as means for taking stock of informations for the economic development of a society. The impact
of State and District Libraries on the economy of Mizoram, through its various services is stated below:

1. The economy of a society depends on what the society is. As it has impact on social life of the society, its impact on economy cannot be ignored. The library books provide various information on the economy of others and from which we can learn many valuable lessons in regard to our own state economy.

2. Each family has their own management. The library is the source for the study of home economics through its collations on such kind of information materials.

3. Through the library books, self-employed persons can have right direction in their employment and that helps them for the economic condition of their family.

4. Library are very helpful to provide instructions on cooking, health, gardening, weaving, and looking after of children which is taken care by women in Mizo society. These services have an important impact on the family of the society or could change family earnings.

4.4.4 Impact on Religion and Belief

The Mizos believed in a supreme God whom they called *Pathian*, but it was not believed that He had much to do with them in their daily life. (Lloyd;nd;19). He was good God, never doing any harm to human beings. Therefore, they conceived the idea that they need not offer sacrifices to him. When they were blessed with good fortunes, they said *Pathian a tha* (God is good) and when they were in a state of fear they uttered, *Pathian in zah a ngai ang chu* (God will mercy upon us). But when misfortunes frequented them, they said, *Pathian a thin ur* (God is angry with us). (Challiana;1978;29,30).

The Mizo believed in the existence of evil spirits, commonly known as *Ramhuai*. This evil spirit is the source of all illness and misfortunes and were terribly afraid of it and hence, utmost care was taken to avoid cursing of these spirits. They worshiped
big trees, stones, mountains and water, since they believe that the evil spirit dwelt in it. They can take different form they liked, as tiger, fire, wind, etc. Therefore, they frequently offered sacrifices to please these evil spirits. (Sangkima;1992;53). There are different kinds of sacrificial ceremonies depending upon the circumstances.

The Mizo believed in life after death at Mitthi Khua (dead man’s village) and Pialral (paradise) somewhere beyond this world. The people who earned Thangchhuah in this world go to Pialral where life was luxurious, plenty to eat and no work to do, but others go to Mitthi Khua, where life was dull and colorless and a shadowy existence and they continue work and toil like they do in this world. (Darchhawna;2007;7). This belief in Pialral and Mitthi Khua was instrumental in shaping the norms and values of the Mizo. (Hluna;1992;19).

Mizo are very superstitious. They are afraid of dried skull of many things, like dried skull of monkey, big banyan tree, separating a family member to north and south on the same day, cutting of nails at night, etc. They belief that the superstitious acts can cause ill-fated to oneself or the other family member.

But the coming of the Christian Missionaries changed the religious belief of the people of Mizo. In no time, they converted into Christianity and observed Christian ways and celebrations, while abandoning their former religious rite, beliefs and rituals. (Lalrimawia;1995;129). The Christian Missionaries has contributed tremendous developmental works for the Mizo society. Consequent upon their work, Mizo used to have one common language, known as Mizo Tawng (Mizo Language), which unite different tribes of the society. The main religious communities of Mizoram are given with Table 4.1 below. (Census of India 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religions</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>7,72,809</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>70,494</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>31,562</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>10,099</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>2,443</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion not stated</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1: Religious Community of Mizoram

On the influence of the Christianity and the Missionaries, the government established social institutions, including State and District Libraries. These Libraries has also play roles for the development of the people of the state in one way or the other and hence, the researcher described impact of State and District Libraries on religion and belief as follows:

1. The State and District Libraries collected different documents concerning religious belief and other related materials which can illustrated the primitive religious acts of the society.

2. The library users could understand about the religious activities of various religions through the collected documents of the libraries. This can caused changes in the religions and belief of the society. They are the most important institutions to collect and serve the society through its services on religion.

3. The superstitions of Mizo are now being driven out due to the information and knowledge provided by libraries from various sources. Library changes various belief and superstitions of the Mizo society.

Mizo are very fond of books and reading. But due to the low economic condition, many persons are not afforded to buy books from their own resources. The most important resources are library books. One of the respondents said that I saw many persons borrowing library books. During 1980s, I visited State or District libraries at least twice in a week, but now I have no much acquainted with these libraries, however. I am confident that local libraries run by YMA/NGO are very useful for the local communities. If you go to the villages, you will see that one book will be read by at least three persons in a week. None of the books in their local libraries are lying idle; at least five or six persons have gone through it. Books supplied by RRRLF though State Library Committee is very resourceful to them.
Many readers might not feel that the books they read had influence their socio-cultural life, but from the above arguments given by the respondents it is true that the library materials of State and District Libraries of Mizoram has some impact in the society. The political consciousness, social life, work culture, family life, cultural consciousness, religious belief, etc. are influence of the environment. These libraries, therefore, touch the heart of its readers and influence their livelihood. Culture has become one of the most important aspects of any community considering in terms of economy. Most of the tourist interests are culture of the society; traditional items and cultural differences form the others. By considering the economy of the society, library plays an important role in the economy of the country through its holdings and services.

4.5 Conclusion
The State and five District Libraries in Mizoram are treasure for storing and serving important materials to the community. These libraries collect, preserved and conserved documents relating to socio-cultural aspects of the society for future generations. They acted, as center of accessing local information needs relating to the social life of Mizo and other societies. The role played by these libraries for socio-cultural development of the society also has contributed to the educational development of the state that is explained in the next chapter in detailed.

References


Census of India 2001.  


