CHAPTER- VI

CONCLUSION

The term ‘Mizo’ is taken and used as a generic name of the people who belonged to the Tibeto-Burman race and speaking Tibeto-Burman Languages. In a nutshell, the people considered ‘Mizos’ exclusively include the ethnic tribes who are commonly called ‘Chin’ in Myanmar, Kuki and Zomi in Manipur, Kukis under else while THKSCALO in Tripura and ‘Mizos’ in Mizoram.

The Mizos belong to one family tracing to one origin. They share many things in common which make them inseparable as one people having the same traditions and cultures in all aspect of life. These groups of people are also closely connected linguistically. The researcher has found that, these groups of people tracing to same origin and one people craved for unification and know the importance of forging unity among the various tribes who proclaimed themselves a unique tribes. But, there seems to be no agreement and consensus on the name and terminology to represent the whole tribes. However, it should be pointed out that more than 80 per cent of the people are strongly in favour of the generic term ‘Mizo’ to be the nomenclature owing to numbers as well as the influence of Mizo language known far and wide in the length and breadth of the land. Indeed, the language of Mizo can serve as a lingual-franca of the people.

In the history of population movement, the most important factors for migration were both geographical and economical. For instance, people from unproductive land would migrate to more favourable place where productivity of the land is high. In short, we can say that the density of population is directly linked to the productivity of the land. In the same way, the Mizos were also in constant move in the past in search of Jhum land and more favourable place to live as one people. The Mizos were in fact living a life of migrants in the past. The life of these migrants was characterized by constant movement in search of better land for cultivation and for conserving their unique identity.

These groups of people migrated to their present occupied areas during a period between 1400 A.D. and 1950 A.D. The trend of their present state of distribution is the outcome of their dispersal during the process of their migration. It should be noted here that the present settlements of most of
the tribes are as old as 100 years or so. Some of the oldest villages many tribes are also as old as 60 years. This proved that there was an internal migration taking place in search of better jhum field for livelihood and in fear of the dominant tribes or clans. It was in fact during the times of Head Hunting period that the Mizos groups of people were in constant move. It was during this period of movement that the influential tribes and clans became dominant in their own respective lands. This dominant tribes and clans like the Sailo, the Maras and the Pawis were able to establish their hold on various sub-tribes and clans leading to formations of Linguistic regions in their respective areas. The same is true to the Hmars, Paites, the Thados and the Zous. The movement during this period was not restricted by State and International boundaries. It was the land of no man’s land and the land occupied by different clans was ipso facto their land as long as they stay. But it should be noted that they stay longer wherever they can sway control of their claimed land. This simply pointed that there was a constant raid and counter raid among various groups during this period of movement. The reasons were many, one among them was expansionism. This was responsible for leaving the place in fear to preserve and conserve their identity. It has led to the emergence of two types of migratory selection. These two types of migratory selections were “conservative and innovative”. This has brought about the migration selection of the Mizos was for food and conservation. The two ends of migration selection represented by Innovative and Conservative initiated individual movement as well as mass movement by different clans.

The migration selection for the Mizo groups in Manipur and adjoining areas was both innovative and conservative. The purposes of innovative and conservative were equally important among the tribes of Manipur and adjoining areas. The supply of food in their origin place was quite inadequate to support the growing population during those times. As has been mentioned before, due to their increase in population and constant inter-tribal wars in parts of Chin Hills and northern part of Mizoram led to both innovative movement and a movement for conservation. The innovative movement was initiated by their way of life imbedded in shifting cultivation responsible for the decrease in the fertility of the soil and available Jhum field to support the growing population. This made in pertinent to move than stay to avoid starvation. This type of innovative movement was also undertaken during the time of hardships due to famine and drought. The innovative movement was also the need of the social system among the Mizos. The heir ship of the father’s property belongs to the eldest or the youngest son depending upon the clans and tribes. The eldest son or the
youngest son after marrying had to leave his father’s house and started his new family life. In most of the cases, they had moved out to faraway place leading to the spread of the respective clans. In this way generation after generation the whole tribe or clans spread far and wide.

On the other hand, the conservative movement was initiated by the fear of losing identity against the bigger tribes. The origin of village polity had also a big impact on the smaller and insignificant tribes. It had created a political platform for separate and distinct identity for them. This led to the assertion of distinct cultures which they were ready to preserve at all cost. The tendency to remain unique and distinct from the bigger clans made them stay as one people. Thus, the weak and the lesser in population moved elsewhere in the west and north to preserve and conserve their identity and cultures. This type of movement by the smaller tribes to escape social acculturation were highly encouraged when they were given safe haven and protection from Rajas of small independent kingdoms of Tripura, Manipur and Cachar. Thus, the migration selection in this case was conservative.

In brief, we can say that the migration selection of all the tribes of Manipur and adjoining areas was both conservative and innovative. It is interesting to note that they have equally compelled the people to migrate and concentrate in different pockets of the region. It is seen that the risk for starvation and acculturation are very high among all the tribes of Manipur and adjoining regions.

The migration selection of various tribes of Chin-Kuki-Mizo origin of Tripura was both innovative and conservative. According to many of the scholars, the migration and spread of the people was economic in nature. But, from the geographical location of many tribes in time and space pointed the movement was basically initiated by the motive of conservation by many tribes. It was also found out during the field work that the nature of and selection of migration was more of conservative. The migration selection for the Hallam-Kukis and the Darlongs was of more of conservative than innovative. It is particularly true for the Hallam-Kukis and the Darlongs. As had been mentioned at the outset, all the villages were a separate political entity which was ruled and governed by their respective Chiefs. This was responsible for social isolation among various groups. This social isolation in various pockets led to the development of distinct social values as well as cultural ethics. This new development led to complete loyalty to their respective clans which became a very strong contention for supremacy and distinct cultures. This distinct culture
was the strongest in the development of languages and dialects. The languages and the dialects so
developed in complete isolation was the root cause of distinct cultures. Language became the main
factor of separate identity. In most of the cases, dialects became so diverse that not even two
villages of the same people could effectively understand each other. They cherished their new
cultural values and ethics which they wanted to preserve and conserve for all time to come. This is
more particularly true to the smaller tribes among the Mizos. This was followed by a virtual war
among themselves in the form of raid and counter raid for supremacy and fame. The weak and the
lesser in population moved westward and northward first against the most dominant groups to
preserve and conserve their identity or cultures. This proved that the weaker and smaller tribes were
pushed as far as Tripura in the beginning of the 15th century from the present northern part of
Mizoram by bigger groups like the Hmars and the Lushais.

The migration selection for the Lushai or the Mizo was mainly of innovative. The migration
selection shows the prominence of movement due to expansion and spread in search of better jhum
fields. The Mizo group in fact migrated to Jampui range and Sakhan range in search of better Jhum
fields. Nevertheless, the constant movement within Tripura and Mizoram indicated the need to
conserve their identity as well. But, the force of innovative was stronger in this case for the Mizo
groups of Jampui range.

The movement of the Mizo groups of the northern part of Mizoram was mainly innovative
movement. But the purpose of conservation of identity can also be seen as well. The two ends of
migration selection represented by Innovative and Conservative initiated individual movement as
well as mass movement by different clans. The migration selection in northern part of Mizoram
depicts higher the scarcity of food; higher will be the clan movement. In this type of innovative
movement, the other end represented by conservative was a low risk. But, the low risk of losing
identity was compensated by high scarcity of food initiated mass movement. This in turned led to
the spread of migrants in larger areas in a contiguous territory. This is very true to the Mizos who
live now in Mizoram. There was also a positive intermixing and fusion of various clan groups
among the Mizes.

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The purpose for ‘Conservative’ was also quite prominent for many clans who are presently living in the northern part of Mizoram. As has been mentioned at the outset, in this type of migration, the tribes or sub-tribes migrated to other places for fear of bigger tribes who were believed to be enrouted in their land. This kind of movement was indeed necessitated by the constant raid on their Jhum lands by these powerful clans or tribes. When they could not put a checked on the intruders from time to time, they decided to move elsewhere. They moved to areas close to their brethren who were powerful enough to check the impending intruders. It was also a movement to put a unified stand against bigger and more powerful tribes. This type of movement was clearly seen from the Mizo speaking groups against the Pawis, the Suktes and Sendus during the later part of 18th century. This was the reason where most of the Lusei Chiefs crossed over to the Tieu River to this part of their present settlements. They moved to these places due to fear of losing their identity. In this situation, there were also instances when clans and sub-clans of the different tribes and clans decided to stay at their place and finally led to intermixing with the powerful intruders and became one with them.

The Southern Region consists of two autonomous districts council. The migration selections in both of these districts are same and relates to innovative movement. Nevertheless, the motive to live as a separate entity pointed strongly to conservative movement. It is to say that the Maras and the Lais occupied their present settlements site more so of innovative movement. It should also be pointed out that the migration of the Maras and the Pawis were concrete examples of clan movement. The Maras consisted of five principle clan groups. On the other hand, the Pawis consisted of three principle clan groups.

The Pawis and the Maras were also in constant move in search of better Jhum fields and expansion of territories. The availability of food and water necessitated social cohesion and finally led to the establishment of big settlements. With the establishment of big villages, the people were better off in all aspects of life. The population has increased quite sharp which necessitated movement of population in search of better Jhum field. Thus, the geographical conditions coupled with their way of livelihood to earn their living necessitated movement in lesser numbers as well as mass movement in search of better Jhum fields. However, the motive to conserve and preserve their identity could not be ignored altogether. It was a means to survive as distinct people having
distinct cultures. This made it inevitable to migrate for conservation as well. But, it should be noted that the migration selection in the southern Mizoram was of more innovative than conservative.

The movement after demarcation of boundaries was purely innovative. It was also highly restricted movement and only most prospects migrants of getting better economic livelihood move from one place to another. There were also instances of mass movement due to ethnic clashes like the Kuki-Naga Clash and The Thadou (Kuki)-Paite (Zomi) clash, the Hmar-Thado clash, the Hmar-Dimasa clash leading to dispersal as well as concentration of tribes and clans in different regions.

The population of any country or state is unevenly distributed. The same is true to the North eastern India as well. It is particularly true to the area under study. But one very interesting feature of population distribution is the concentration of same tribes or clans in different regions. For instance, the concentration of the Mizo speaking groups in Northern and central Mizoram. The concentration of Thado and Paite speaking groups in Manipur and the Darlongs in Northern Tripura are again glaring examples of their concentration. It also depicts the concentration of few tribes in different pockets of the land. This is a clear implication of clan movement in the past. The distribution and density is high in Mizoram, moderate in Manipur and very sparse in Tripura and Assam.

The total population of the study area spreads over more than 2000 villages and 50 towns. It is considered to be an area of villages. The percentage concentration of Mizos in the study area ranges from only 0.64 percent in South Tripura to 97.97 per cent in Serchhip to the total population of each district. The distributional pattern further indicates that there is a moderate to very high concentration of Mizos in the core regions of concentration and a very low concentration of Mizo population in the peripheral regions of dispersions. This clearly implies the tendency of various clan groups to cluster in different pockets of concentrations. The overall distributional pattern of the Mizo population in the study areas reveals that there are as many as seven districts in the core regions where the percentage share of Mizos to total population is more than 85 percent. These districts are Serchhip, Champhai, Mamit, Kolasib and Aizawl in Mizoram and Churachandpur district of Manipur. Secondly, the district of Lunglei recorded 82.26 per cent of Mizos population to the total population of the district, which fall under high areas of concentrations. There are three districts which have moderate areas of concentrations in the core regions of concentrations. These
districts are the district of Lawngtlai with 51.41 per cent in Mizoram and the districts of Chandel and Senapati of Manipur have a moderate concentration of 45.77 and 28.52 per cent which fall in the category of 25 to 55 per cent of concentration areas. There are three districts where the percentage share of Mizos is 1 to 9 per cent which fall under the category of 1 to 25 per cent concentration areas. These districts are located in the peripheral regions of dispersions. The district of Dima Hasao in Assam recorded only 8.91 per cent of Mizos to the total population. The other two districts are Dhalai and North Tripura districts of Tripura recorded 7.10 per cent and 3.68 per cent respectively. The other areas recorded less than one per cent to the total population and therefore very negligible for the point of view of analyzing and meaningful interpretations. These areas are regarded as insignificant areas.

The population composition of any region comprised of various demographic attributes. Firstly, the population of any region consists of male and female population. It highlights the status of population composition in general of the study area. Secondly, the study will relate to the location and size of settlements in which people prefer to live and why they do so. This constitutes the rural and urban composition of population.

The total population of the Mizos in the core regions of concentration is 11, 20,287 including 5,65,308 males and 5,54,979 females respectively. The male and female composition of population in the core areas does not show so much of disparity in all the districts. The district of Aizawl has more female population than their counterpart male population. The districts of Mamit, Lunglei and Lawngtlai in Mizoram have relatively lesser number of female populations than male populations compare to other districts. Nevertheless, in all these districts except the district of Aizawl male-female composition of population is unfavourable for females. However, in the districts of Serchhip in Mizoram and Chandel in Manipur have almost equal parity in male-female composition.

The total population of the study area under the core regions of concentrations spreads over more than 2000 villages and 22 towns. It is considered to be an area of villages. According to 2001 census, there are twenty two towns in the study area. The maximum of towns where the Mizos are in majority are found in Mizoram. It is followed by the state of Manipur having three towns. The
percentage share of urban population is highest in Mizoram and followed by the state of Manipur. The least percentage of urban population among the Mizos is in the state of Assam. The census publications of rural-urban composition of the tribes are in fact misleading. This is because in a state like Tripura, the percentage of the Mizos living in urban towns and cities is very low compared to the dominant tribes of the so called Tripuri (also known as Kok Borok speaking) and the majority Bengalese. In reality, the majority of the so called Mizos lived in rural areas only. Like for instance, the Chin-Kuki-Mizo communities live in the periphery of most of the important towns of Tripura in small clusters of rural settlements. Even in the district of Dima Hasao in Assam these communities live in rural areas excepting a few numbers of them live in Haflong the Headquater of the district. However, the situation is quite the opposite in all other regions. In other areas, like Mizoram and Manipur the Chin-Kuki-Mizo communities live in their own towns and formed the majority in the town. It would not be out of text to mention that the percentage share of these communities in Imphal city is also quite remarkable. This points out that, the educated Mizos of Mizoram and Manipur preferred place of settlements is in urban areas due to high economic development as well as their socio-political influence in their respective areas of concentration. It is also highly attributed to the numbers of their own tribes. In this context, the Thado Kuki groups having a population of more than two lakhs in Manipur have more colonies in Imphal city alone. But, in general the Mizos settlements in Manipur are rural in character due to the politics of Chieftainships whereby, the villages are the direct beneficiaries of funds in the name of developmental projects from the central as well as from the state.

The present day life of the Mizos is in fact a twist of indigenous cultures and western cultures brought by the Mizo-West Contact since the late 19th century. Besides, the influences of Indian Cultures also play a vital role in the present day socio-economic life of the Mizos. The Indian Cultures that influence their way of life is in the form of dominant cultures that prevailed in their respective environments. The Mizos are distinctly different in their cultural traits in different environmental conditions. These cultural variations are the direct outcomes of both local natural and social environment. Both these natural and social factors play a vital role in shaping and moulding the adaptation processes vis-à-vis with their psychological adaptation leading to variations in their cultural lives. It would be pertinent to discuss the factors of both natural and social factors affecting the lives of the Mizos in their various environmental habitats. These
factors are responsible for variations in the socio-cultural and politico-economic adaptations of the Mizos in North east India. The broader view of these transformations through modifications, adoptions and introductions of their cultures are analyzed and studied under two distinct periods. These two distinct periods are taken as turning points for the present day socio-cultural lifestyles of the Mizos. The two periods are taken at a span of sixty years to indicate the transformations of the society in time and space.

On the whole, the nineties of the 19th century marked the beginning of a new era for the Mizos and the Mizo society. Transition in the Mizo society began to take place in numerous forms since then as a result of the ‘Mizo-West Contact’. Prior to that, the Mizos way of life was purely traditional in character. They lived in a state of barbaric practice and animistic faith and belief. Raids, attacks, wars, and head hunting on the one hand, and superstitions and fear of malignant evil spirits on the other, fabricated the bygone days of the Mizos which have now undergone into oblivion by way of disuse in gradual process since the nineties of the 19th century.

The Mizos adoption of Christianity had a profound impact on their social life. Owing to its Christian faith and belief, the marriage system in the Mizo society has undergone a change in the form of compromise between the indigenous process and Christian method. A mizo marriage followed a Church marriage and side by side with traditional marriage customs. In Mizo-Christian marriage institution, many indigenous practices have been replaced, many are still preserved, and many new things have been added. The Mizos in the indeginous period performed marriage with a series of rites and ceremonies and offerings of sacrifices to both the evil and good spirits. All these have been in disuse with the spread of Christianity among them. Now, a Mizo marriage is conducted in the Church by the Church elder and marriage tie is treated as a permanent, intrinsic bond between a man and woman which never dissolves. The Mizo marriage feast again has undergone a change. In the indigenous period, the Mizos used to celebrate marriage ceremony with a special feast in which rice, pork and Zu were served. But in the present day Mizo-Christian marriage, the traditional items as above have been replace by tea, cakes etc. But although modification in the form of abolitions, additions and replacement in some spheres has taken place, the Mizos still retains some other indigenous customs relating to marriage, namely, courting before marriage, activity of intermediary in the process of marriage, marriage price. On the issue of
divorce, it can be said that Church does not allow a practice of divorce though the Mizos preserved the traditional customs of divorce. The present day Christian Mizo society is, therefore, in the state of uncertainty in respect of divorce. But, at present the tradition of divorce is taken as the right of the individual to live independently in his or her life. This is mostly due to the influence of western cultures as well as the introduction of law and order under the constitution of India.

Modifications have also occurred on the Mizos’ traditional custom of burying the dead. This begun since the gospel came to the Mizos. In the past, it was customary to burying the corpse near the house with the exceptions of Chiefs who were buried in their respective houses. It was also recorded orally among many Mizo communities that there was a practice of keeping and drying of the death at the warmth fire places for days. This was done to show respect to the death by performing related rituals at the house of death. It was also a test of the love of the family near and dear ones. During this time, the near and dear ones of the decease ate without washing their hands to show their respect and love to the death. The degree of this time tested love for dear and near ones varies from place to place. With the growth of religious consciousness in the line of Christianity, the old practice of burying the death and related rituals had been changed and modified largely with many additions and alterations. First, burial ground is set up in every village and locality at a convenient place for all the people of the locality or the village to bury the dead. Secondly, funeral ceremony is performed with a series of prayers based on Christian religion. Thirdly, the condolence meeting that is held in Christian Mizo society was also in practice in the indigenous period. But in the former case, Christian hymns are chanted while the latter was animist in nature. Lastly, the Mizo practice of tlawmgaihna an ethical and social norm of the Mizos, which has been in practice in death and burial in the indigenous Mizo society is still in existence among all the tribes of the Mizos under study.

Before the advent of Christianity and British annexation of Mizoram, there prevailed cent percent illiteracy in the Mizo society. Not only that, the Mizos had any written language of their own, they were totally ignorant about the western education. In fact, all the various denominations of Christianity gave top priority to raise literacy and education of the Mizo society, although the Presbyterians and the Baptist Mission had a lion’s share in it. They all have opened schools here and there in Mizoram. It should be worthwhile to mention here that the whole system of education
in Mizoram was in the hands of the Christian Missionaries during the pre-independence period of India. Before India achieved her independence, the missionaries aimed at giving mass education, and thus, they opened educational institutions up to middle school standard. Record indicate that there were as many as 200 primary schools and 4 middle schools belonged to the Presbyterian Mission in north Mizoram in the pre-independence period, of which about 120 primary schools and 2 middle schools belonged to the Baptist Mission in south Mizoram. These schools of the Christian Missions were responsible for the spread of mass education among the Mizos from the beginning. This has resulted into the increase in the literacy level of the Mizos at a faster space. The impact of these initiatives taken by the Missionaries the literacy ladder had reached 36.23 percent in Mizoram. Thus, the overall development of literacy standard of the Mizos from zero percent to the percentage that appeared till India achieved her independence was singularly owing to the sincere efforts and sacrifices of the Christian Missionaries, and in post-independence period, by the joint venture of the Christian Missionaries and the Government.

The evolution of the Socio-Cultural life of the Mizos had undergone a sea change after India’s achieved her independence from the British. These changes were more rapid and at an unprecedented rate after the launching of the five year plan by the Government of India. It has also brought about a twist and turn in their adaptations to physical and social environments. The process of adaptations of the Mizos since 1951, are more to the introduction of new social phenomena into their fabric of traditions and cultures. These new introductions into their cultures played a dominant role in variations for the mosaic of cultures in different parts of their land at the backdrop of both physical and social environments.

The Mizos are now migrants no more. It is naturally a striking fact as to how the migratory habit of the Mizos has been changed so quickly. It is observed that the actual hope of being able to live permanently in one place came into being among the Mizos since the Mizo society began to achieve the following: protection of life and provision of livelihood, mass education, and the growth of Church. Apart from these, the role of the Indian Government after independence should not be neglected for the settled life of the Mizos. The permanency of the settlements was strengthened by the various policies and rural area development programmes undertaken by the government of India through the different governments under States.
The settlements types found in rural areas differs widely from one region to another. These differences in the types of rural settlements are basically due to both Physical factors and social factors. On the basis of these two factors, there are variations in the types as well as in the pattern of settlements. There are two types of rural settlements found in the study area. These are Disperse and Isolated type of settlements and Grouped and Compact type of settlement.

Disperse and isolated types of settlements are the outcome of both physical and social environments. The relief of Tripura is dotted with small hills and a network of narrow elongated valleys between these numerous small ranges of mountains and hills. These ranges of mountains and hills are rich in vegetation cover and teeming with wild life. Most of the hills near the valleys are occupied by human settlements and thus, led to the development of disperse type of settlements. The Valleys on the other hand, are intensively cultivated by the people. One very prominent feature of the topography in places of human habitation is the presence of fish ponds of all sizes at the head of the valleys. These valley heads are transformed into fish ponds mainly due to two reasons. These reasons are; first, for regulating the flash floods during rainy season which is characterized by flash floods destroying the paddy field down below. Second, it is a means to earn supplementary income through the practice of fishery. The demand for fish is very high in Tripura because the majority Bengalese is Hindu in religion. It also serves as supplementary dietary supply to the locals. This has led to their diversification of their economic activity and their capacity to earn more income in their environments.

Grouped and Compact types of settlements are characteristics of tribal population worldwide. It is also the same in the study area. In this type of settlements, houses are built close to each other. These types of grouped and compacted types of settlements are found in all parts of the study area. The growth of these types of settlements all over the study area is influenced by similar factors of location of settlements both historical and cultural. They evolved under the influence of both physical and social environments. It was also the outcome of grouping of villages after independence. The relief and social environments play a vital role in the types of settlements and led to two specific patterns of rural settlements across the study area. Firstly, the Rectangular and Linear Elongated type of settlements pattern are mostly developed all along the roadways and foothills in all over the areas. These types of settlements all along the roadways are mainly confined
to gently slope of the mountain and mountain tops wherever the road runs approximately at the middle of the settlements. Secondly, the Circular and Elongated type of settlements pattern are developed mostly from a hill tops to the surrounding areas wherever state highways and roadways pass through the settlement sites.

The factors responsible for the outcome of these types of settlements in the area are both physical and social. The relief and topography of the areas is relatively rugged which was responsible for the development of these types of settlements in the Hills. As the valleys of these regions are highly inhospitable due to high humidity and high temperature, people preferred to live on mountain tops. On the other hand, the mountain tops are having equitable climate all throughout the year. Temperature is mild and humidity condition is moderate to low due to high altitude. This has led to the establishment of villages on the top of the mountain. In this context, it should be mentioned that the site of the settlements in all areas is on the slopes facing the sun. This is because of high humidity, where the need for sunlight is essential for all life forms. In course of time, the developmental works undertaken by the government, especially on roadways led to the spread of the settlements all along the roadways away from center of location. The mountain tops also acted as a defensive fort against enemy attacks in the past.

The social factors responsible for this type of settlements are political, economical and cultural. Politically, firstly, the social set up of the Mizos in the past was characterized by Chieftainship. The Chief was the head of the village and the administration. He was considered to be autocratic in nature. But he is also considered the guardian and protector of the people. This practice of Chieftainship led to the development of compact villages for security and safety. The practice of Chieftainship is still in vogue in Manipur and its adjoining areas. As had been mentioned at the outset, the Mizos in the past were Head hunters practicing constant raids, attacks and wars. They were in fact at logger heads among themselves for territory, food and fame. Secondly, due to political decisions taken by the government of India to group villages under the name of, ‘Protected and Progressive Villages’ commonly known as PPVs was responsible for the growth of bigger and compact villages in Mizoram. As a consequence of the political upheaval of 1966 led by the MNF, the security, administration and progress of the loyal villagers living small numbers and in isolated far flung places of Mizoram became a problem. Therefore, the Army in consultation with the civil
administration adopted ‘Operation Security Scheme’. Under this scheme the small villages situated within a radius of the Silchar-Aizawl, and Aizawl-Lunglei Trunk Road were grouped together at different points along the main road. Thus, the bigger villages with bigger population came under the name ‘Protected and Progressive Villages’ commonly known as PPV became big in size and population. Thirdly, in Manipur many villages are grouped together to form a bigger village with independent jurisdictions under various chiefs. This is due to social and ethnic tensions between various tribes. The growth of big villages at the foothills of Manipur in the 1990s was the outcome of Kuki-Naga conflict and Kuki-Paite conflict. In the same way, the growth of compact settlements in Jampui range was also attributed to the social tension between the Mizo and the Reangs during 1980s and 90s. In short, group of villages come together to form bigger village was for security and safety to life and property.

According to 2001 census, there are twenty two towns in the study area. The maximum of towns where the Mizos are in majority are found in Mizoram. It is followed by the state of Manipur having three towns. The percentage share of urban population according to my classification is highest in Mizoram and followed by the state of Manipur. The least percentage of urban population among the Mizos is in the state of Assam. In Tripura and Assam, the percentage share of urban population of the Mizos is highly insignificant and negligible. The only notable town that can be mentioned in Tripura is the small town of Vanghmun having a population of 1699 persons and Sabual (Part) with a population of 1757 located on the Jampui Hills Block under North Tripura district. The other towns of Tripura are inhabited by the majority Bengalese and dominant tribes of Tripura. The percentage share of the urban population of the Mizos in Tripura is negligible. In the same way, in Dima Hasao district of Assam as well, the percentage share of urban population of the Mizos is insignificant. There were almost only 1000 to 2000 inhabitants in Haflong the districts’ headquarter.

The factors responsible for the development of compact type of settlements leading to the growth of towns in the study areas are the following. Firstly, the growth of Church in every village made the Mizos to live permanently. Chapman and Clark, the two missionaries stated “the practice of moving villages fell into disuse when every village had its own Church. The people were reluctant to abandon the site where stood the beautiful house of worship which they had built with so much
loving labour. The village location was no longer changed, and the people constructed permanent houses”. The Church became the center of attractions and social activities in the village. All social activities are organized and solemnized by the Church. This has shown the seed of the functioning of an organized civil society. Indeed, the functioning of the church in a democratic way did attracted the Mizos far and wide to come together and stayed permanently in a compact types of settlements. Since, the Church has become a center of meetings, gathering, feastings and festivals; it has a profound impact on the civil society among the Mizos. It has shown the seed of modern administrations in the minds of the people. In fact, those big centers became an administrative capital of the states, districts and at block level administrations. This indeed was responsible for the social, religious and political awakening of the people. It had also emancipated the Mizos from their traditional ways of outlook and methods of cultivation to modern outlook and method of cultivation.

Secondly, the developments of Socio-Civic Amenities like transports and communications and supply of drinking water supply are highly responsible for the growth and development of compact types of settlements in the region. The development of transports and communications is another innovation of the independent India. The government of India undertook the task of developing roadways and communications network through the length and breadth of the land. This had a profound impact on the life of the Mizos in all walks of life. The growth and development of towns and city was possible due to easy means of transports and communications. It has led to easy movement of people and materials. It has necessitated emotional unity among the people. This is because ideas and thoughts could be shared within short notice. It brought forth emotional unity among the Mizos of different regions. All the main centers of the region are connected by National Highways managed and maintained by the Central Public Work Department. The other important centers are connected by State Highways managed and maintained by the PWD of each state. Apart from this, the Border Road Organization has also undertaken tremendous work for better connectivity in the study areas.

The availability of safe drinking facilities is not the same among the Mizos in the study area. In this regard, the urban towns have a better water connection and supply than the rural areas. Almost, all the urban centers have safe drinking water facilities. However, household connections vary from
one state to the other. Like for instance, the state of Mizoram is better off in water connections and supply. On the other hand, in rural areas the availability of safe drinking water supply is not evenly distributed. In a State like Manipur, the rural areas have no water connection from the department or government whatsoever. The only available connections are the endeavor of the Village administration only. But, the majority of villages depend on rivers, lakes, ponds, Hand pumps and springs. In Tripura as well, the facility of safe drinking water supply is quite uneven and unpredictable. The Large and medium size settlements close to the big towns have a water connection with public points distributed across the village. All rural settlements also depend on the available natural water supply like rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and springs. But in Mizoram, the government has done a commendable job in providing safe drinking facilities to almost all rural settlements in the state. In this field, Mizoram is in better position in the core regions. This is possible mainly due to compact large villages in Mizoram which facilitates household connections are largely possible and feasible. On the other hand, in parts of Manipur and Tripura the presence of small and dispersed type settlements act as detrimental factors for the provision of safe drinking water facilities in rural areas. Comparatively, Tripura is far better off than Manipur in the supply of water to the rural areas.

The introduction of western education by western agencies has a greater impact on the lives of the Mizos in all walks of life. As has been mentioned at the outset, the overall development of literacy standard of the Mizos from zero percent to the percentage that appeared till India achieved her independence was singularly owing to the sincere efforts and sacrifices of the Christian Missionaries, and in post-independence period, by the joint venture of the Christian Missionaries and the Government. Here is the literacy chart at a glance in the context with education and literacy of the Mizos in transition in the core regions of concentrations in the study area according to 2001 census.

Before India achieved her independence, the missionaries aimed at giving mass education, and thus, they opened educational institutions up to middle school standard. Record indicate that there were as many as 200 primary schools and 4 middle schools belonged to the Presbyterian Mission in north Mizoram in the pre-independence period, of which about 120 primary schools and 2 middle schools belonged to the Baptist Mission in south Mizoram. These schools of the Christian Missions were
responsible for the spread of mass education among the Mizos from the beginning. This has resulted into the increase in the literacy level of the Mizos at a faster space. The impact of these initiatives taken by the Missionaries the literacy ladder had reached 36.23 percent in Mizoram.

The Christian missionaries had also taken initiative to bring about a change in the attitude of the society towards Mizo women. They treated Mizo women as equal to men in all walks of life. They planted the seed of education among women along with men in the Mizo society. As a result, there were 53 literate females as against 2005 male literates in 1901, 464 literate females as against 5719 male literates in 1921, 16718 female literates as against 44375 male literates in 1951. The more the Mizo women begun to receive education, the more the whole society and women especially begun to realize, that women were no longer simply domestic slaves as they had been in the past.

The increase in literacy rate since 1951 in the study area is highly remarkable. This is due to the fact that, the implementations of planning and policies by new independent India has had the desire impact on the people in general and on the Mizos in particular. The literacy level attained before India got its independence from foreign rule was less than 36 percent in the region. This level of literacy was in fact the credit of the Christian Missionaries who tirelessly and selflessly worked for the people of Mizos in the past. This had created a conducive environment for the spread of education throughout the length and bread of their land.

Thus, it paved the ways for higher educational attainment for the Mizos in India. Since then, vigorous steps were taken by their respective State’s governments under the direct financial support of the Central government has reaped rich dividends in the field of education in the lands of the Mizos. The literacy rate of 36.23 per cent in 1951 is raised to 91.58 per cent in 2011 in Mizoram. The achievement in the literacy level in Churachandpur is also quite remarkable from 35.42 percent in 1961 to 84.24 percent in 2011. This rapid increase in the level of literacy is responsible for the change in the mosaic of cultures in all parts of the land. This has resulted into the twist and turn of their adaptation process in their respective environments. In other words, it is the literacy that paves the way for variety of adaptations process taking place among the Mizos. Thus, the diversification in their economic activities resulted into differences in their adaptation to their environments both natural and social.
Since independence, the administration of the Village has been changing according to the change in 
the systems under the central and state governments. It differs widely in different parts of the study 
area. In some regions, the traditional institution like Chieftainship was completely abolished. But in 
other parts of the region, this important traditional institution is retained with slight variations in 
formations and functions.

During the pre-independence period in Mizoram and elsewhere in the study area, each village had a 
traditional institution of Chieftainship to manage the village affairs. The chief was at the same time 
the supreme administrator, judge, protector and guardian of his village running village 
administration with a council of elders called Upas. These Upas were generally men of the Chief’s 
choice, nominated and selected without the villagers’ opinion. The Chief thus, tried to give his rule 
the semblance of people’s rule in the governance of village through the ‘Council of Elders’. After 
independence, a new scheme of simple and inexpensive administration of the tribesman of certain 
hill districts of the then state of Assam based on the recommendations of the North East Frontier 
Tribal and Excluded Areas Sub-Committee of the Constituent Assembly known as the Bordoloi 
Sub-Committee was incorporated in the Sixth Schedule of the constitution of India. Thus, 
chieftainship was abolished in some north eastern states including Mizoram and Tripura.

In short, the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India provides ample powers to the District 
Council for Self governance of the Tribal population of the state. The District Council has its own 
powers to appoint its own staff in terms of requirement and appointment rules. As per my 
observation and interactions with the people, the representation in the District Council is quite 
satisfactory to all groups of people in all the areas of its functioning. In the administrations of 
villages in Mizoram and Tripura, the members of democratically elected Village Councils are given 
the direct responsibilities of Local Self Governance in their respective areas by the State 
Government and the Districts Councils as the case may be. Indeed, the politics within the State and 
the Union are the direct influence of the Village Councils.

In Manipur, the functioning of the Autonomous District Councils could not be successfully carried 
out due to many reasons. The first and foremost reason is the practice of the traditional institution 
commonly called Chieftainship. The institution of Chieftainship is still in vogue in Manipur making
the success of ADCs impossible. The second factor responsible for this state of affairs in Manipur is again the apathy of the State government. The government became a silent spectacle to this state of affairs due to fear of the powerful and influential Chiefs of different regions. The other important factor responsible for the retention is due to fear of social conflicts. In this regard, the Chief is still seen as a protector, guardian and diplomat of the common people. Though this traditional institution of Chieftainship is still practice, it does not remain untouched by the political upheavals all over India. The common people became aware of their rights and demanded for justice to the Chiefs as well as to the Government. Due to Socio-politico and economic development, the long felt need of the people to have a say in the administration of the village was accepted by the Chief and made some modifications on the functioning of Village Administration. This was becoming a necessity especially after the launching of various Rural Development Programmes by the Central Government.

The position of the Chief is at the highest hierarchy in the village administration even today in Manipur. He is the head of the Village and has a say in all matters concerning the village. He can take his personal decision matters relating to the welfare of the people and no one can challenge his decisions. In other words his decision in all matters is final and binding. But the Chief of today are clever enough to know the interest of his ministers and the people. In brief, he is bound to give very wise decisions on all matters. Otherwise, his prestige and authority would be questions by his ministers and the people. It is so to say, he is not above the law in any case. However, the institution of Chieftainship is hereditary. The powers and functions of the Upas or Council of Ministers are almost similar to the Village Councils in Mizoram. But it was on paper only. The real authority rests on the Chief in most of the cases.

The council of Ministers or the Upas of the Chief is elected by the people but still acts under the behest of the Chief. The functions of each Upas are similar to present day functioning of the modern day Associations or Organizations. The meetings or deliberations are presided by the Chief. In his absence, the vice President or the Secretary may preside over the meetings. But major decisions could not be taken unless the Chief gives his consent on the matters. They could decide on matters of less importance relating to day to day affairs only. In short, the autocratic rule of the Chief to some extent is continued in the present day village administration under various Chiefs in
Manipur. It is through the institution of Chieftainship that the politics of the state as well as the National is affected in most parts of Manipur. The Chiefs with their powerful influence are hand in glove with various political parties supported by different organizations of the region. In reality, the common men have no say in electing their own representatives. In brief, the role of the Chief and his Council of Ministers are still paramount in the politics of the State and the country.

The primitive Mizo society was purely rural in character. Cultivation in the form of shifting cultivation was the main occupation of the people. Besides agriculture, cottage industries, hunting, collection, fishing and domestication of animals formed part of the Mizo’s economic life. In fact, the Mizo economy in olden days was basically primitive and rural and was simply to meet the demands of the basic needs of day to day life. But, today the Mizos are not merely satisfied with the bare necessities of life.

The trend of occupational structure of the Mizos has shown a diversification in their economic activities. This sector-wise occupation of the Mizos since 1981 relates to only the core regions of their concentrations. In Mizoram, there appeared wide variations in the occupational structure of Mizos particularly in the sectors of Cultivators and Other Workers. In the case of Agricultural Labourers and Household Industry, Manufacturing, Processing and Repairs, the occupational structure of the people do not show much variation. The very striking feature of the occupational structure in general is the highest percentage share of Cultivators in all the districts except in the district of Aizawl where the percentage share of Other Workers is highest.

The overall occupational structure of the Mizos depicts the disproportionate representations of workers in all the sectors of occupations. The share of cultivators is highest in Mamit district with 81.08 per cent to the total Main Workers in the district. It is closely followed by the district of Lawngtlai with 78.23 per cent. The workers engaging on the sector of other workers also shows a high variations but it depicts the dependence of the people on this sector. This sector includes services and other related services in the tertiary sector of the economy. The improvement on this sector would results in the improvement and progress of other sectors of the economy. In this sector, the district of Aizawl in Mizoram has a record high of 61.59 per cent of workers engaging on this sector. There are also a high percentage of workers engaging in this sector in the district of
Saiha with 32.47 per cent to the total Main Workers. However, the district of Mamit has recorded the lowest percentage of 14.99 per cent engage in this sector.

The workers engaging as Agricultural Labourers are relatively less in all the districts. It ranges from 1.56 percent to 6.59 percent of the total Main Workers only. The district of Champhai has the highest percentage of workers as agricultural labourers with 6.59 percent of workers engaging as agricultural labourers. The second highest percentage is recorded in the district of Kolasib with 3.37 per cent followed by Mamit district with 3.10 per cent. The district of Saiha recorded the lowest percentage share of 1.56 percent to the total main workers in the district. Finally, the least percentage of workers is engaging in Household Industry, Manufacturing, Processing and Repairs in all the districts. This is in fact not a good sign for higher and sustainable economic growth in the state. There are four districts having a percentage of workers more than one percent engaging in this sector. The district of Serchhip has the highest percentage of workers in this sector with 2.61 per cent to the total main workers. The district of Lunglei has the lowest percentage of workers engaging in the sector with only 0.57 per cent to the Total Main Workers in the district.

The trends in the occupational structure of the Mizos in Mizoram have shown a small shift from Agricultural sector to other sectors especially in the sector of Other Workers. However, the shifts in the household sector do not show much variation during these three decades of planning and policies. These shifting of occupations are in fact the impact of planning and policies of the State Governments and the Central Governments to develop the region.

In the agriculture sector including Cultivators and Agricultural labourers the decline in the percentages of people involved is quite striking. The highest decline is observed in the district of Aizawl where it declines from 55.48 in 1981 to 34.37 per cent in 2001. By and large, there is a decline of 21.11 per cent during this period. The agricultural labourers also decline from 3.75 to 2.64 during the same time. The districts of Lunglei, Champhai and Mamit have also shown a decrease in the people engaged on agriculture as cultivators. The district of Lunglei however has a decline from 2.12 percent in 1981 to 1.58 percent to the total main workers in 2001. The lowest decline in the agricultural sector was observed in Saiha district with only 5.58 per cent decline during 1981 to 2001.
In Manipur as well, the occupational distribution under four sectors of occupations namely; Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers; Household industry and Other Workers is analyzed to interpret the sector wise occupation of the study area based on 2001 census. It will be taken as a comparative analysis of districts with the rest of the core regions of concentrations only. The agricultural sector alone provides an employment of more than 60 percent in all the districts. In the case of Senapati district the share of the agricultural sector is more than 75 percent of the total main workers in the district.

In all the districts of Manipur under the study, the economy is more diversified than in the districts of Mizoram. But it has shown similarities in the fact that the share of agriculture and other workers to the total main workers is relatively high in both the regions. The share of cultivators is highest in the district of Senapati with 62.27 per cent to the total main workers in the district. This is closely followed by the district of Chandel with 61.56 per cent. The lowest percentage is recorded in Churachandpur district with 56.75 per cent. The corresponding figure in parts of Mizoram is as high as 81.57 in Mamit district and 34.37 per cent in Aizawl district. The percentage of workers engaging as agricultural labourers is as high as 13.26 per cent in Senapati district. The district of Churachandpur recorded percentage of 8.57 and the lowest percentage is recorded in Chandel district with 7.14 per cent to the total main workers. The figure in Mizoram is lower as the percentages recorded are 6.59 per cent in Champhai district and 1.56 per cent in Saiha district of Mizoram. The sector of household industries has shown no drastic differences but it projects a very less percentage of workers engaging in the sector. The highest percentage share of 7.12 is recorded in the district of Churachandpur followed by the district of Chandel with 6.46 per cent. The lowest is recorded in Senapati district with 4.8 per cent only. The corresponding figures in Mizoram are as low as 2.61 per cent in Serchhip district and 0.57 per cent in Lunglei district.

Finally, the number of people engage in the sector of other workers does not show much variation in all the districts under the study area. In Manipur, the highest percentage of 27.55 per cent of workers to the total main workers is recorded in Churachandpur district followed by the district of Chandel with 24.83 per cent. The lowest is recorded in Senapati district with 19.67 per cent. The corresponding figures in the districts of Mizoram are 32.47 percent in Saiha district and 18.17 per cent in Lawngtlai district. However, the district of Aizawl has recorded an exceptional high of
61.59 percent of workers engaging in the sector of other workers to the total main workers.

The trend in the change in the occupational structure in the districts of Manipur is analyzed under three sectors namely, Agricultural Workers, Agricultural Labourers and Non- Agricultural. It was a comparative analysis to the rest of the core regions of concentrations to generalize the trend of sector-wise occupations in the three districts of Manipur. The sector-wise distributions of workers in these districts do not show much variation in the increase or decrease of workers in each sector. In all the districts, there is decline in workers engaging as Agricultural Workers. The percentage share of workers to the main workers is highest in the district of Chandel with 71.64 per cent in 2001. The percentage share of workers engaging as agricultural labourers in the district has shown an increase of 3.79 per cent from 1.97 per cent in 1991 to 5.76 in the year 2001. Finally, the number of workers engaging in the Non-Agricultural sector has shown a remarkable improvement during the same decade. However, the percentage share of workers in the Agricultural sector is still very high with as much as 77.4 per cent of workers depending directly or indirectly. The next highest percentage of workers engaging as agricultural workers is in the district of Senapati with 68.26 per cent of workers engaging in the sector. The Agricultural Labourers has shown an increase from 1.97 in 1991 to 5.76 per cent in 2001. The number of workers engaging in the non-agricultural sector to the main workers is 28.18 per cent in 2001 which has an increase of 8.44 per cent from 19.74 per cent in the year 1991. The highest change and shift in the distribution of workers in different sectors is observed in the district of Churachandpur. The percentage of workers engaging as Agricultural Workers has shown a decline from 78.01 in 1991 to 61.82 per cent in the year 2001. The highest change is observed in the sector of Non-Agricultural with a recorded increase of 11.89 per cent from 19.41 per cent in 1991 to 31.30 per cent in the year 2001.

The traditional Mizo society was such that there was a dominating role of men folk over the womenfolk in the family and the society. The womenfolk seemed comparatively hard working and self-sacrificing in family matters. They share with their men folk all works, including cultivation. In the off seasons, they engaged themselves in cloth-making while their men folk passed time in full rest and idle gossip. Their share in the economic participation was un-noticed in the family and in
the society and was taken as a duty bound expected to be dutiful in all walks of life. But, at present
context, the situation is completely change, the role of female in the Mizo society becomes a
necessity and important to the family and society. It is also recognized by the society and in most
cases; Mizo women of today superseded the male in all walks of life. The participation rate of
female in sectors of the economy is based on the Census Primary Abstract at Village level Census
for the years 1981, 1991 and 2001. A maximum care is taken to represent only the Mizos of the
core regions to generalize the male-female participation of work force in the study area. The
participation rate in the agricultural sector does not show a wide disparity between Male and
Female working population. The participation rate of women as cultivators and agricultural
labourers are as high as 35 percent to 51.56 percent to their Male counterpart in each sector of the
economy. A very striking feature of female participation rate in the sector is that there is no much
variation in the participation of women in all the years. This indicates the active participation of
female population in the workforce among the Mizos during the past three decades.

The participation rate in Household Industries highly fluctuates excepting the two districts of
Serchhip and Mamit where the participation rate is increasing during the past decades. On the other
hand, the female participation rate in the sector of other workers has shown a continuous increasing
trend in female participation in all the districts excepting the district of Aizawl. The district of
Aizawl has recorded an increasing trend of 27.64 per cent in 1981 to 37.35 in 1991. But it has
slightly decreases to 37.28 per cent in the year 2001. In the rest of the districts, there is an increasing
trend in the female participation rate in the sector.

In brief, the economic institution of the indigenous Mizo society was very simple. The Mizos’
expectation in the economic progress was limited to the extent of their simple living and livelihood.
They remained satisfied by meeting the bare necessities of day-to-day life. But, today the Mizos are
not merely satisfied with the bare necessities of life. Their economy is highly diversified and
enlarged beyond imagination. This is partly due to increase in literacy among the people and high
economic growth achieved by India. India, as of now is one of the fastest developing economy in
the world. This high growth and development has an impact on the Mizos elsewhere in the country.