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Chapter 5

The Media in Mizoram: Its relationship with Politics and its social impact.

5.1 Introduction

The press, the cable television industry and literary magazines are spelled out in the context of Mizoram becoming part of the nation state. As mentioned in Chapter 3, it was due to the policy of liberalization that such media entered the country and eventually the state. From the time liberalization was introduced there was a tremendous growth in the area of media. By media we mean all means of communication. Internet has also grown in a very tremendous manner. The growth has been so rapid and quick that we did not even know what hit us before we became almost entirely dependent on the medium of communication that surrounded us. Take for example the mobile phone, barely a decade ago, we were living without our mobile phones but now most of us would not be able to function without it. Our dependence on the technology today proves that there has been a tremendous growth in media not only within the country but also in this remote part of the country. From the early 1990’s, the landlocked region of Mizoram like other mainland regions in India began accessing global satellite television. The reception of both western television programs along with South East Asian programs especially South Korean Channels had played a significant role in the Mizo society. This will be discussed later in the chapter. Since the colonial government adopted a policy of isolation of the Lushai hills district from mainland India, therefore there was a lack on the part of the people here to learn the Hindi language. Almost all the publication of school text books, literary publication and local newspaper was done in Mizo or English.
Media in Mizoram had taken a very long and winding road to reach to the stage that it is in today. Print media is very much linked with the political situation of Mizoram. Where growth of political awareness can be seen, there is a parallel growth of newspaper. The newspaper is always the medium of spreading political awareness, whether it is challenging the ruling government or to be used as a tool to spread government policies. Print media has played a very important role initially as this was the only means of spreading ideologies, news, medium of entertainment and creating awareness. There has also been some publication in other districts as well. But since most of the birth of newspaper was in Aizawl, the chapter will highlight discuss the media in Aizawl and the impact that it has in Mizoram. There have been 94 dailies and 15 periodicals and also for the production and broadcasting of news and other programme we have the cable network. There are 32 newspapers being published from the state capital Aizawl alone, 13 from the districts capital of Lunglei and 6 from Mamit, 11 from Saiha, 7 from Lawngtlai, 9 from Champhai, from Serchhip and 6 from Kolasib.\footnote{MJA Annual Report 2011-12.} Besides newspaper there are number of publications which are being brought out in the form of journals/newsletter which is not for commercial purpose alone. There are many NGOs, YMA and even Church that had made use of such newsletter almost every locality has its own newsletter. Mizoram is one state where media and politics go hand in hand right from the time of the British rule in Mizoram, especially print media but with the change of time and improvement in technology the subscription of print media may have gone down but it still plays an important role in the politics of Mizoram no less. The Mizoram Journalist Association (MJA) of Mizoram had been an important organization in Mizoram. It is interesting to note that the founding President of MJA is none other
than the Present Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla himself who was at the
time editor of the newspaper ‘Mizo Aw’. MJA was found in 1972.
Almost all the well known politicians of the past and present had been
affiliated with one newspaper or the other.\(^{191}\)

The First Mizo newspaper or rather newsletter was *Mizo chanchin Laisuih*, it was a handwritten newsletter written in 1898. It
was a government issued newsletter; it contained news about the
government activities in the village and the official notifications. It is
unfortunate however, to note that the number of copies made for its
circulation and when it was stopped is not recorded and therefore it is
unknown. The pioneer of this newsletter is none other than the
missionaries F.W. Savidge and the newly literates *Khamliana,
Thangphunga* and *Suaka*. The second issue came out on 24\(^{th}\) August
1898 and it contained news about hunting and the officials’ visits to
Phaitual. The third issue was not found. The fourth issue came out on
16\(^{th}\) January 1899. From 1900 to 1919 there was a new weekly
newspaper known as the *Mizo leh Vai chanchinbu*. This newsletter was
issued from the Superintendent’s Office by the Superintendent, John
Shakespeare known to the Mizos as *Tarmita* (which means the man
with spectacles). This newsletter contained articles written by the
superintendent and chiefs of the nearby villages. It also contain
worldwide news, it was very informative. This newsletter gave the
Mizo people information and awareness of the outside world and
especially during the First and the Second World War it was a very
important source of information for the Mizo people.\(^{192}\)

Meanwhile, the missionaries were also aware that with growth
of more number of educated and literate They knew that mizo

\(^{191}\) Zonunsanga Khiangte, ‘*MJA hun Hmasa leh Welfare Services kalkawng*’, MJA Ruby
Jubilee Souvenir 2012, p. 53.

\(^{192}\) C. Lalrambuatsaiaha, ‘Development of Print Media in Mizoram’, MJA Ruby Jubilee
newsletter would make more impact in the mind of the people and the society. But the real initiatives were taken by few church elders R.Dala, Zakunga, Lianhmingthanga, Dohnuna, Suaka, Thangrual, Dala and Zotawka. This group of elderly people while discussing the Gospel, came to a decision that the most effective means of spreading the gospel was by writing about it. At first, since they did not have a means to publish this newsletter they were reluctant and discouraged, but fortunately, one of the Missionaries Dr. Fraser had a hand press with him and this was used to print the first issue of the Kristian Tlangau (Christian Herald). In 1911 the first issue of Kristian Tlangau was printed. Unfortunately the following year in 1912 Dr. Fraser was transferred to Lakhipur and since he took his hand press with him it created a problem for the printing of the Kristian Tlangau. The superintendent of that time Col. C.E. Locke presented the church with a Treadle Machine which was worth 4500 rupees at the time. From 1916 onwards this machine printed the issues of the Kristian Tlangau. Initially, 500 copies were printed but now the number has gone upto 25,500.\textsuperscript{193}

Another important newsletter is the \textit{Thado-Kuki Kristian} which was first issued in 1921. There were some periodicals like \textit{Hapta kar Chanchin} (1939), \textit{Thlawmngaihna} (1940), \textit{Robawm} (1943) which was meant for the students, \textit{Zoram thupuan, Hun thar, Ramthar, Thlirvelna} to name a few. Post-Independence has been a period where there was a thirst for knowledge and people were curious about the outside world. These newspapers gave the Mizo people new idea. It even motivated them politically. The number of literates and educated people were mushrooming in the state therefore; it was becoming more and more important and print media was developing firmer roots in the Mizo

\textsuperscript{193} \textit{Ibid.}
society. It is no surprise that Politics and Media had gone hand in hand since politics entered our land.

5.2 Media and Politics in Mizoram post-independence

The relationship between media and politics in Mizoram makes a very interesting story. As we have already examined in the previous chapter the political situation of Mizoram pre-independence and post-independence, the media also have a very important role to play during this period. No doubt that newspaper was the main source of information regarding news within the area and also the world news. Just as newspaper during the freedom struggle in India is the main tool for spreading awareness amongst the masses, the media in Mizoram also played a similar role. In 1946 a newspaper was issued by the name of *Mizo Arsi (Star of the Mizos)*. This newspaper was the Official newspaper of the Mizo Union. Whoever held the post of the General Secretary was the editor of the newspaper. From 1979 February onwards it was kept in the hands of *J. Lalthangliana*. According to the Editor *J. Lalthangliana*, the newspaper being a controversial paper faced a lot of challenges. It was the first political newspaper which was started during a turbulent political situation. There was an incident where an editor was called to the Assembly house during the session to apologize for publishing an article against them. Very often the newspaper receives funds from the government or aid from the government to run the newspaper. In 1989 the Congress government refused to fund *Mizo Arsi*. The editor said it was a hard time faced by the newspaper. Simultaneously while the Mizo Arsi was being issued, a monthly magazine called *Sakeibaknei (The Lion)* was also being published. This magazine was being published due to the fear that without the government aid, the newspaper will not survive. The success of the magazine surprised the editor and it gained subscription more than they expected which provided revenue enough to run both
the daily newspaper and the monthly magazine. Though the publication of the magazine no longer functions, the newspaper continues even today. The insurgency period was a difficult time for the journalists.

During the time of insurgency the Government had to approve what the newspapers were going to publish, they were very careful as a simple article can trigger the mind of the people to rebel against the government. Another newspaper by the name of Mizo Aw was started in the early 60’s. The founding president of this newspaper was Laldenga who was the president of MNF and who eventually became the Chief Minister. But since due to the political turmoil, being the leader he could not continue with the newspaper. It slowly faded but in 1970 with the initiative of Lal Thanhawla the Mizo Aw was revived but since Lal Thanhawla also entered politics and was one of the main leaders he could not continue as the editor of the newspaper. He handed it over to his brother Lalthanzuala but in 1984 unfortunately, Lalthanzuala passed away. After the passing away of Lalthanzuala, D.R. Zirliana took over the newspaper and he is the present Editor of this newspaper. The mode of printing initially was by Cyclostyle making 500 copies. In 1973 it was printed in letter press. From 1996 onwards offset-printer was used. Today 5000 copies are circulated in Aizawl.

There are also some other newspapers which were published in the early 60s. In 1965, Thu leh Hla was published by the Mizo Academy of letters which was established in 1965. It was not a political newspaper it was mainly to promote the literary skills of the Mizo people. It was a newspaper which encouraged the writings of the

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194 C. Lalımbuatsaiha article on ‘Development of Print Media in Mizoram’, MJA Ruby Jubilee Souvenir 2012, p. 68.
195 Lal Thanhawla became the President of MPCC (Mizoram Pradesh Congress Conference) He is the present Chief Minister of Mizoram.
196 Thu leh hla was a literary journal of Mizo Academy of Letters.
Mizo people. This newspaper was published by the literary elite. When India gained Independence the nationalist movement seems to influence the Mizos who studied outside Mizoram in the neighbouring States of Assam, Meghalaya and West Bengal. There was a thirst for a platform for writers which were neither religious nor political. A secular newsletter which would promote literary work and to create a responsive literary public was the main idea when creating the newspaper. The first issue of *Thu leh Hla* was edited by J.F. Laldailova and was published in the monsoon of 1965. It may be noted here that these media was the only means where we find the direct public participation.

The MNF movement of 1966 had effected the media environment in many ways. Number of newspapers came up during this period. 1968 saw the birth of *Tawrh Bawm* a Mizo daily and the revival of *Mizo Aw* followed. In 1972 the pioneer of English Daily *Aizawl Times* was published and edited by H.K. Bawichhuaka, then a politician and a former CEM of the erstwhile Mizo District Council. *The Highlander* newspaper followed a week later.\textsuperscript{197} From the mid 1960’s and 1970’s there was a setback in the growth of media. The declaration of the armed struggle between the Indian army and the MNF had made the production, circulation, distribution and consumption of any written material in the form of document a suspect in the eyes of both the Indian Government and MNF.

**Mizoram Journalist Association:**

In order to understand the growth of media in Mizoram it is relevant here to discuss the Mizoram Journalist Association (MJA). MJA was established in 1972. The founding president was Lal\textsuperscript{197}

\textsuperscript{197} Lalkhawliana ‘Mizoram Journalists Association (MJA) completes 40 years’, MJA 40 years Jubilee souvenir. Pp. 46-47.
Thanhawla (Editor Mizo Aw), Vice-President- C. Chhunbura (Editor Hmar Arsi), Secretary General – R.K. Pautu (Correspondent, The Times of India), Secretary – Biaksanga (Editor Tawrh Bawm), Treasurer – Lalbuaia (Editor Mizo Arsi). Even though it was during the insurgency the atmosphere was more free and liberal as compared to 1966 and the few following years. The atmosphere was much cooler. There was a calm atmosphere where the people could voice their honest opinion regarding the political scene of Mizoram without the fear of being punished from either side of the Government or the insurgents. There was a new zeal amongst the editors and owners of newspapers. The role of such newspaper was to promote the policies and ideas of the political parties such newspapers are:

- Mizo Arsi (Mizo Union Chanchinbu),
- Tun Lai (MNF Chanchinbu),
- Zoram Thupuan (EITU Chanchinbu).
- Hmar Arsi (This is a political newspaper and it does not particularly have a political affiliation).

The MJA had a very constructive role to play during this period of insurgency. It was an important body in forming the public opinion. They felt that their duty was to provide the masses with news and create awareness about the political situation. During this period, the media was said to have been trapped between anvil and hammer situation. Mizoram was a disturbed Area with the Armed Forces (special powers) Act in full force since 1966. Meanwhile, the covert diktat of the MNF insurgents frightfully loomed large. News report to be printed had to be scrutinized first by a panel of official censors before it went for printing. Police personnel would frequently visit the office and sometimes editors were even arrested if they published articles which they thought was Anti-Indian Sentiment. Sometimes they were even summoned to the office for the same reason. They even
faced threats from officials of the MNF underground outfit whose duty was to react on alleged anti-Mizo slur. Those were the days when the journalists actually found in a tougher situation.\textsuperscript{198} There have been incidents where political leaders and newspaper owners acted violently against each other because of articles that were published. As mentioned before, even bloodshed had taken place. Mizoram was in its worst situation politically between the years 1966-1971. The peace accord that was signed by the Government of India and MNF leadership in 1986 finally ended the uncertain days. MJA as an organization had survived the hard times and they enjoyed the warmth of media fraternity. The MJA started focusing on building relationship with the State Information Dept and the central publicity unit well without compromising interests of the MJA or any journalists as professional. Apart from the normal duty of publishing newspaper and magazines, the MJA members’ together took up projects which were more of public concern. Entertainment was the need of the day and they aimed at brightening corners as the people were trying to recover from the days of insurgency. Their projects included Miss Mizoram Beauty Contest, Fashion Show, Musical Concert, and Friendly football match. These projects and their undertakings were mostly carried out in the 80s. It has been 40 years since the establishment of MJA and it is still a very strong body.

\section*{5.3. Central owned Media Departments:}

In Mizoram, All India Radio and Doordarshan are owned and controlled by the central government. They play an important role in the society. Before Liberalization and the Cable network entered, these two important media were the ones who gave information to the people and was the source of entertainment for the people of India.

\textsuperscript{198} Lalkhawliana. \textit{op.cit.}
5.3.1 All India Radio:

It was against the backdrop of insurgency that All India Radio (AIR) Aizawl started as an auxiliary station in 31st July 1966 with a small 150 watt Medium wave transmitter. The Mizo National Front (MNF) had started taking up arms from February 1966 and there was a wave of secessionism all over the erstwhile Lushai Hills District. The Mizo National Famine Front, which was originally formed to help ease immense suffering of the people during the severe Mautam Famine in Mizoram, was converted into a political party - the MNF on October, 1961 out of disillusionment over the pathetic ways the authorities handled the famine.

All India Radio, Aizawl came into being to supplement the Mizo programmes originated in All India Radio, Shillong and broadcast through All India Radio, Gauhati shortwave transmitters. The station has to struggle hard to cope with publicity requirements in the insurgency infested land. The station itself faced the other difficulties that are typical of disturbed, remote, hilly and hardly accessible tribal area. However, the station had faced a lot of trying times but has come out victorious. It has established itself as the pioneer media unit that has grown in popularity, listenership, credibility and has come up as the most popular and reliable media in Mizoram inspite of the advent of TV, Cable and Satellite TV.

Transmitting Capacity: AIR, Aizawl has one of the lowest transmitting capacities in the north eastern region as compared to other capital stations of the region. The station was given a 1KW medium wave transmitter in January 1970. The transmitting strength was raised to 10KW in 1975. The strength was further raised to 2X10KW MW in 1979. A 10 KW short wave support was provided in 1982 and the new
10KW short wave support was installed and commissioned by Shri. Silvera, the then Union Minister of state for Health on 12th Feb, 1996.

Studios: The Interim studio and receiving facilities provided initially in 1966 were upgraded in 1985 when a Type II-R studio with office block was commissioned. The type II-R studio comprise:

- Playback Studio : 1 No.
- Talk Studio : 1 No.
- Music studio : 1 No.
- Drama Studio : 1 No.
- Dubbing Room : 1 No.

Studio transmitter Link: 2 Units of 100 watts VHF FM Link on 99 MHZ are functioning between studio and transmitter since June 1998.

Machine and equipment: The station has several old, worn out and obsolete machines and equipment requiring urgent replacement. At present Studer and Meltron CTR as standby is working.

FM Studio: An Fm stereo studio building for Aizawl has been completed and is already commissioned on 15th August 2008.

Computerization: Use of computers has been started in the station and the station is equipped with Internet connections. It is proposed to make use of computers for programming and office work. Use of computers for storing and retrieving programs is being experimented at the station. Many of the program staff and engineering staff had been given computer training.

199 The station’s E-mail address is airmaizawl@gmail.com.
Reception Quality: The reception quality is expected to improve further once the proposed single unit 50 KW SW transmitter is installed to replace the existing 10KW SW transmitter. However, the reception quality of the station at present is very poor and due to that the station is losing many listeners as well as revenue earning.

Limited Coverage Area: The total coverage area of AIR, Aizawl is limited to the three districts of Aizawl, Kolasib and Mamit with many parts of Mizoram not able to clearly receive the station’s signal. Serchhip, Champhai, Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Chhimituipui districts are, for the most part, practically out of range of the station’s signal’s due to MW transmitter. If FM transmitter is commissioned, then it will be possible to listen from all over Mizoram.

New Programs introduced: New programs introduced in the Station have received wide and positive response from members of the public. These programs are:

1. Locally booked commercials: Commercial spots and greetings commercials were introduced in the station during the year 1999. A modest but encouraging amount of a little over 2 lakh rupees was earned by the station after the introduction of commercials from February 1999. At present the average monthly local earning is approximately Rs. 1,01,275/-. The station also broadcast commercials booked by CBS Kolkata and CBS Mumbai.

2. The duration of the Aaj Subah programme has been increased to 20 minutes following encouraging response and demands from listeners.

3. Phone-In-programmes: Live Phone-In programmes for Rural People especially the farmers every third Sunday of the month
between 4:00 to 5:00 PM has proved very popular with listeners. The station has another weekly programme of a live phone-in spoken word programme broadcast every Saturday at 1:05 to 2:00 PM with encouraging results. Phone-in facilities are also used for news purposes with recorded and live reports inserted in news bulletins.

Program Composition:

In addition to general talks being broadcast in Mizo and English, the following special audience programs are also being broadcast - Rural programs, Youth programs, Educational broadcast, Non-Forman Education, Women’s programs, Children’s programs, Hindi and English lessons, science and sports programs, Gandhi Prathana and National Integration programs, Music from other regions, community singing, Wit and Humor, Family welfare programs, Literary Magazines, Replies to Listener’s letters, drama, documentaries, features and Health Notes.

Music broadcast include Mizo light, folk, traditional, devotional, secular, patriotic songs and instrumental numbers. Western music, Hindi film and non-film songs are also broadcast regularly. Request programs of Mizo love and devotional songs including phone-in requests find prominent places in the station’s programs. Western music occupies second place in the station’s music programming. Hindi film music is becoming popular among the rural listeners.

Regional News Unit

The Regional News Unit at AIR, Aizawl started functioning in 1975 with one post each of Assistant News Editor, Correspondent and News Reader-cum-Translator sanctioned for the unit. It started with a daily Mizo news bulletin of 5 minutes duration. The duration was
extended to 10 minutes from January 1977. At present the news unit is manned by a News Editor.

The news unit also originates weekly news commentaries, district newsletters and state newsletters. Reviews of the proceedings of the State Legislative Assembly are also originated as and when the state Assembly is in session.

The regional news bulletin in Mizo is relayed by AIR Lunglei every evening at 6:30 pm and 7:30 am on morning through shortwave. There have, however, been complaints over the reception of AIR Aizawl signals at Lunglei is poor. This problem is however expected to be solved once the satellite up linking facilities at AIR Aizawl starts functioning. AIR Aizawl relays the entire major and most of the hourly national bulletins in English and Hindi. It also relays Sports News in English every evening besides relaying the North East News in English from Shillong.

The regional News Unit at AIR Aizawl is equipped with a computer, fax, Television connected with local cable and electronic teleprinter of PTI. The Station has 6 Part Time Correspondents one each at Saiha, Lunglei, Champhai, Kolasib, Serchhip and Mamit. Proposal for sanction of Part Time Correspondent posts for other district headquarters of the state is pending underway. The RNU has no sanctioned post of Stenographer or Typist. The Unit has however been able to maintain a high degree of credibility and appreciation from the public in Mizoram.

**Dialect Broadcasts:**

AIR Aizawl broadcasts dialect programmes of Mara, Lai, Hmar and Chakma communities for 70 minutes each per week. The dialect
programmes broadcasts between 5:10 and 5:50 pm mainly comprise love and devotional songs.

**Programme Coordination:**

There is a close coordination in programme matters between AIR Aizawl and AIR Lunglei. The Station is one of the most regular contributors to AIR North Eastern Service in Shillong. The Head of Programme regularly attends Zonal Programme Coordination Committee meetings whenever they are held. A cross channel promos have been aired in both prime and non prime slots by DDK Aizawl and AIR Aizawl. A vigorous but sustained cross channel promotion is being done by AIR Aizawl and DDK Aizawl.

**Relationship with State Government:**

The station enjoys an excellent relationship with the Government of Mizoram. The Station mainly receives publicity requirements of the state government through the state Directorate of Information and Public Relations. The Station receives help and cooperation from the state government whatever is required for smooth functioning of the station.

AIR Aizawl also has very good relationship with its artists and talkers. The Station has a high reputation as a prestigious organization. The Station was awarded the First Prize in Cleanliness by the State Government for the year 1999 during the cleanliness competition in which the courtesy and accessibility of officers and staff of the station were taken into consideration.

**5.3.2 Doordarshan:**

Doordarshan is first known to people of Mizoram in October 1982 when a 100watt low power Television Transmitter started
functioning from Tuikhuahtlang, Aizawl. This was just before the commencement of IXth Asian Games hosted by India in New Delhi. The government of India wanted to give the people something which would interest the people of Mizoram and feel more attached to the mainland India. During the Doordarshan expansion program in 1985 by Govt. of India for all state capitals, Mizoram got the opportunity to taste the full-fledged Doordarshan Kendra with Program Production facility. The construction of Doordarshan Complex comprising Studio and Transmitter was set up at Buiahmun peak in Durtlang was started in 1986. The Doordarshan Complex was commissioned on 12th June 1995 by the then Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Mr. K.P. Singh Deo.


Doordarshan, Aizawl also telecast in live various events happening in Aizawl like, Sports, Chapchar Kut Festival Aizawl etc. The transmitter telecasting DD National program including local program and DD News were of 1 KW power 100 Watts respectively. The Duration of telecast was from 1800hrs to 1900hrs and consequently extended for an hour from 1800 hrs to 1000 hrs from 10th May 2000 onwards. A fifteen minutes program showing the events which happened in the state, region and country started from 10th May 2000 on 4 days a week basis. The commercial broadcast commenced from DDK Aizawl from 15th April 2002 onwards like sponsored programs like Drama, Songs which started from 26th January 2004 onwards. The transmitter for DD News was replaced with a new solid
state transmitter with an upgraded power of 1 KW from 10th October 2003 onwards. Similarly, Transmitter for DD National was replaced with a new Solid State transmitter with an upgraded power of 10 KW from April 2003 onwards. This extends the coverage of our transmission terrestrially for a distance from 80 to 100 Km radius. The dream of the people of Mizoram who are not residents of Aizawl had come true as a ‘Christmas Gift’ for viewing locally originated Mizo program when Doordarshan Kendra, Aizawl started up linking via Satellite, the local program using Digital earth station from 25th December 2004 onwards.

Aizawl Doordarshan also covered in live the Assembly Elections held in December 2008 as well as the 2013 Election with Digital Satellite News Gathering equipments received from Kolkata. The Mizoram state Assembly proceedings were also covered and telecasted whenever the Assembly session is scheduled. The Studio of the Doordarshan is being digitized with the state of the art Equipments and technologies. Currently, the programme originated by Doordarshan Aizawl is being relayed at the following places:

1. 10 Kw (HPT) High power transmitter at Lunglei.
2. 100 Watts (LPT) Low Power Transmitter at Lawngtlai.
3. 10 Watts (VLPT) Very Low Power Transmitter at Champhai.
4.10 Watts (VLPT) Very Low Power Transmitter at Saiha.

Doordarshan Kendra, Aizawl is functioning with a total staff strength of 160 persons approximately under various sections like program, engineering, News and administration Doordarshan is a state owned Media Agency and therefore, they are very careful in what they broadcast. They do not broadcast anything which is harmful for the
image of the government. They are having much advantage over the private media and they reach wider audience. The policy that they have is Information first, Education second and Entertainment at last. Therefore, if we compare it with the private media which caters more to the interest of the viewers alone we can say that, the Govt. own media agency are more helpful to the masses.200

5.4 The Working of Government of Mizoram and its Media:

The Government and Media in Mizoram have a very close link with one another. The leaders of the political parties were at one point of time a part of the MJA or a Media person. They paid attention to this area. There are many incidents where the State Government has offered the media people a helping hand. There are two departments in the government which deals with such area i.e. Information and Public Relation Department and Information Technology Department. The Information & Public Relations Department (I&PR) is the nodal agency of the Government of Mizoram for disseminating information on various activities of the Government to the people through the media and providing feedback to the Government on important matters which is reflected in the media. In addition, it is also the authoritative and official publicity agency of Government of Mizoram. The Department of Information and Public Relation came into existence when Mizoram became a Union territory in 1972.201 Since it was a Department set up during the insurgency, it had faced a lot of problem. There was an incident where the Director of the Department while following Lt. Governor of that time Shri S.P. Mukherjee was ambushed near Zanlawn by the insurgents fortunately he escaped unharmed. During the insurgency, the department tried its best in bringing about peace in the

200 An Interview with Mr. P. Bidyananth, an Engineer Technician Doordarshan Kendra, Aizawl Mizoram on 6th April 2013.

201 The First Director was R.L. Thanzawna he was the Assam Civil Servant.
State. It did its best in bringing the underground elements and the government on the negotiating table. The Department was instrumental in mobilizing the people including church leaders and voluntary organizations to participate in the endeavor to bring about lasting peace which is conducive and a pre-requisite for all round development. It tried its best to set the mind of the people in a positive way. It was and still is the bridge between the masses and the Government. To bring about normalcy from the curfews that was continuously imposed, the department besides their normal event organized Beat Contests, Cultural Exchanges, Exhibitions, Excursions, Fairs and Other Events. The Information & Public Relations Department has been continuously reaching out to the people through various media, mitigating many pressure groups and communicating the futility of violence in any form.

5.4.1 Department of Information and Public Relation:

I&PR is an important department of the Government of Mizoram in spreading the government policy, promoting the governments agenda and awareness amongst the masses of Mizoram. The functions that they perform are as given below:

- Effectively propagates ideals, policies and programmes of the Government.
- Carries information on the schemes of the Government to the doorstep of the people.
- Effectively using mass media for dissemination of information.
- Creating awareness among the people particularly among the rural masses about the welfare measures through publicity.
- Disseminating policies and programmes of the Government through Print, Electronic Media advertisements, exhibitions, publications, traditional media and others.
• Gives feedback to the Government from Press, Prepare Press Clippings for various ministries.
• Acts as a nodal agency for release of advertisement of various Government Department.
• Printing of Government publication such as Diaries, Calendars, Booklets Pamphlets, Posters, Portraits and others.
• Enforces Press Accreditation Rules and grants accreditation to Journalists.
• Production of documentaries on famous personalities/Success Stories/Departmental Achievements.
• Organizes discussions and Seminars on Current Affairs.
• Provides press coverage to official Government functions and programmes, VIP and VVIP visits.
• Provides News Video Clippings to National and Local Channels.202

Very often when ministries change and a new political party come in power, there is some sort of reservation from the new ministry to wholly trust the department which has been doing publicity for the former ministry. Though it does not take much time for the new ministry to be well-acquainted with the department and the staff, the loyalty of the staff is with the government and not with the political party so, they are aware of their duties and they perform it very well.203


When the Congress Party came into power their main policy which they wanted to implement was the New Land Use Policy. This

203 Personal interview with P.B Lianthangpuii IPRO who has been working with the Department of I&PR since 1989. Who is presently in the NLUP cell. 18th October 2013.
policy aims to give rural farmers and the urban poor to have a head start on earning their own income and to build a self-sustaining mass in Mizoram. This policy was very much welcomed by the people of Mizoram. The Department of I&PR even set up a separate cell to do the publicity for NLUP. It is not surprising that 50% of the journalists are getting the aid under NLUP which is directly distributed to the people of Mizoram. The reason is mainly because the Government wants to be in good terms with the journalist section of the population. The NLUP involves direct distribution of cash of Rupees 1 lakh; the media as already mentioned is a very important tool in creating a powerful public opinion which is responsible for their acceptance or rejection. Giving the NLUP to the media persons is a very smart move for the government as this will give a good vibe with the journalists’ community who in turn will provide a positive input in their newspaper about the government policy and that will create a positive outlook for the people of Mizoram. At the end, the vote of the people is all that matters and the government knows this very well. The government has been very kind to the media community knowing the power that it hold. They have not censored any article nor have they ever taken away the license of any press.

Department of Information and Public Relation has been a loyal agency for the government. When the private press becomes too harsh and aggressive in their writings about the government policies and actions, I&PR department would always give explanations for their action and always strive to create a clean image for the Government. As the department is also in charge of publicity, they distribute government advertisements and classified advertisements to the local newspaper and cable networks/ Local channel for publicity. They have the authority in choosing the newspaper that is to publish their advertisements. Though there are some rules and regulation as to who
would publish them, since the media community is small and it is not always possible to apply the rules. Such rules state that the government advertisements should go to those which have the widest circulation. It is a very difficult rule to follow because the newspapers which have the most circulation do not need the advertisement money to run the press. There are many newspapers which are small in circulation which need aid from the government or aid from any other source to publish their newspaper. Since the government wants to play fair, it tries its best to encourage as many newspapers to exist since according to the constitution it is the right of the people to voice their opinion. Therefore the government giving aid in the form of advertisement even to the newspaper with small circulation is justified. Another means for the Government to support the newspapers is by directly acknowledging the journalists through the department of I&PR. There are 191 accredited journalists in the state while this study is being conducted. The Central Government (PIB) in its budget has added the Journalist welfare fund commencing from the year 2001-2002. There has been a provision that in case an accredited journalist dies while performing duty the family of the deceased journalist will receive the sum of Rupees One Lakh. The accredited journalists are the ones that the Government call and summon every time a state event takes place or a VVIP visits the State. As we have already mentioned before, the media and the government are somehow linked to one another. There are many reasons why they need to appease one another. The MJA has often requested the Government of Mizoram to make a separate budget for the journalist welfare fund, and then on 13.9.2007 the then council

204 The Indian Constitution, while not mentioning the word "press", provides for "the right to freedom of speech and expression" (Article 19(1) a). However this right is subject to restrictions under sub clause (2), whereby this freedom can be restricted for reasons of "Sovereignty and integrity of India,

205 Personal interview with P.B. Lianthangpuii IPRO, Department of I&PR, 18th October, 2013.
of ministers came to a decision to keep the sum of Rupees Ten Lakhs from the budget. The first time it was kept aside was from the year 2008-2009 budget. The MJA members were very grateful to the then I&PR Minister R. Lalthangliana, I&PR Secretary at the time TBC Rozara and K. Lalnghinglova and the Director L.R. Sailo. The government had played an important role in the welfare of the MJA.206

5.4.2 Department of Information & Communication Technology.

Another important body which came up was the Department of Information & Communication Technology. It was established in the year 2008 for framing policy, planning, implementation and monitoring of Information & Communication Technology and e-Governance projects. The Department has a vision to use Information & Communication technology to make available information and government services related to basic needs of common persons accessible to them in their locality throughout their lives through minimum procedural formalities thereby pursuing economic development. Initially this department was functioning under the Department of Industry and the Industry Department acted as a Nodal Department till the month of October, 2004. The Department has been actively working to make Mizoram one of the most IT literate states in the country and providing ICT-enabled citizen-centric services for the welfare and development of the society. The department has undertaken various projects since its inception to materialize the objective and vision set forth by the Government of Mizoram to bring about economic growth and sustainable development in the State through the adoption of ICT tools. The Department has a vision to use Information & Communication technology to make available information and

government services related to basic needs of common persons accessible to them near their locality throughout their lives through minimum procedural formalities thereby pursuing economic development. The Department also developed a common integrated Content Management System and Common template for various Departmental Websites, and about 60 Government websites are currently hosted in the department's dedicated Web Server located at a secured environment.207

Over the years, a large number of initiatives have been undertaken by various State Governments and Central Ministries to usher in an era of e-Government. Sustained efforts have been made at multiple levels to improve the delivery of public services and simplify the process of accessing them.

E-Governance in India has steadily evolved from computerization of Government Departments to initiatives that encapsulate the finer points of Governance, such as citizen centricity, service orientation and transparency. Due cognizance has been taken of the notion that to speed up e-Governance implementation across the various arms of Government at National, State, and Local levels, a program approach needs to be adopted, guided by common vision and strategy. This approach has the potential of enabling huge savings in costs through sharing of core and support infrastructure, enabling interoperability through standards, and of presenting a seamless view of Government to citizens.

The National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), takes a holistic view of e-Governance initiatives across the country, integrating them into a

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207 DoICT's Server runs on Intel Processor, 2GB Memory and Unlimited Storage Space. The Operating system is CentOS release 5.8 (Final) with support for PHP Version 5.2.17 and a popular MySQL database server. The Server is located in a secured environment and is monitored continuously by a team of expert 24hrs a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
collective vision, a shared cause. Around this idea, a massive
countrywide infrastructure reaching down to the remotest of villages is
evolving, and large-scale digitization of records is taking place to
enable easy, reliable access over the internet. The ultimate objective is
to bring public services closer home to citizens, as articulated in the
Vision Statement of NeGP.

The Government approved the National e-Governance Plan
(NeGP), comprising of 27 Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and 8
components, on May 18, 2006. The Government has accorded approval
to the vision, approach, strategy, key components, implementation
methodology, and management structure for NeGP. However, the
approval of NeGP does not constitute financial approval(s) for all the
Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) and components under it. The existing
or ongoing projects in the MMP category, being implemented by
various Central Ministries, States, and State Departments would be
suitably augmented and enhanced to align with the objectives of NeGP.
This has been undertaken by a state run Agency, State designated Agency:
Mizoram State e-Governance Society (A society under Department of
ICT, Govt. of Mizoram) which is funded by Department of Electronics
& IT, Govt. of India, under the Ministry of Communications &
Information Technology.208

The Government has taken many steps to implement the
e-Governance in the state for better administration. The main objectives
of the e-Governance are as follows:

Government to Citizen:

- Provide one stop easier access to information and service
- Reduce the average waiting for the citizens to avail services

• Provide the citizen with transparent view of the government processes and timely response to Application.

Government to Business:

• Reduce burden on Business, provide one stop access to rule and regulations and clearances.
• Reduce the cost of compliance by reducing the instance on the business to report the same data, multiple times to multiple agencies.
• Providing facility for online reporting and self-certification.

Government to Government:

• Assist the State and other local government to more easily work together to better serve citizens within key line business.
• Provide administrative saving for the government departments.
• Improving the way that all government department share information at all levels.
• Reduce the non-value added work for the workers in all government departments.
• Providing enhanced access to high quality training and competency development for state employees through capacity building across departments.209

The “Department of Information & Communication Technology” was created on 10th July, 2008 to strengthen the Information Technology to the Citizen as well as the Government itself within the State. Though recently created, the Department has taken up various important projects which are mentioned as follows:

209 The e-governance roadmap
1. **MIZORAM STATE WIDE AREA NETWORK (MSWAN):**

   MSWAN is a network covering and connecting all the District Headquarters and Block Headquarters with the State capital. The network is capable of carrying data, video and voice communications throughout the State for all Government Operations. There is a Point of Presence (POP) in each District Headquarters and Block Headquarters. MSWAN has connected 42 POPs within the State. The Project implementation was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Chief Minister on 19th June, 2012 and operation will be continued for five (5) years.

2. **STATE DATA CENTER (SDC):**

   SDC is one of the core infrastructure projects which is envisioned as a ‘shared, reliable and secure infrastructure service Centre for hosting and managing the e-Governance Applications of the State and its constituent Departments’. This shared infrastructure will be utilized by all the Government Departments for Data Archival. The Government of Mizoram has awarded the contract to M/s Prithvi Information Solution Ltd. in consortium partnership with Payoda Technologies Pvt. Ltd. and MSeGS. Work has commenced from 18th June, 2012 in the Secretariat Building Annex-I.

3. **COMMON SERVICE CENTER (CSC):**

   CSCs are front-end service delivery points for Government, Private and Social sector services to the urban and rural citizens of Mizoram. There are 136 Centres in the State where CSCs is setup and through this, the citizen can obtain Government services online. All the CSCs are operated by VLE (Village Level Entrepreneurs).

   The Service Center Agency, ZENICS has developed Government-to-Citizen (G2C) and Business-to-Citizen (B2C)
application software to be utilized under “Mizoram Online”. However, to provide more services to the citizens in all the villages, the Government is installing the NEC funded 300 Rural Information Kiosk (RIKS), which will further have a huge impact in bridging the digital divide. The Hon’ble Chief Minister of Mizoram has kicked-off setting up of 153 Centres on the 19th July, 2013 for the 1st phase and the rest of the Centres are to be completed during this financial year.

4. STATE SERVICE DELIVERY GATEWAY (SSDG) & STATE PORTAL (SP):

State Portal (SP) will act as front end interface to state level e-Governance initiatives and services. The State Portal shall host all the formats for various Government Services accessible to the Citizens in the State. Presently, there are six (6) Government Departments onboard the SSDG&SP portal for delivering Services to the Citizen. The project has gone live on April, 2013.

5. E-DISTRICT:

E-District Mission Mode Project (MMPs) include back-end computerization of District Administration to enable efficient delivery of Government Services and to pro-actively provide a system of spreading information on the Government Schemes, planned developmental activities and status of current activities. The pilot project was successfully launched in Aizawl District and State wide roll-out of the project in all the 7 Districts are in progress.

E-District will provide G2C (Government-to-Citizen) services such as Income Certificate, Residential Certificate, Schedule, Caste/Tribe Certificate, Tax Exemption Certificate, Inner Line Permit, Housing Loan Clearance Certificate, Bakijai Clearance Certificate, Fixation of Rent, Land Acquisition etc. and complaints related
Services at the D.C’s. Office, New Arms License/ Duplicate in case of lost of Original, Renewal of Arms License etc.

6. CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT:

To realize the NeGP vision, 27 Central, State and Integrated Mission Mode Projects (MMPs) along with 8 support components have been identified in NeGP. The focus is service delivery to the Citizens. Capacity Building is one of the important components of NeGP for establishing internal capacity within the Government framework essentially in the State.

Specialized training has been imparted to Officers of the Govt. of Mizoram including MLAs in and outside of the State through NISG, IIPA etc. Much has been benefited through this Capacity building. Apart from this training, workshops and seminars are conducted in various places to disseminate the e-Governance vision.

7. DIGITAL LAND RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM (DLRIS):

Digital Land Resource Information System (DLRIS) project aims to generate and create comprehensive resource information relating to transport network, power distribution line, school education, drainage & water distribution pipeline, Agriculture information, Village information and town planning, etc. integrated with Geographical Maps obtained from Satellite imagery.

All the necessary satellite imagery of Aizawl District and the required hardware and software has been procured from NRSA, Hyderabad. Bharartidhasan University, Tiruchappali. Tamil Nadu has started implementing the project and in Mizoram, survey has been done in various locations of Aizawl District. DLRIS project will be completed by the end of 2013.
8. SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGY PARK OF INDIA (STPI):

Software Technology Park (STP) is a 100 % export-oriented scheme for the development and export of Computer Software using communication links or physical media and export of professional services. STP Scheme has attracted many entrepreneurs in the area of software and services. Establishment of STPI facilities and state of the art incubation facility at Aizawl is considered absolutely necessary for further growth of the software industry in this region. Number of units can grow up rapidly, once the STPI has set up its own infrastructure to provide HSDC facilities to customer.

In pursuance to this, the Government of Mizoram has earmarked 33356.42 Sq.ft of building space in Ch. Chhunga Terminal Building, Thuampui, Aizawl along with a land measuring 5 acres in the Mizoram University campus at Tanhril for setting up of STPI Center. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between STPI, MZU and Govt. of Mizoram has been signed on the 4th May, 2012, Site preparation at Ch. Chhunga terminal, Thuampui is expected to be completed within this financial year 2013-2014.210

5.4.3 ZENICS (Zoram Electronics Development Corporation Limited):

ZENICS is a public sector undertaking under the Government of Mizoram registered under Company Act, 1956 on 20.3.1991 with authorized Share Capital of Rs. 5 Crores. The Government of Mizoram raised the Authorized Share Capital to Rs. 10 Crores on 10.8.2006.

210 In an interview with Mawitea, Department of Information and Communication Technology as on 13th November 2013.
The Main Objects of the Company are:

- To develop Electronics and Allied Industries through manufacturing and research activities.
- Manufacturing and servicing of all audio visual equipments.
- Developing and perfecting electronic technology.
- Organizing seminar, exhibition, etc. in the field of electronics and electrical engineering.
- To carry out business of manufacturing, buying and selling, etc.

The main duty of the Company is to have business ventures in electronics and more recently, Information Technology on profit motive. In regard to organization, the Board of Directors is the authority of the Company and the Managing Director assisted by other managerial level officers execute the works of the Company. ZENICS as ‘Chief IT Consultant to the State of Mizoram’, is to help the State Government to provide complete IT and e-Governance solution, Capacity building and empowerment of Government’s employees and help entrepreneurs to set up IT and ITES-BPO Industries. The main charters and its objectives are:

**Consultancy Services:** To undertake consultancy services to various Departments for implementation of State Mission Mode Projects (MMPs).

**Capacity Building:** To conduct e-Governance training programme for all Government’s employees.
**E- Governance:** To establish e-Governance centre of excellence for development of e-Governance and its application for various departments.

**IT Training Centre:** To establish State-of–the–art IT training Centre in association with multinational Companies like Microsoft, Oracle, CISCO & Red Hat for effective linkage with IT Industries and IT Education.

**Electronics Production:** To establish assembly unit for electronics & computer production like PC, UPS, Inverter, etc.

**Sales & Marketing:** To establish business partnership with multinational companies like IBM, HP, Dell, Cisco, Xerox, Toshiba, Sharp, Microsoft, etc.AMC for all Hardware & Software products.

The different projects that are undertaken are:

- **Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) project:** Election Commission of India, Government of India appointed/awarded ZENICS to be the implementing agency for the state of Mizoram. This project was taken up during 2002-2004. ZENICS had generated EPIC for 80% voters of the total nos. of electors. And the remaining / residual voters are those who are on tour/living outside etc. and the State Government agreed to do the job departmentally, as we gave necessary training to the officials of all DC’s. With the revenue earned from this project ZENICS had a profit during the year 2002-2004 which was utilized for payment of Salaries of staff and for management of the Corporation, almost all of the Share Capital received from the Government kept untouched/un-utilized in the Bank.
during these years. After the contract period was over ZENICS gave training to the Election Department Officers and staff how to operate and generate EPIC and trained them how to maintain and operate the Voting Machine. After completion of the project period it was not extended or continued the contract as Election Department were thoroughly trained by ZENICS to develop/generate EPIC and maintain the voting machine it was felt by the department that they could maintain the system on their own and continue the works by themselves it was not that they were not satisfied by the performance of ZENICS rather ZENICS well trained the Election Department officials to cope with the works on their own.

- **IT Entrepreneurs Development Programme for unemployed youth of Mizoram**: This project is one time project and it was taken up in 2002- Government of India, Department of Information Technology had sanctioned an amount of Rs. 253.74 Lakhs (as grant-in-aid). Out of the total project cost Rs. 20 Lakhs was State Share which was released long after successful completion of the project period.200 Nos. of trainees were enrolled to undergo this training but due to unavoidable circumstances and private problems 114 Nos. passed out from the programme. Most of the enrolled students who had completed and passed out got a job within and outside the state of Mizoram as well as abroad.

- **District School Computer Training Centre**: This project was taken up in the year 2002 under the 11\(^{th}\) Finance
Commission. ZENICS was entrusted to Supply Computer System & Furniture for an amount of Rs. 288 Lakhs.

- **Cable TV Operation:** project was taken up in 1991 and now sold out to various private buyers due to stiff private competition, ill willed attitude of consumers, and theft of key equipments.

- **Component Bank:** It was set-up in 1991 to disburse raw material and spare components for local electronics firms and direct consumers.

- **Development of Website for Tourism and Public Relation Department:** Rs. 11. Lakhs project for development of Website for Tourism Department, Govt. of Mizoram was completed and launched in 2004. As per the proposal submitted to Information & Public Relation Department, Govt. of Mizoram, ZENICS developed website for this department at the cost of Rs 2,15,000. The website has been uploaded 11.7.2011. In the meantime, development of website for other departments is being sought by ZENICS.

- **Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC):** ZENICS signed AMC contract agreement with Dept. of ICT, Govt. of Mizoram on 28.3.2011. For maintenance of Online System of ICT department. The total value of the contract is Rs. 4,02,262. From this AMC contract work, ZENICS expected to earn a profit of not less than Rs 3,50,000.
Setbacks on the working of e-governance:

The function of e-governance in Mizoram is a recent phenomenon and many steps and initiatives have been taken by the government and the departments but the success or the failure does not rests on the government or the department alone. There may be other factors which may cause hindrances to the rapid implementation of the working of e-governance.

**Electricity:** The central component which is essential for the working of e-governance is electricity Power and connectivity. In a state like Mizoram power can be a problem. Though step has been taken to install generators and improve power line in the main office where the server is installed yet there is a need for the good power supply even in the delivery centres. Since e-governance function only through information technologies for which electricity is a necessity, therefore good power supply is essential.

**Connectivity:** Another backbone for the successful functioning of e-governance is the connectivity. The infrastructure and hardware are laid down by the IT Department in various ways that we have discussed earlier but very often it also faces a lot of problem and one of the major obstacles that the system faces is with the connectivity. Internet connection is often not upto the requirement for the proper working of the e-governance.

**Slow implementation of its Delivery Channels:** There is a delay in the setting up of the delivery channels specially the CSC. For a faster connectivity V-SAT is being provided to the CSC VLEs but in many cases we find that there is a delay in the setting up and proper working of these CSCs. This has created a doubt about the success of some of the projects of e-governance.
Lack of Awareness and knowledge: These projects of e-governance are citizen centric and therefore the success of these projects will be determined by widespread participation of the masses by using the infrastructure set up by the government. But so far the masses are not actively utilizing these channels to pursue their interest which is laid down for their convenience. Awareness about the project has been lacking therefore, creation of awareness about these projects should be carried out more effectively. Not only is that, imparting knowledge at the grassroot level is also lacking. Educating the masses about these projects should be a priority.

Looking Forward with Informatization: Conclusion

Informatization challenge is not only to create the conditions for a vibrant information technology that is globally competitive but to use information technology to improve the quality of the mass of its citizen, to solve their pressing problems and to empower them through readily accessible information in a language that they can understand. There are some points which are important in bringing about informatization which are discussed as follows:

Creation of IT mindset amongst the masses: To a certain level with the advent of internet, mobile phones specially smart we are a witness to the changing trend in our social-cultural and political life around us. But the purpose of the use of these technologies may differ from one person to another. But the question is how useful is it in our daily civil life? Or it is an important tool in creating a good relationship between a citizen and the State. Information is still mostly the domain of a privileged few, although with the expanding public access to television, cable, telephony and the internet, this scenario is changing. An IT culture cannot be created overnight but it cannot be denied that we are heading towards it.
Developing Human resources: The key resource for informatization to succeed centers around human resources. If informatization is to make an impact in our problems of the rural areas the focus should be in educate and trained the teachers in the cities, towns and village levels in internet-based education methods. Government employees, operators of internet community centres operator (so that they can adequately serve the public’s information needs), the Village leaders as well but most important facility for free training and awareness should be provided to the masses so that they utilise the infrastructure to serve their purpose.\textsuperscript{211}

After much discussion about the advent of information and communication Technology with regard to e-governance, its function and its problem we can conclude that it is taking Mizoram down the road of informatization. Mizoram had a late start in going down this road yet we cannot discount its contribution towards development. Mizoram is not lagging behind as compared to many other areas in the country though we may be in a hurry to achieve the goals of e-governance, we can say that it is on the right track towards achieving its goal. It has provided services and hopefully it will enable more public participation in the socio-political discourse of the State. There may be projects which may flounder or break the initial inertia but give it some time it may prove to have potential to transcend the inept and inefficient bureaucratic system which will empower the end-users. In a State like Mizoram where democracy is advocated and transparency is the keyword of the day, development of ICT and successful working of the e-governance projects may be the panacea of the many problems faced by the rural areas. A democratic, independent

\textsuperscript{211} Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers, op.cit. pp. 266-269.
communication infrastructure at the community level can play a constructive role in enabling marginalized people to manage their own development and to acquire a sense of control over its course through self-management and self-representation.212

5.5 The functions of various mass media and its social impact:

After the implementation of policy of liberalization in 1991, there have been many changes in the mass media. The cable network entered the country and there was tremendous growth in the media of Mizoram. Before 1991, though Doordarshan was always there for the TV viewers since it was government owned it was not as liberal in its broadcast. It was always controlled by and from the viewers perspective it did not quench the media thirst viewers. Mention may be made that in 1972 when Mizoram was made Union territory a lot of newspapers came into existence and also when India signed the Peace Accord in 1986 and Mizoram got statehood, the print media was the major source of information for the Mizo people. The Mizo people are very curious people by nature and therefore there was always a thirst for information and news. When India in 1991 took the path to liberalization the media scene in Mizoram also started to change. Before the cable network came in, Doordarshan being the only channel to view, even though Hindi language was not very well-acquainted with the Mizo people, the Hindi movies and Hindi songs were very much appreciated by the Mizos. Programme such as Chitrarahat which was a playlist of Hindi songs from Hindi movies was very much appreciated. But with the coming in of cable networks in Mizoram and STAR TV in India the whole system of Media as we knew it was changed. The growth of print

media which was also a major source of information and entertainment for the people was also slowing down even in circulation. The growth of Media in various forms whether it be print media or electronic media, it brought about various changes in the society and the people’s participation.

5.5.1 Print Media:

In spite of the challenges of the speed and audiovisual punch of the electronic media, the newspaper is still perceived as being relevant in both developed and developing countries. This perception is partly due to the fact that even though the newspaper is slow, it has a lasting power far beyond that of the spoken word or the visual image, and readers can refer to it again and again.

As we have already discussed, print media being the first medium of information is very deep rooted in the soil of Mizoram. There has been much speculation that with the growth of technology and the electronic media, the print media would slowly fade if we classify the type of print media we have in Mizoram, we find that there are number of newspapers which are merely surviving for namesake. Prominent journalists and Government accredited journalists were interviewed to know the details of the present state of print media and to know it’s past and relationship with many other social institutions. An interesting fact is that some of the journalists who were and are still involved in print media at some point of time worked under the Government. But as they got more involved in the media they eventually left their government jobs and joined the newspaper on a full time basis.

According to H. Zosangliana (L) former President of Mizoram Journalist Association, also an accredited journalist for the newspaper Tawrh Bawm, the newspapers today are very neutral and unbiased in
their reporting as compared to the times when the newspapers were part of a political party and their main function was to spread their ideologies and criticize the opposing political parties. There were newspapers which functioned from the party office. This period started in the late 60s through the 70s and 80s but with coming of liberalization and globalization, there was a drastic change in the scene of the media. Since the nature of newspaper was used as a political instrument. There were speculations as to which political party does a certain newspaper belong. This was the problem that the independent newspapers also faced earlier on. Gradual change emerges and the independent newspapers are now starting to take up their watchdog role. Initially, for instance, when an editorial was written the one political party would view at it as it being against their political party where as the other party would view it as being against their own, such was the mind-set of the people. The pattern of news item being arranged had also improved a lot. Almost all newspapers have followed the same pattern of printing the activities of the ruling party in the front page as it is obvious that the masses would be interested in reading the activities if the party which has the most activities in the State. The Editorials on the other hand have a critical tone. Since, the writers of the editorial are judgmental towards the activities and works of the ruling party, it often sounds like the newspaper is attacking the government.

The consensus about the newspaper has changed in many ways. In actuality it is performing its real function of keeping a check on the Government and its activities which makes it a more powerful institution today than it ever was. The role of free press is now being realized by the media today. Many print media are now starting to let go of the political ideologies it has been holding onto. Politics and Media go hand in hand; and especially in a democratic state the media is what connects the Government and the people. Though there are some newspapers that still hold on to their ideologies but these
newspaper do not rate very high with the masses, as the masses want to know the truth which the newspapers are expected to report without being biased. The newspapers which are in circulation the most are the ones which do not have any political standing or are linked to any political party. With the coming of electronic and visual media, the print media did lose its hold with the people. The people started viewing such media to get its information and news and since we live in a world which is fast and always on the go, we tend to prefer electronic and visual media. But there is a huge difference between electronic media and print media. The fact is that electronic and visual media just passes by in a flash. If we want to document something, only the print media can be filed and therefore print media is more useful that way. The printed article or the newspaper can again be used as a reference if the need to do so arises. Therefore the value of such print media cannot be replaced even though the electronic media may be in trend. Another illustration can be, if a person who is an esteemed personality of the society or an official gives a speech or talks on the visual media, we tend to get bored and we do not have the patience enough to get through a long speech but in case of an article of an eminent writer or someone that we hold esteem in the society we tend to read it till the end and even keep it for keepsake.213

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was a lull in the growth of the print media due to the growth of electronic media but since the survival of the media is dictated by advertising companies, these companies came to realize that it was more profitable to place

213 An interview with Zosangliana, Accredited Journalist, Editor of Tawrh Bawm (a Daily newspaper). He worked for the Government from the year 1975 to 1985. He was always interested in writing and spreading awareness through print media. He was inspired by the MNF movement. When he was in class 9, he used to make a hand written newspaper which he circulated in the class. It was about an awareness for the MNF movement. Interviewed on 7th July 2013.
advertisements on print media as they can be kept for record. And this has revived the newspaper. The print media has become glossier and the number of pages has also increased. This implies that there is a growth in the print media.

5.5.2 Cable Networks and Local Channels:

When the Satellite networks came into the country, it was welcomed by the people of country. The cable network distributors grew and they enthusiastically gave out the channels by the cables. The cable network operators even started having new means to reach the masses. They started producing their own channels and shows. This got the people to involve themselves in the society more than ever. In the earlier stage cable networks such as Skylinks, Zozam, LPS Cable Networks came up and later on ZONET also came up in 2004. Initially LPS was just a cable network distributor and it did not have production of its own but eventually in 1994, it started to have its own production. The Mizo people are by nature very sociable and they like music and songs. One of the first productions that the LPS cable network and other networks did was mostly making of music videos of the good singers at that time. Though Doordarshan existed at the time yet the people could not relate with it too much as the programs was mostly about the rural India and farming and the language used was Hindi. So with the coming of Cable network there was a whole new world open to the Mizo people.

As compared to the earlier stage the gadgets used in making of the music videos and the production of programmes has improved a great deal. In 2003 LPS introduced a Hindi serial called’ Kasauti Zindagi Kay’. It was a not even translated into Mizo language yet it caused a craze amongst the Mizo people. Though there were many Hindi serials shown in the cable network channel yet the one that was
shown in the Local channel Kasauti zindagi kay became very popular in Mizoram. Mizoram is a land where the Mizo people are not very familiar with the mainland culture and always more drawn to the Mizo local channels as most of the language of these shows were in Mizo language. The producer of the show Lalsawmliana Pachuau CEO LPS Cable Networks, in an interview said that he introduced the Hindi serial because there were a lot of positive things to learn from the Hindi culture like how the younger generation show respect for the older generation was a lesson worth learning for the youth of Mizoram. Since Mizos are the kind of people who are always looking for a role model, for instance in the 1960s the youth would wear the same kind of fashion trend of bell bottom jeans, play rock and roll music, dance to the tune of the Beatles and read book about cowboys. That was how the media influenced the society, they were looking to the west for inspiration and it did. Similarly when Kasauti Zindagi kay was aired from the local channel, the producer hoped that the good values of respect and decency would be a lesson that the Mizo people would pick up. This serial caused a big frenzy amongst the Mizo people. In 2006, a big event called Peace Fest was organized and one of the actors from the serial who played the role of Prem was invited to come to Aizawl as a guest. This caused a huge stir amongst the Mizo people. There was a big debate over this issue. There was a section of people who were very excited and were very supportive while there were many who were opposed to it. Eventually, it was decided against his visit.\footnote{As narrated by Ruth Hrangchal, Organiser of the Peace Fest 2006} That was the kind of frenzy that such serial can cause. But as everything is not perfect and since Mizoram is a State where most of the people follow Christianity, there was a fear that there could be a negative impact in the religious life of the youth who get influenced very easily. And finally he cancelled the airing of the serial which by the time it
was cancelled it was already translated into Mizo language which earned more viewers than when it started.

The Producer tried to turn the attention of the people from the Hindi serial *Kasauti Zindagi kay* to more local based interest singing is one the favorite activities of the Mizo people. In 2006 a new show was produced by the LPS local channel, called youth Icon. This show was copied from the internationally aired ‘*American Idol*’. There were many young aspiring singers coming for audition and from the aspirant, the best 20 were selected and they are competed to be the *Youth Icon*. This helped gain a lot of viewers for the cable networks. A new craze was found again amongst the people of Mizo, everyone was glued to their television when the show was on. It was the creation of an Icon for the youth of Mizoram which indeed was the network doing good service to the society. The Hostess of that particular show also became well known TV personnel mostly because this show also had a huge viewer in the village area. When the Aizawl Municipal council election had to have 30% women seat reservation she was approached by the MNF party to contest for election and she accepted the offer. She even won the election to become the member of the Aizawl Municipal Council. This is a good example of how the faces in the media specially the one that are on the popular shows become familiar with the people and eventually become the representatives of the people. Sometimes shows are made not only the ones that the producer wants to air. Very often the pressure from the people that direct what kind of show was to be aired. Another show which became a success, the initiative taken by the producer of LPS cable network is the Pro-fight. Pro-fight is a boxing show very much like the Youth Icon. It had contenders who played eliminating a player as they played different rounds and eventually the last man standing was announced the winner. Such type of reality
shows started coming up. The idea of the producer was that such kind of TV program would have a good impact on the society.\(^{215}\)

In Lunglei also there are smaller operators like J.B Cables, LDF Cables and Eldo Zenith Links operate at Lunglei. Cable networks are located mostly in urban areas and are mostly concentrated in Aizawl and Lunglei. This is because the urban areas have more interesting news and it has more population who pay attention to these networks. The cable network situated in Aizawl has more impact and influence all over people in Mizoram as Aizawl is the capital and they can gather the news faster than the ones that are located in the further area. Cable networks in Mizoram have more advantage than the ones in other district.

Let us look into the details of the working of one of the leading cable network of Mizoram.

**The Zonet Cable TV Pvt. Limited:**

Zonet was started in 2004; as compared to the other cable networks it was started late since the event that ushered in the existence of such cable networks was the Liberalization policy of 1991. When the Cable networks which were functioning earlier were giving up the operation of cable networks, ZONET came into existence.\(^{216}\) Today, it is run by the sons of the chairman K. Sapdanga and the Board Member Vanneihtluanga. Lalnunpuia s/o K. Sapdanga as Manager and Lalthantluanga s/o Vanneihtluanga, the General Manager along with 34

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\(^{215}\) As according to Lalsawma, owner of LPS Cable Network in an interview held on 6\(^{th}\) April 2013.\(^{216}\) The founders of ZONET are: Chairman: K. Sapdanga, Board Member: Vanneihtluanga, Board Member : R.K. Lianzuala, Senior Advisor: Vanlalzawma (Ex-MP Lok Sabha), Senior Adviser : P.L. Liandinga.
staffs run the cable network. The Zonet not only gives out cable network but also produce programs and broadcast as a local channel. It may be noted here that the way such cable network functions is against the rule and regulation of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting however, in Mizoram though it is violated there has not been a complaint filed against such broadcast. This is not only in Mizoram alone but can also be found in different states in the country. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also finds it very difficult to control such activities. The Zonet Cable networks have also violated these regulations but it does not mean that they will be asked to close down. They are doing very good with their productions and are growing. They air good programs for the public and play an important role in the formation of public opinion and also provide a platform for a public participation. They deal with all the current issues in the State.217

Out of these seven local channels that it airs, the Zonet headquarter control only the two of them Zonet-Zawlbuk and Zonet-Rimawi. The sub-channels of Zonet are all named after flowers but the main channel that the headquarter control is the Zonet-Zawlbuk which is named after the oldest institution in Mizoram. This Channel is the only channel which is launched via satellite and can be viewed via satellite in India. All the Mizo people within India will be able to view this particular channel. This Channel has many programs which are related to the State and this can be said that it is one of the most viewed channels in Mizoram. Some of the programs which can be useful in forming public opinion and which benefits its viewers are:

- Zoram Kalsiam (Guiding the route of Zoram): This program is about the driving the state to the road to development. It is like a

217 They even have seven channels. They are: Zonet-Zawlbuk, Zonet- Zamzo, Zonet-Rihnim, Zonet-Ainawn, Zonet-Rimawi, Zonet-Nauban, Zonet-Dingdi
talk-show and various issues and topics are discussed by a panel of people who talks about their insight about the State.

- **A tak ram (The real World):** This program is mostly a debate on the latest social issues. It can sometimes be regarding politics, health, recent events and occurrence within the state. One of the main issues in Mizoram which the media talks about a lot is the MLTP Act.

- **Damna Rahka (Steps to healing):** This program deals with health issues. The doctors are called on the show and they talk about health and the issues which deals with it.

- **Thazual (The bests):** It is a program which shows the top ten best music videos. The Mizo by nature are music and songs loving people. The artists who make music videos fill up a prescribed form and submit it to the network. This network then picks out the ten best songs and the music video and shows it in this particular program.

These are the contents of the program and all these are very important and create an informed viewer in the State. Besides the Zonet-Zawlbuk channel another local channel that the headquarters control is the Zonet-Rihnim which is dedicated to sports. With the coming in of the cable network, the people have cultivated a huge interest in sports. The sports that interests the Mizo people the most is football. For example, when The Football World Cup is played, almost everyone is glued to the TV set. Before liberalization when most people could not afford television in the state in the 1980s, the house which owned a television set would have people from their locality or the village comes to watch a football match. This says a lot about the fascination of the people to sport. Times have changed and there are many people who can afford television and especially with the cable network the news on football or any sports for that matter is known
right away. Therefore, to have a separate local channel dedicated just for sport is not at all strange.

The other six channels are run and managed by other centres; we can say that it is outsourced. The Zonet-Rimawi is a local channel dedicated to music alone. As already mentioned, the Mizo people enjoy songs and music. They showcase different types of songs, mostly Mizo song and songs performed by the local artistes. It also does air different genres of music. It shows both Gospel and Secular songs. This channel is very much appreciated and it has generated many viewers. As for the other channels they mostly show movies and serials and very often these serials are non-Mizo movies and serials. These days the trend among the Mizo people is to watch the Korean serials. The latest block buster movies of Hollywood can now be downloaded from the internet and these movies are shown with translated version. The growth of technology has caught up with the Mizos and it is no wonder that such type of movies can now be shown from these cable network. Since these channels except Zonet-Zawlbuk is not launched via satellite there is no fear felt by the Cable network operators. Also, since there is no Censor Board in Mizoram, the cable operators have the liberty to air whatever they want to. But so far there is no case of the operators abusing this right. The shows that are aired are very carefully selected. They work by their own Media Ethics which is why it is rather a success in the State.

Another important factor is the funding. These cable networks are a Private Limited, they do not get government funding; therefore, they rely on subscription and advertisements. The firms and companies which exist within and outside the state place advertisements in the show. There is a prescribed tariff made by Zonet. It is not only the advertisement of items to be sold but also if any notification is to be made by a company, association or an individual, one has to pay
according to the rate prescribed by the Cable network. There is also a system that if there is amongst any of the staff who bring in an advertisement worth a huge amount, the person who brings in the gets 10% of the advertisement amount. This encourages everyone in the staff to scout for people willing to advertise their product in the local channel.

5.5.3 The Mobile Phone:

Mobile phone has a lot of impact and had brought about change since it came into the state. The first company which provided mobile phone service was BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited). When it first came into the State it was a big deal. There was a great speculation, many were appreciative of its entrance into the State and many were critical. In the beginning only 2000 sim-cards were issued. It was issued to those who were considered important in the society. Preference was given to doctors and Govt. officials. The ones who had them, considered it as a status symbol. The tariff was high and the telephone bills were very high too. Not everyone could afford to have the cellular phone. But like any other part of the country, the mobile phone industry grew tremendously. Many other companies which were Mobile Phone Service Provider started coming into the state like Airtel, Vodafone, Tata Indicom, Aircel and Idea. The BSNL being government operation had a lot of competition when it came to mobile phone service provider. The people of the state started using mobile phones and now almost every adult citizen seems to have possessed a mobile phone. With the growth of technology and the upgrading of the type of mobile phone, it has become an integral part of our life. The business sector also grew a lot in Mizoram. Many service providers came into existence and it started generating jobs for the youth. Now sim cards could be bought from any agency. Mobile phone not only makes it easier to talk with one another but also send text messages or SMS as
they are popularly known. Just within a decade the Mobile also improved a great deal. We now have phone which are called Smart phones.

In the early 2000 the mobile phone company which sold the most mobile phones was Nokia. Its function was mainly to voice chat and to send text messages. But today the phones have improved a lot. We now have what is known as the Smart Phones. The smart phone function has almost no limit. We can now listen to music and radios from our phones and even watch videos. The Mizo people are very fond of the latest technology and gadgets. Most of the phone use GPRS or have an internet connection of some kind; this allows the user to use the phone as a means to connect with another person and world all together. With so many software and applications which can be installed in the phone with free downloading from the internet, the world has definitely shrunk.

In this chapter we shall discuss about the Mizo people’s reaction to social networking and how it has affected the society and politics. Today, in Mizoram Mobile phone is one of the most important instruments in our lives as it helps us connect with each other in all spheres of social activities. The ability to just send a text message has made it even more convenient to connect with one another. In a lot of ways, opinion polls are now easily taken through voting in the internet.

The cable networks have aired programs which are reality shows like Youth Icon, Mizo Idol etc. These shows are based on the opinions of the people; therefore it is conveniently done through SMS voting. Similarly, in this way it can be used as a means for spreading political ideas in times of election campaign etc.
5.5.4 The Internet Connection:

The internet itself is a revolution which changed the whole communication system as we knew it. It brought about change in ways that we cannot even comprehend in the beginning. The working of the modern technology would be useless without the existence of internet. We have discussed earlier in the 3rd chapter how internet came into our country and how it revolutionized technology and our means of communication. In Mizoram also our government department as discussed had tried to bring about the similar revolution. If 50 million is taken as a measure of number needed for user to continuously use technology then the automobile industry took about 30 year to achieve that number of user and the television about 20 as for the internet it only took about 5 years and the number keeps doubling in less than two years.\textsuperscript{218} The impact of internet in Mizoram is sweeping the state and is bringing changes in almost every spectrum of the society. It has blurred the lines between all the technologies. With the advent of technologies the use of internet has grown in only few years. The changes that we discuss in this chapter are the changes that mostly the internet has brought within the state of Mizoram at every level of the society and in every area.

5.6 The impact of Media on the Mizo Society:

The growth of media is parallel with the growth of technology. We live in a world where everything can now be done with a push of a button. This makes our life easier and at the same time it also makes us more lethargic and unproductive individuals. If we compare the earlier times with the world today, we find that it took more effort to do anything back in the days before such growth of technology. Mizoram

is one state where the impact of the growth of technology is fast and the people get used to technology and make it a part of their life easily. Today, we find that almost everything is connected to the Media and Technology. Amongst all the Mass Media, the medium which has affected the life of the people the most is the Television. Television in the 1980s was hardly found in the homes of the people of Mizoram but in 1986 Football world cup many of the people came to watch it in the house of the people those who own television. The house of the people who had television was jam packed during the match. Slowly the number of the television owners grew and by the 1990s many people had a television and by 1994 World cup most people could watch the match in the comfort of their own home.

Media has a huge impact in the society. It can be said that it has changed our way of thinking and it has even altered our value-system. The cable networks along with it brought in many channels which are divided into different types of programs and shows. On one hand we have the NEWS channel and on the other hand we have the lifestyle channels. There are so many TV programmes to choose from now that a person can switch on the TV and watch only the show which interests him. The television is the window to the world and the internet allows communication and interaction between the user of these means to create ideas and talk about the possibility of achieving them. This way the people build up new ideas and they try to act accordingly. There are many ways that the media influenced the society.

5.6.1 Social impact:

The internet has brought in what is known as the Social network. There are many social networking sites, the Mizo people being a sociable people by nature wasted no time in getting well acquainted with it. Such sites as Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr are all social
network sites which can be accessed through computers and through smart phones. There are many applications in the smart phones such as WhatsApp, We-chat etc which are social networking applications. These sites and applications allow the users to communicate and interact using these devices. Because of all this virtual socializing and being able to keep oneself busy most of the time, the traditional mode of socializing has gone down in a lot of ways. Before such cable networks and social networks came into the scene, the youth would gather at a friend’s house and sing songs playing guitar or a young man would visit his girlfriend at her residence. The mode of courting has also changed in many ways in Mizoram. It is true that the Mizo people by nature like to sing and play guitar, a young man was automatically assumed to know how to play a guitar. There would be a group of friends gathering at a friend’s house and sing, as singing was the favorite activity of the youth. Nowadays, the young people would meet outside the house and hang out with one another. Since there are many activities which can be done at home and almost all activities at home are solo activities, the socializing in the real sense has gone down a lot. In today’s world, business has boomed and ideas have grown so much that the people of Mizoram also do not have time to waste. Almost everyone is on the move. Besides socializing virtually and keeping oneself busy watching TV and going online, Church is still remains the one institution which is an important place for socializing. The Mizo people of different denominations are very attached to their Church. The youth activity in the church is an important sphere to meet and socialize in reality and once they all head home, most of the youth go back to their virtual world. The social impact can be classified under different areas:

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219 In an interview with Vanneihtluanga. Interviewed on 3rd September 2010.
• **Lifestyle and Fashion impact:** Lifestyle is also affected in a lot of ways; the people of Mizoram watch televisions and are inspired by what they see, the lifestyle and the homes of people from the more developed places. Today, in the houses of those who can afford we find that they have good furniture and infrastructure which make them look like European houses. Also in the market since such type of furniture are in demand, there are shops which sell such type of furniture, curtains and other household items, which means that because of our exposure to media the business side also grew.

The Mizo food and cuisine are also influenced by the media in many ways. Initially, the place where the people used to snack was mainly on the roadside tea stalls which served tea and bread made of sticky rice, Chow and Fried rice. But now, the menus of out tea stalls have changed and many Cafes and restaurants have come up which serve food inspired by the western worlds. The youth now crave food such as Hamburgers and Pizzas etc; this is how the media has influenced the food culture as well.

The world is so well connected today that the way they shop has also changed. Business has changed a lot. We now find the brands that are being advertised in the market we can now find almost everything in Mizoram. With globalization a lot of international brands coming into India.

Another important area of its influence is the fashion trend. The Mizo people are very much attracted by things which are modern and nice. They were highly influenced by the western culture in particular. But with the influx of media, the influence of the South East Asian culture and predominantly South Korea is very strong. Even internationally, there is a strong Korean
wave or rather what is known as the K-pop. The way the youth dress themselves and the way they do their hair is all influenced by the media. They clad themselves like they were to walk down the streets of New-York and they do look like they belong. There was a time when the Mizos who studied outside Mizoram or the Mizos who stayed outside Mizoram would come home and they would stand out because they would have more advanced fashion sense and they lived in a place where such outfits were available. But today if anyone came to Mizoram from a more modern and developed state, no one would notice the difference because there is practically no difference in the way they dress themselves anymore. We have more knowledge about the world outside our own state so much that we lose focus on the reality and the state that we are in.

- **Area of change; our Mind-Set**: There has been a drastic change in the way we think. The older generation already has a strong mind-set, yet the youth are easily influenced by what they see and hear from the media. There was a time when the chieftainship was abolished because it imposed a kind of slavery on the people and slavery was abolished in the west. Today, because the world is obsessed with the ideology of capitalism, the mindset of the youth is also starting to lean towards a more liberal social and political setting. The media has made the youth aware of the development of the world and made them convert the modern world. It has given them new role models and made them more interested in the international scenario. There is a shift of role models from the sons of the soil; pass the country to international celebrities, which resulted in the existence of youths who do not even know the names of Mizo Civil Servants,

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220 In a personal interview with Lalsawmliana Pachuau, CEO LPS vision. 6th April 2013.
ministers, politicians and people who have achieved so much in different fields. At the same time, young girls styling their hair and dressing up like a Hollywood stars or Korean Pop-Stars. Young men also look up to sport stars for inspiration or the business entrepreneur are influenced by people like Steve Jobs, Bill Gates and for the ones who are politically aware, Barack Obama become their role model. Not only in the social life and the mind set but also in the approach to politics in the state, the expectations from our Government has changed a lot.

- **Impact of Sport:** One of the very important impacts of media is in the field of sports and how sports have impacted the social and political policies is an interesting fact. The cable networks have air many channels. There are number of news channels, music channels, movie channels, sports channels etc. For a long time now, while cricket has been the game that was obsessed by the people of mainland, Football inspite of the absence of football grounds, it is the one sport which interests the Mizos the most. During the football world cup tournaments, even when there were not many television sets to watch, people would gather in the houses of those who own television and even if they were aired at odd hours (since most matches were played in Europe, there was a big time difference,) this would not stop them from watching it. Time has changed with the cable network, everyone interested in Football even from the remotest village in Mizoram can now watch the football match that he pleases from the comfort of his own house. Not only the World Cup which comes around once in four years but also of the European Cup called the ‘Euro’, the UEFA Champions’

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221 According to Tlanzova, an accredited journalist. Former Editor of Vanglaini Column ‘Thalai te pual’. Interviewed on 19th July 2012.
League or the English Premier league can be watched for those interested in the game. The power of the media is such that, the person in the remotest corner of Mizoram can now share the same interest and be a fan of a European football team along with the person in the most urban part of Mizoram or Europe for that matter. Such impact on the sports has motivated the young men of different part of the state to pursue a career in this field. This has also made an impact on the policy makers to take steps in building facilities which would be more helpful to those who aspire to become sportsman be it in the field of football or judo. It cannot be denied that it is all an impact of the media. The Zonet Cable network Satellite had also taken steps to promote football in many ways.222

The Mizos like to be a part of a society and are very active in social networking. With the growth of internet, there are many social networking sites and the people use them thoroughly. Of these social networking sites Facebook is the most common social network. Almost everyone who has access to internet have an account. This is not only amongst the Mizos but rather, this is a global trend. Facebook does not have only negative effects on the society but it is also an important means of communication as it gives the users edutainment (education + entertainment) not to forget that it is one of the most useful sources of information and a platform to voice opinion. It is easily accessible through computers, laptops, phones and tablets. The established media such as our print media and cable networks have also used it as a source of news. It provides a new sphere which is the virtual sphere. It is neither public sphere nor private sphere. It is a platform to use the freedom of speech and expression but at the same time, one has to be aware of the duty and not misuse this freedom.

222 An interview with Vanlalmuana, former editor of Y2Goal, 9th July 2012.
Journalism is now a social responsibility. The public news environment and new media technologies have enabled a participation in the news process. There is a new term which defines this new phenomenon of participation called the user-generated content or, citizen journalism and community media to name a few. It is not the citizens who report the news and event and Facebook provides a platform for such participation. This is a very important forum for the users to voice their opinion on latest issues which is discussed within the State. The responsibility of the people has also become bigger in the field of reporting an incident or talking about an issue or even commenting on an issue. The media ethics are also important to know for the user. ‘What? When? Where? Whom? How?’ should be reported. In spite of the growth of information technologies, the press still remains the fourth estate but it has to work harder in maintaining its status quo. Facebook has now become the main link between major institutions and the mass. It is a platform for anyone to voice their opinion and therefore, the social media power now rests in the hands of every user, it is now evident that it can be used to change the society in many ways.

5.6.2 Political impact:

The media has placed the politics as a very important area of the society since it defines the structure which put forth the system of administration of the state. The media people have also followed the whereabouts of the politicians as they are the ones who hold the administrative as well as financial power which are the key elements for the smooth running of the state. The news which holds the interest of the citizen the most can be rightly said is the political news and

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Lai Lai Khuhly, Offline Facebook ve thung aw!. http://www.vanglaini.org/articles Thursday, 07 February 2013 12:57 Vanglaini access on 10 February 2013
therefore we can say that the politics also in turn affects the media.\textsuperscript{224} There are many TV channels which talk about the politics of different countries and their leaders. There are many news channels which highlight the political development of the various countries and governments. Through the media good governance have been witnessed and it builds a desire amongst the youth to want such type of government. Barack Obama came into the political scene and his key word was ‘change’. He promised that if he came to power, he would bring about change in the country; this was when America was facing economic crises, a recession period. Since most of the cable networks aired news about the United States of America, the youth in Mizoram were also influenced by it. That year in 2008, when there was an Assembly Election in the State, the key word amongst the political parties was ‘Change’. The political party which used the word ‘Change’ the most was the Congress Party and they won the election and they came into power. This build up a high expectation amongst the youth and to this day change is still expected by the youth.\textsuperscript{225}

The Government in the neighboring country of Burma is observed. We witness how Aung San Suu Kyi has fought for democracy and how the west helped her in achieving her goal and today the Mizos are inspired by such kind of politicians who give importance to ideologies like democracy and who stand up courageously by the values that they uphold. Such is the way the people here are influenced by the media.

When Barack Obama was running for the President of United Stated of America in 2008, he used the social media as his means of campaign amongst the youth as facebook and twitter was one of the

\textsuperscript{224} Personal Interview with K.Sapdanga, 21\textsuperscript{st} July 2013.

\textsuperscript{225} Personal interview with Laltlanzova, an accredited journalist. Former editor of Vanglaini Column ‘Thalaite pual’. Interviewed on 19\textsuperscript{th} July 2012.
most popular social networking of the day, he used it to reach the youth. Even in Mizoram that trend is being followed. Facebook is one the most effective instrument to reach the user. It is not bounded within the territory of the State and it reached further than Mizoram. Ideas are being shared and discussed. On facebook there are many pages like Special report, Lengzem, Chanchinthar, Zo-Life etc. These pages are like a forum which allows the users and members to discuss and interact and most importantly share ideas regarding the politics of the state. The media cannot be ignored by any political leaders because this is where the real public opinions are formed.

The growth of technology has definitely enabled a faster flow of information. Today there are more informed youth than any other time in the past. Yet, since there is information in excess, the youth tend to pick up information which is only of their interest. They have a great deal of knowledge on the things that they are interested in but many of them are still ignorant about the politics of the state. But it is true that if one is interested and want to know about the Government, information about the government can be found abundantly in the media. Also if anyone wants to put forth an opinion or needs a platform for sharing their political ideas or even in criticizing the government policies, one can do so as the media has put forth a good platform for public participation.

In the Mizoram Assembly election of 2013 the media has played a major role in making the citizens aware of importance of voting and mobilizing them. Unlike any other time, the election of 2013 witnessed a very vibrant use of media. There were many shows on TV which talked about the various issues before the election and many election reviews were aired on TV post-election. The political parties also used these social media as an important tool for campaigning and the party which used the most was the Zoram National Party (ZNP).
There are many newspapers which are apolitical. They do not have any political leaning and therefore are reliable source of information. These newspapers give a separate column for articles and opinions of the people. The people send text messages to such newspapers and write about their grievances and disappointments regarding various issues. Not only that, they also write about what they like about the governance and policies, so on and so forth. Being able to connect to other places, people tend to compare the governance system of those countries with their own government. This has raised many issues of corruption, development and good governance. This creates an awareness and demand for such type of governance and development in the state is being felt.

5.7 Media, Politics and the church:

Church, as an institution concerning practice of Christian faith and principles perform three fold functions in the Mizo society: Religious, Political and Social. In its religious functions, it tries to bring about spiritual growth and religious consciousness so as to strengthen the faith of the people. Socially the church had always tried to bring about the sense of equality. The Church has a meaningful voice and authority in the society and has always been an instrument in maintaining the order in the society. At the time of disaster and natural calamity, it is often the church that comes forward to help the people in distress. Politically, the Church promotes the order of the society and they encourage their members to be a good law binding citizens and participate in election. They have kept their distance from the politics

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of the state as far as possible but in the recent times there has been a change in their level of involvement. We have witnessed that at the time of election the Church has a say in the way elections are to be conducted in the state. The first visible engagement of the civil society in the election of the Mizoram Assembly was in 1972 when the first election was conducted; the church issued an appeal to the politicians and members of the Church to conduct a free and fair election. The Church being an institution which forms the public opinion is very well known to the politicians and therefore, they tried to create a good impression in the Church in spite of what party they belong to. Knowing this the Church also tries its best to create a party politics free-zone. The Church is a religious organization not a political, commercial or social organization. But it has the tendency to get involved in any aspect of the social life if its involvement is going to improve the situation of the society. Even during the insurgency the Church has played an important role of bringing about peace in the state. Just as the members of the Church are the citizens of the state, it is not possible to stay entirely away from the political turmoil that the state was going through. The leaders of the Church were working overtime, risking their lives, negotiating with the government officials and leaders of the underground group. This eventually led to the signing of the 'Memorandum of Understanding', known as the Mizoram Peace Accord, between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front, bringing peace to the state after reeling under insurgency for over two decades.

Even when Mizoram was a Union Territory; the Church had always tried to give a positive political education to the people. Since the media was not as strong as it is today; and not everyone read the newspaper and the circulation of such newspapers were very limited but almost everyone went to Church therefore, the Church added to its
role, political education to the masses. In the first election of 1972, the Church issued guidelines for a free and fair election. They continuously did this in the following elections. The Church requests the parties to put up honest, upright and people with high standing in the society as candidates. They also appeal to the political parties for a peaceful election campaign and to refrain from buying votes, or making unrealistic promises and use of other illegal means. At the same time the Church urges the people to exercise their franchise without fear or favor, and strictly requested them not to sell their votes.

The Church leaders would conduct a meeting with the newly elected political leaders irrespective of parties or affiliation, convened by the Synod Executive Committee. At that time they would share their vision together freely and discuss what should be done and what should not be done for the welfare of the state; at the same time requesting them to run the government fairly, with concern and justice for the people.

Before the 2003 Mizoram Assembly election, the Churches and most of the prominent NGOs of the state worked tirelessly together for a free and fair election. They had political education campaign in almost all local congregations in the rural and urban area. But it was found that all these campaigns did not bear much fruit as expected. The candidates spent more money; there were cases of selling and buying of votes, uses of muscles power; and in one assembly constituency, some of the candidates were kidnapped. It was even reported that some underground outfits were also involved in the political campaign. As this was the case, free and fair election seemed a distant dream. The case was reported to the Synod Executive Committee, who in turn, resolved to put the matter to the session of the Mizoram Synod for deliberation.
The Mizoram Synod decided to study the issue in details and make more meaningful plan for future endeavor for political reform.\textsuperscript{227} The matter was forwarded to the Synod Executive Committee, who in turn entrusted the matter to the Synod Social Front Committee. The Committee worked very hard to find out fact and figures, distributed questionnaires, contacting people of the affected areas to have realistic view of the situation. After finding out the ground realities and assessing the situation the Synod Social Front suggested that the Church should reach out and work jointly with other churches and prominent NGOs of the state. The Synod Executive Committee entrusted five of its members to explore ways and means for working together with the Churches and NGOs on the issue of political reform. These selected members held a series of meetings and consultations, over a span of eighteen months, with the leaders of the churches and NGOs. The outcome was to work together in a common platform, creating a new entity wherein all these Churches and NGOs would be constituent members.

The Synod Executive Committee accepted the proposal and entrusted the same members to put the proposal into practice. These members, acting on behalf of the Church, liaise with the other Churches and prominent NGOs and together they decided to create a new, common platform to achieve their goal. On 21st June 2006 was born a unique platform; which was christened the 'Mizoram People Forum'.\textsuperscript{228}

\textsuperscript{227} Resolution No. Synod 2004 General 11

\textsuperscript{228} There are twelve founder constituent members, as listed in the following; The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, Catholic Church of Mizoram, Evangelical Free Church of India, The Wesleyan Methodist Church, Evangelical Church of Maraland, Lairam Jesus Christ Baptist Church, Young Mizo Association, Mizoram Women's Association, Mizoram Elders' Association, Young Lai Association, Young Mara Association.
While all the prominent NGOs of the state have jumped on the bandwagon, some of the Churches in Mizoram were unable to join as member due to various reasons. But individual members of these Churches are allowed to freely join and take active part in the movement and the churches have provided moral support and prayers. A number of organizations have later joined the movement as associate members.

It is perhaps a rare instance of accurate naming, for the Mizoram People Forum seems to have been able to turn ordinary people's desire for disciplined campaigning and peaceful elections into a reality. MPF worked with firmness and good sense to induce cooperation and compliance, not only from the political parties and the general public, but also from the militant groups, so that neither the flamboyant shows of money and muscle nor disruptive violence could confuse or hinder the free exercise of the people's franchise. However, a clean and peaceful election may not immediately mean a trouble-free government, but the vigilance of a popular watchdog organization may help in bringing about clean governance too.\(^\text{229}\)

It is mandatory that the Election commission lays down election code of conduct but in addition to that, the MPF also lays down certain rules which the political parties should avoid during election. These steps taken by the MPF have many good points but at the same time its very existence is debatable. Knowing that they are the vote bank, they lay down good rules and regulation for the people to follow when conducting an election. On the other hand there can be many debates arising from the very existence of the MPF. We live in a democratic

state and the state already has a body which lay down the proper rules and regulation, a code of conduct which was to be followed by the political parties during election. The Election Commission is the body which looks into the election and conducts a free and fair election. Many media persons feel that forming of MPF is not a very democratic act of the church.

The Church being a religious body and trying to impose itself on the political scenario of the state, it is considered not very democratic by a number of media people and very often it can be seen in the articles that has been printed in the newspaper. Yet, at the same time most media persons have claimed that they are free from the influence of the Church and that they do not possess any threat from any of churches specially The Synod. Most of the Christians in Aizawl are affiliated to the Presbyterian Church and therefore, the church is very influential and very respectable. The members of the Church give one tenth of their salary and their earning as tidings to the church. This money then goes to the Synod. The Synod manages the money and uses it for the purpose that it is intended for. There was an incident of the money being misused by the Synod. But this is not investigated and there was no report on this matter. It is not that such incident does not take place within the Synod or that there are political issues which can be reported but question remains that, is it out of respect for the Synod or does the media fear the church or they just don’t want to be involved in such matter. Any controversy which arises regarding the Church has little reporting or no reporting at all. This only shows that behind the silence about the Church there is a reason. The reason could be that the media fear the Church too much or that it respects its affairs too much and does not make any controversy. But on the other hand it has

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230 The Synod is the highest Body of the Presbyterian Churches of Mizoram. It is the ultimate decision making organ of the Presbyterian Churches of Mizoram.
reported very well on the activities of the church like its Conferences and Seminars and what the church demand from the people of the State and the values that it wants to inculcate.

5.8 YMA, Politics and Media

Young Mizo Association (YMA) as it is popularly known today was formerly called Young Lushai Association (YLA) when it was formed in June 15, 1935 by the Christian missionaries and the pioneer Mizo Christians. Inspite of countless terrors and resistance against Christianity which found its roots in Mizoram in 1894, the entire region was swept by Christianity within a decade. Even the chiefs and their subordinates started to recognize and embrace it. Various churches and institutions came into existence resulting in the decline of the Zawlbuk (Bachelor’s dormitory) which was one of the most esteemed establishment among the Mizos. While the number of participants in schools and Churches increased, the attendance in Zawlbuk met a drastic fall. The attempt of the then Governor to bring about revival in the Zawlbuk institution had no significant outcome, thus the most valued institution came to a sad end.

The Christian Missionaries and the Church leaders found it necessary to establish an institution that could take the place of Zawlbuk since it no longer exists. Consequently, a meeting was summoned at the residence of a Christian missionary Miss Katie Hughes (Pi Zaii) on June 3, 1935. ‘Young Mizo Kristian Association’ was one of the names suggested but it was rejected due to its exclusive nature. One of the Christian missionaries Rev. David Edward (Zorema Pa) suggested that “Young Lushai Association” would be most fitting and it was agreed that it would officially start functioning from 15th June, 1935. Indian Independence in 1947 brought about political revival even in Mizoram resulting in the change of “Young Lushai
Association’ to “Young Mizo Association” on 7th October, 1947, as the latter has a more panoramic coverage.

Most organizations confine themselves within the development of their own organizations and their activities are mostly limited to their specific aims and objectives. On the other hand, the purpose of forming the YMA is exclusively for others, and the YMA has been responding to the needs of the society and very often they perform tasks which are well beyond their specific objectives and there are occasions in which the government is not sufficient to carry out particular responsibilities. In times like these, YMA is summoned to assist the work of the government. Complete trust is given to YMA by the general populace.

**YMA AND ELECTION:**

In the run up to the election involving political parties in India, heavy expenses have been incurred in an attempt to influence the voters. In the process many voters have sold their votes on auction-like sales and some unscrupulous persons have tried to make maximum benefit by way of extortion from oblivious candidates. Whatever the case may be, this unethical trend has been created by the candidates themselves and spoiled the innocent voters. This trend has infected elections in Mizoram also since early 1990s. One may therefore, conclude that our elections are not free and fair today.

In this matter, the YMA could not remain silent and turn a blind eye. They, therefore, considered it necessary to rise to the occasion and create awareness in the minds of the public and sensitize the voters the need and value of having a free and fair and peaceful elections in Mizoram. In the year 1987, YMA issued the first election appeal on the eve of the Assembly Election. This was followed-up in the 1989 Assembly Election by taking control at the ground level by setting up a
Common Information Centre and also preparing tea - which is a common feature among the Mizos, for the general public as well as the officials. In the next election - in 1993, the first State-level Coordination Committee on Election was formed under the Chairmanship of the YMA, which includes all the political parties. As the years went by, YMA continued its activities on the election and took active part in the formation of the Mizoram People Forum, in close consultation with the church leaders.

In order to have a free and fair election, YMA considered it necessary to caution the political parties to avoid any malpractice or not to indulge in extravagance involving heavy expenses to influence the voters to gain weightage. On the other hand, YMA have encouraged the public and the political parties to show decency at the time of election and set an example for the entire country to follow. To achieve its goal, it issued Public Appeal well in advance before each election for the public and the political parties to observe the Dos and Don’ts enumerated by the Central YMA.  

231 The list of Dos and Don’ts include:-

1. Since the Govt. is made by the people, it is their responsibility to make good or bad choice; therefore, only eligible voters should cast their votes.

2. The YMA strongly oppose any discrimination on the basis of religion/clan. Therefore, each political party and the public are solicited not to make any nomination on this line. All the political parties and candidates are cautioned not to prepare feast after announcement of election results.

3. Catering tea to the public on the day of election is unnecessary expenses and the same should be avoided by any person concerned with election.

4. Since the candidate will be public leader if elected, all the parties are cautioned not to nominate alcoholic, corrupt/dishonest, doubtful character, etc. Public is cautioned not to vote for such person if nominated.

5. All concerned are advised not to abuse or misuse persons below age in the hustings.
The YMA is the biggest and most popular organization in Mizoram. It derives its strength from the public support. Even though it has no legal sanction for any action taken, the YMA could achieve many results what the Govt. sometimes could not do. Therefore, no party or individual would openly wish to oppose the advice or dictum of the YMA in Mizoram. Since its inception, YMA has published a number of leaflets, brochures and books on various issues and topics for the purpose of education and awareness campaigns. A separate subcommittee has been created to oversee the publication and documentation of the various activities and achievement of YMA.

The YMA has played many important roles in the society but at the same time there are many occasions when the media and the YMA have clashed in opinion when it comes to dealing with the certain issues. YMA had always been on the lookout for the Mizo Society. There are many issues that the YMA take up in performing its role in the society. One of the major issues among others is fight against

6. Only what can be achieved should be included in the Manifesto.

7. The YMA has invited the representatives of all the Political Parties to discussed action proposed to be taken by the former.

8. In fact, the YMA took the responsibility of catering tea at its polling booth on the expense to be borne by the concerned Candidate.

9. At the time of verification of Electoral Rolls for the purpose of deletion and edition. The concern authority is requested to include YMA representative to ensure that no foreigners are included in the Electoral Roll of the State.


233 A monthly journal called “YMA CHANCHINBU” with over 8000 copies has been published in Mizo Language since October 1973. And a Quarterly journal called “YMA Newsletter” is also being published in English.
narcotics. This issue is taken up very strongly and actions are taken up. There are sub-committees and organizations under it which it takes up the action to fight against narcotics and even alcoholism. In the process some YMA members have committed excesses against some individuality. The media persons at times do not entirely support the decision of the YMA. This is often because they feel that the actions of the YMA are encroaching into the Government jurisdiction. Similarly there are many issues and activities of the YMA that the media does not always support.

Mizoram being on the international border often have people from the neighboring country as well as form the neighboring state infiltrating into it. Regarding this also the YMA have often taken the matter into their hands and driven away the so-called foreigner. The media always scrutinizes such activities. The private cable network owners make local program about the latest issues and call the representatives of the YMA to defend their stand on the issues and give them a platform to explain the actions that they take against or for the people involved. The purpose is to let the YMA make its stand clear on such controversial activities.

5.9 Human Rights and Media in Mizoram:

Freedom of speech for the press, information and of assembly is vital for the realization of human rights. Defence of human rights is one of the media's most vital tasks. An important contribution which media can make to the democratic process is denunciation of abuses of power in society and defence of human rights. It has been performing this task for as long as it has come into being. Many social workers and activists had sought the help of media to create awareness on human rights and as well as the duties of the citizen. Many social workers and activists very often tend to misuse the media for their cause and at times like this
the media does its best to mediate the real situation to the people. Media can intervene to promote human rights by:

- By educating the public about their rights so that they are able to see when Government or any other party violates them;
- Facilitate public discussion on the issues of democracy and human rights;
- By providing the right information to the masses

In Mizoram there are activists and social workers who make use of the media in many ways. Such person by the name of Ruatfela Nu has contributed in many ways to the society.\textsuperscript{234} She has written books and also she has written many articles in the newspaper regarding human rights. The media has always been very helpful and supportive of her cause. Despite her contribution, she sometimes focuses too much on the rights and tends to lose focus on the duties of the citizen.

**Media and Politics: an empirical Analysis:**

A survey was conducted to learn about the nature of media, its impact and its relationship with the Government in the state of Mizoram. For this purpose, a structure questionnaire was prepared and circulated. A stratified random sampling technique was used in conducting this survey. In this survey, a total population of 150 from different strata of the whole population responded. Of them, 87% were urban and 13% rural respondents. Among the urban population 29% male and 58% female, while among the rural population 6% male and

\textsuperscript{234} ‘Ruatfela Nu’ means Ruatfela’s mother which is her pen name. A child right activist and member of the state Child Welfare Committee (CWC) Her actual name is Vanramchhuangi. She was even offered a national award for her works but she refused it.
7% female. 24% of the male population were undergraduate and only 3% were post-graduate. Among the female urban respondents 39% were undergraduates and 19% post-graduates. The rural respondents’ educational profile is also very interesting while 5% of the male were under-graduate, only 0.6% i.e. one male was a post-graduate. Among the rural female respondents 6% were under-graduate and 1% post-graduate. This suggests more women are educated than men in rural areas. There are more number of female post-graduate (i.e. 31), than men (5).

The economic profile of the sample is also important to understand their orientation to media and politics. For our purpose we have assumed people with income above Rs. 3 Lakhs per annum as high income group and those below 3 Lakhs as low income. This is done so keeping in mind the standard of living in Mizoram. (See table 5.1)
Table 5.1 shows the population of the sample

UG = Under Graduate, PG = Post-Graduate, HI = High Income (above 3 Lakhs per annum), LI = Low Income (Below 3 Lakhs per annum)

Source: Based on the survey conducted
One of the important aspects that needed the attention was to find out the linkage between means of communication and information within the state of Mizoram. Since media is spread across the state we find that the respondents from all sections of the society have access to these media of one kind or the other. Among the different types of media which is used to get information, our study shows that newspaper, television and internet are the main source of information. The use of radio has been declining in Mizoram though there is still some section of the population who still use radio as the main source of information. Out of all the 150 respondents, 129 use newspapers as well as main source of information, 120 use televisions, 129 use internets, 33 use radio and therefore we can say that radio is declining but use of newspaper, television and internet are rising media.

Figure 5.1 shows the types of media used as a source for information.

Source: Based on the Survey conducted.
With globalisation and growth of satellite networks, television has become more popular than ever. It has become the mostly used means of getting information as well as a means of entertainment. The study tries to find out which kinds of programs are mostly viewed on television by the people of Mizoram. In general, we find that 80% of the respondents watch news channels and 60% watch the locally produced programs broadcast by our local cable network providers. This is because the people have become aware and are concerned with the events which are happening within the state. The locally produced programs have become very popular because the language in these programs is in the local language. (See figure 5.2)

![Figure 5.2](image.png)

**Figure 5.2 shows the programs which most people watch on television.**

Source: Based on the survey conducted
The media has now an influence in every aspects of our everyday life. It is no longer art imitating life but rather life imitating art. Therefore, the study tried to find out to what degree the media influence the society. 76% of the respondents say that media in the society to a great extent while 24% thinks that it is influenced only to some extent. With so much growth of information technology and especially with the advent of satellite network and the internet, the influence of media is felt more than ever before. (See figure 5.3)

![Figure 5.3 showing how much the society is being influenced by the media.](image-url)

Source: Based on the survey conducted
With so much media influence in the state, the study enquires into which area the media influence is mostly experienced. The study has found that in general out of all the respondents 24% of the respondents think that the media influence the society politically, also out of all the respondents 28% say that the media influence the cultural arena but 90% of the respondents are of the opinion that the media influence the people of the state socially. Social Media also serves as the main source of entertainment. (See figure 5.4)

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<td>No. of responses</td>
<td>42</td>
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*Figure 5.4 the areas that are influenced by the media.*

Source: Based on the survey conducted
The growth of information and communication technology along with the mobile phones ushered in various types of mobile phone service providers into the state. We have seen the existence of BSNL, Airtel, Aircel, Vodafone etc which enables people to connect with each other in giving and receiving information. They all provide internet services. Therefore, a large number of people have access to internet through their mobile phones to otherwise. From our study we learn that 86% of the population are user of internet to get their information while only 14% say are not using internet as their main source of information. (See figure 5.5)

Figure 5.5 shows internet as a source of information and news.

Source: Based on the survey conducted
Internet has ushered in many new areas which can be explored. Amongst many uses of the internet, social networks are very popular means of connecting. Social networks are very widespread in this age of informatization. In a close knit society like Mizoram, it is has many use and therefore, the use for entertainment is the most popular amongst them. Even politicians and political parties use it as a means for campaigning. The study shows that 60% of the respondents have an account in at least one of the social networking sites such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc. There are social network applications even for mobile phones and therefore, it is easily accessible. The most common social network site or application is the Facebook. (See figure 5.6)

![Pie chart showing percentages](image)

**Figure 5.6 shows the percentage of respondents who has social networking accounts.**

Source: Based on the survey conducted
As already mentioned, social network is very popular amongst the Mizos. Therefore, the question which comes to mind is the purpose for their usage. The study conducted looks into the purpose of the users. From the analysis of the study it is found that 55% of the respondents use it for socializing while 29% use it to get information while 16% use it as a platform for discussion of various issues in the society. Mizos by nature are sociable with many associations and organisations these socials networks makes the working of these organisations much easier and much more efficient. (See figure 5.7)

![Figure 5.7 Purpose of use of Social Networks](image)

*Source: Based on the survey conducted*
The reliability of the media is very important. The main source of information about the State is the information disseminated by the media both print-media as well as electronic media. Since, they are the ones who shape the public mind-set, it is essential that they give accurate news. Media and Politics are deeply connected so there is often the tendency for the state to use media to their advantage, whereas in some states, media act as the opposition. For a healthy political conscious society it is important that the people keep the masses well-informed so that the people can make the right choices. According to the study 92% of the respondents find that the media gives right information about the State. But 8% do not agree. (See figure 5.8)

Figure 5.8 does the media give information of the political scenario of the State.

Source: Based on the survey conducted
The thesis has explored the working of media in Mizoram. It has studied media of various kinds. The most fundamental activity of the media is to report the news. In Mizoram, we find that there are many institutions which deals with various issues though they may be of the interest of the people yet, these institutions tend to encroach upon the free-space of the media. The study shows that 66% of the respondents are of the view that the media has no free-hand in reporting the news, while 22% say that they don’t know and 12% say that the media do have free-hand in reporting the news. (See figure 5.9)

Figure 5.9 show if the media have free-hand in reporting news.

Source: Based on the survey conducted
Media has always been an important source of information. To give accurate and truthful information to the masses, it is the essential for the media to be free from any kinds of restrain. But unfortunately, many of the media publishing houses are often dependant on the government for funds and sponsorship. The study therefore tried to find out whether the media has been affected by the government or if there is a certain degree of government control over the media. Of the respondents, 42% says that there is no such control, 32% feels that media is partly controlled by the government while 14% have no idea but 8% of the respondents feels that the media is controlled by the Government. (See figure 5.10)

**Figure 5.10 show if the media is under the control of the Government.**

Source: Based on the survey conducted
Civil society is very strong in Mizoram. Of all the civil societies the church holds a very dominant position in the social structure of the state. The study wanted to focus attention on the position of the church regarding the media in Mizoram. Though the church does not openly control the media, yet its pressure is felt by the media. The study shows that 42% feels that the control of the church is felt by the media to some extent, 17% said that there is control of the church to a little extent, 29% feels that there is no control of the church but 12% opined that control of church to a great extent. We can therefore conclude that though the church might not openly control the media yet there some degree of control. (See figure 5.11)

Figure 5.11 shows the degree of Church control over the media.

Source: Based on the survey conducted
Besides spreading information and educating the masses through the media, the media also provides a platform for participation. The study finds out to what extent the masses think the media provides a platform for public participation. Public participation may be political or social though it is not specifies. According to the study 67% opined that the media provides a platform to some extent. 19% of the respondents think that it gives a platform only to a little extent while 14% fells that the media provides a platform for public participation to a great extent. Media is a means to voice one’s opinion and it is a means for participation. (See figure 5.12)

![Figure 5.12](image)

Figure 5.12 shows if there is a high degree of public participation through media.

Source: Based on the survey conducted
In a world where information spreads like fire and the technology become more and more accessible, media has become an effective instrument for the state as well. But the real question is whether the masses feels that media plays an important role in the decision making and policy formulation of the government. The study finds that 66% of the respondents find that sometimes it is an effective instrument while 16% are undecided about their views and 18% feels that the media is the decision making and formulation of the government. In a world where media is vibrant and easily accessible, it becomes an important instrument for government to consider the opinion of the masses which is voiced through the media. (See figure 5.13)

Figure 5.13 shows if media is an effective instrument in the decision making and policy formulation of the government.

Source: Based on the survey conducted
The most-important function of the media is to keep the masses well informed about everything which is going on in the State. Whether it is a social news or political, the ultimate duty of the media to keep the masses well-informed. The study determines the opinion of the people on how well-informed the media has played in the society. The 38% of the respondents are of the opinion that the media has kept the masses well-informed most of the time while 32% of the respondent says yes, 22% opined that the media sometimes keeps the masses well informed, 4% are undecided and another 4% say no. (See figure 5.14)

Figure 5.14 shows if the media has kept the masses well informed

Source: Based on the survey conducted
At the end of the Questionnaire, there is an open-ended question which asks the respondents to give any suggestions they would like to make on how the media can take more effective role in the society and make points where they think media in Mizoram should make improvements. For this answer, they responded by saying that, the media should not be bias in giving information to the masses. The political news should be a constructive news or information. The respondents suggested that the media should be more reliable and accurate. Some suggested that politicians and Church leaders should have minimum influence in the reporting of news by the media people since this tends to alter the reliability of the news. Some suggested that there should also be more reporting on the activities of the church since it is also news which concerns most of the population of the state. Some of the respondent view that there is a lack of investigative journalism and therefore, there should be more investigative work carried out by the media persons. Many investigations in the government departments can be done through RTI (Right to Information) yet they should maintain an unbiased opinion regarding their reports. There were respondents who further went to suggest that there should be newspaper and media houses that are independent from the government. Since there are many newspapers that are dependent on the government for funds and advertisements, it creates an opportunity for the government to have control over the media. There is also a concern about the pictures and graphics portrayed in the media which are not ethical. There is also a suggestion that there should be a censor board in the State. Since there are no censor board in the State, the local channels tend to show programs which does not go through proper screening for the Mizo audience. The media in Mizoram lacks professionalism since most of the journalists in the state do not possess journalism degree or diploma there is a lack of professionalism in the reporting of these media. With the advent of social media in our state, there is a lot of
citizen journalism which can be a problem because we do not know how reliable these news or information are. Therefore, we should be more careful and more cautious. Proper education and awareness should be created in this regard. Many suggested that the media should get away from the clutches of the Government, NGOs and the Church. The media persons should portray images which are more appealing to the masses and which can inspire them. The media should be aware of their power and use it to reform the society.

**Conclusion and Finding:** From the above questionnaire we come to know more about the sentiments of the Mizo masses regarding the media. The respondents mostly watch television and they watch news and locally produced programs. The masses are mostly influenced socially. When it comes to the social networking, Facebook is the most popular networking site. Internet is widely used in the state. The social networking site are mostly used for socializing, this reflects the nature of the Mizo society which is very sociable. Of all the different media, Television is the most effective media as it gives a visual picture to the masses. At the same time, many are of the opinion that the media is not free from the control of the government and the Church. But nonetheless, many of the people are aware that the media is an important means of participation. Though there is a lack of professionalism and media ethics, media in Mizoram is emerging as an important political institution.

Overall, the media in Mizoram is very well-established and it is accessible to almost all the people and it is viewed as an important institution by the people of Mizoram.
In this chapter we have seen that media has deep impact on all aspects of the social structure and it has deeply affected in many areas. The government has also taken major steps in building media which would allow the citizens to participate in decision making. The Government has also set up many institutions to provide easier services to its citizen. In this chapter we have seen how the government has tried its best in educating the masses through the media and how it gets its feedback from the masses through the media. The private media also helps a great deal in setting up a reliable institution where the people can participate.

The media has catered to all the interest of the people. The interest may not necessary be about politics but in almost all aspects the Mizo people are more aware of the world today than they were few decades back. The rural areas of Mizoram are also connected to cable networks, this allow the people in the rural Mizoram to get all the information and news about the government through the national news channel, Doordarshan, cable networks and local channels. If we compare the contribution of the both the Government media and Private media, we find that the Government media disseminates more information and has more officials in its presentation where as the private media gives more entertainment and caters more to the interests of the people of Mizoram. The media has grown a lot of over the last few decades. We find that there was a growth in print media in the late 70s and early 80s in terms of numbers but unfortunately, not in terms of circulation, with the coming in of the cable networks the growth has slowed down tremendously. The electronic media always has an advantage over print media because it can always reach a wider section of the society. But in the reality since such media feeds the eyes and the ears, it serves the purpose of the viewer for the time being. The importance of print media cannot be replaced by electronic media.
Today, the world is fast and people are busy. Most of the people do not have time to sit and read the newspaper word by word instead they prefer a media which can feed them news and entertainment on the go.

Social institutions also play a major role of public sphere in the society. The pressure groups and the other NGOs other than YMA also influence the media. There are organizations which claim that they are there to look after the interest of the masses. For example there are group like the PRISM which is an organization who mainly deals with issues like Civic Issues, Human Rights, Legal Awareness & Aid, Right to Information & Advocacy, Rural Development & Poverty Alleviation, Tribal Affairs, and Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation and any other issues which deals with public interests. They have had many publications of public interests. The media sometimes take up these issues which the PRISM wants to publicize. Though they are a small body as compared to organizations like YMA and their very existence though they may not be a big body but they may have scared off certain people from committing offense against the law knowingly.

Regarding the empirical dimension of the interrelationship between the media and politics, it has been evident that the media does influence politics to same extent. However, the pressure of other institution like Church and other civil society organization diminishes the media presence in determining the political. This does not mean that media has a negligible role. Rather media has great importance in the socio-cultural level in that though entertainment media has been highly influential in the day to day life of the Mizos.