CHAPTER VI

EMPLOYMENT OR ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF WOMEN

Reasons for working

Today women are entering into all walks of life, technical, clerical, medical, marketing, scientific occupations in large numbers. The rising cost of living along with new trends of modern living, resulting in the ever widening field of necessities of life, are compelling more and more women, both married and single, to seek employment. For the sheer love of work and also to give a purpose to life many women from affluent homes take up jobs. Along with men, every woman must have the chance to seek out a career suiting her aptitude, interest and aspiration.

Varieties of works of women

Earlier women used to be engaged mostly in unskilled, or semi-skilled occupation. However, now their presence is rapidly felt in services, industries, shops, offices, hospitals, laboratories and the white-collared and other occupations. Undergraduates as well as postgraduates with science subjects like medicine, engineering as well as commerce are increasing in numbers alarmingly as job seekers. One unfortunate trend has been the enormous increase in the number of women applicants clamouring for white-collared clerical jobs.
Irrespective of the difficulties involved, women are taking up jobs in construction, heavy mill work, machine transport, foundries and are showing their creativity and inherent personal abilities. It is well-known that women are blessed with certain innate abilities like colour sense, adaptability, flexibility, human sympathy, unorthodox approach to fashion and so on. These qualities enable them to qualify for the jobs of saleswomen, interior decorators, fashion designers, advertising executives and demonstrators. The major numbers become nurses, midwives, health visitors, etc. Many lady doctors can now be found in the government hospitals. Many lady doctors are also employed in dispensaries, colleges, schools, charitable clinics and nursing homes besides continuing private practice. Girls these days are taking up courses to qualify as pharmacists, dispensers or compounders. Women play crucial roles in the production, storage and processing of food in most societies.

Women Form One-Third of the Total World Labour Force

Report of United Nations reveals that women form one-third of the total world labour force and do most of the unpaid work. But they receive only ten percent of the world's income and own less than one percent of world's property (United Nations Commission, 1980).

It has been revealed in countless surveys that even if the official definition of the labour force is employed using conventional economic indicators, a world's profile reveals that women constitute one-third of the official labour force. If a total range of women activities are taken into account, women work longer hours than men. Women spend about 15 hours
working at home and in the fields. They are expected to perform all this without proper training and remuneration. In comparison, man spends less time in the field, less on housework and has less onerous duties. And he has the training leverage too. Any money women may earn from selling farm products is customarily handed over to men. Should they then need some extra cash to spend on the family needs or on food as often or not, they have to fight for it with the husband or head of the family.

Yet, women's contributions to their national economics are underestimated or rarely taken into account by the development planners. The national statistics of most countries characterize women as 'economically inactive'. Though women's work in the domestic and external sphere demands more time and energy, it is disregarded. The few girls who are enrolled in technical and vocational education, learn sewing, dress-making, housecrafts, childcare and embroidery.

Women's contribution to the upkeep of the household has been overlooked, and no provision has been made for them to ease their burden either. The economic factor of a woman's life is evident for it takes outside intervention of dedicated social workers to persuade men in the building trade or canal construction to consider the special famine needs of a woman worker. Very rarely, moreover, do such employees consider improvement in work output which would be to their gain, if the woman had regular rest periods for food and breast-feeding, and proper minimum facilities for the care and development of her small children. The normal approach is to take her labour automatically, deducting the time she might have to spend on her children, by giving her a wage lower than that of a man though more often than not, a man's labour may not necessarily be any heavier.
In some instances, status in the work situation will come from being made overseer and all supervisory work of this nature tends to be a largely sedentary. There are probably no women in labour force who are overseers, supervisors or inspectors, yet in terms of heavy or light work, this would mean responsibility, but little requirement of physical strength. It can be argued that at labour levels men workers might resent a woman overseer, especially where workers are all illiterate, but the fact remains; it is a sector that is taken for granted as a man's right to status with a comparable development of woman's right to status on the same terms. As a result, she has neither ability to go higher nor a comparable wage, while statistics indicate that her situation is becoming worse rather than better.

In almost all employment levels, men resent working under a woman. Illiteracy and the lack of access to technical training available to some men related to machines like tractors, tubewells, fertilisers to manufacturing, processing, transport, storage and communications all relegate working women to the unskilled ranks from which there is no way out for her, but the sheer day-to-day monotony which trades heavily upon her age-old training in patience and devotion.²

No Real Recreation for Women

A Lushai woman is always very hard-working, has much hard work to do, and has all too little time available for any profitable leisure. This state is even more definite during the times when the jhums demand attention. Lushai women, though taking no part in the actual felling of the jhums, have plenty to do in this season of February and early March. There is the harvest rice to collect from the fields and to store in the bins of circular
bamboo-plaited frames, constructed at some convenient place between the fields and the homes on the hill-tops. This rice storing is a heavy task, as each load has to be carried from the field to the storing-bin on the women's backs. From these storing-bins the women carry up through the year load after load to meet the needs of the family's daily consumption in the homes. The loaded baskets are steadied on the backs and held up by a plaited bandeau pressing against the foreheads of the women. Thefts of stored paddy are extremely rare, it being a rigid custom that stealing simply is not done.

At this time of year the women like to take advantage of the dry weather to prepare their cotton harvested in December or January by ginning, teasing, spinning and making skeins for easy use at some convenient occasion in the future. Industrious women will also use this season for cutting firewood, its porterage to the house, and its stocking, for use during the rains, when its collection would be less profitable.

Women figure prominently in the routine of cultivation, in the sowing of the seeds, in the three or four seasonal weedings, and the harvesting. Women rise at dawn, while men sleep on, and coax up fire, husk rice, already overnight, it having been left on the shelf over the fire-place. Even before dawn the Lushai village reverberates with the squawking of the fowls, the dull thudding of the pestles, as the women rhythmically pound the rice in the wooden, hand-fashioned mortars. As soon as the supply of rice for the first part of the day has thus been secured and the cooking is well on its way, women, after waking up their menfolk to watch the progress of the cooking, will make their way down to the water supply to fill their several bamboo tubes with water. In the hot weather, when water springs often go...
dry, this venture not infrequently gives rise to squabbling, for there are many bamboo tubes but all too little water. Breakfast is eaten at about eight in the morning, and women clean up, or in some cases, do not clean up the utensils! During the cultivation seasons women will go off for the day to their fields, often taking their babies on their backs, if they have none with whom to leave them safely. At other times they will go out for two hours' woodcutting or will sit down on their varandas and take up the weaving of some cloth already in a partial state of completion, and lying folded on the loom.

If the family is to be in at midday there will be a good meal, otherwise cooked rice, folded in a banana leaf, or in some other convenient way, will be taken out for a picnic meal during the day. After return from the day's outing the women will have to set to work to make up an evening meal, usually taken at about six o'clock. This may even involve the husking of more rice. Before sundown the important function of feeding the pigs will have to be performed, the fowls will have to be caught and put away into their baskets of neatly fashioned bamboo, and these will then be hung up or placed high up on appropriate shelves, far out of reach, it is hoped, of civet cats or other prowling vermins.

When Lushai women are not actively employed on any of these vital and necessary duties there are still children of varying ages, together with the continual need to produce clothes for the entire family. It is not at all unusual to see mothers, who are pregnant, still having to feed their latest offspring at the breast. To help a burdened mother, a daughter of seven or eight, however, can often be seen with a cloth strapped around her shoulders, in which a few days old baby may be being joggled around. Unsuitable feeding,
spartan childcraft, and health disorders often result in profuse crying by the younger children. But Lushai mothers, though busy with their hard and ceaseless duties, evince a patience and serenity towards these mites which induce feelings of compassion and sympathy for them in their simple quiet courage.

A cradle song by a Lushai poet offers an insight into a Lushai mother's heart:

"Smile sweetly, my baby, and play Tum-bai-lek, tum-bai-lek.
I'll do lachawng-DIT, and hold you up in my outstretched arms.
Try to stand up and earn your egg
Grow up and be the comfort always of your parents.

"I'll play Dai-aw-su-lep-lep in this home of mine with you
I'll drop you either on the TUIPUI or TUIITE
Make your choice and your parents can give
Choose TUIPUI we say for there are stones in TUIITE.

"Sleep on, my beloved baby, and never never cry
Upon my back with cloth will I sing you to sleep
Play away in this pile home of ours
And grow up your friends to out-fame in your life."

TUM-BAI-LEK is one of the first lessons for baby, the mother teaching it to open and close its tiny fists. LAICHAWNG-DIT is the name given to the habit among mothers of squeezing the child's navel and again relaxing it. DAI-AW-SU-LEP-LEP is the name given to the game, when an adult lies on
his back with his knees bent, while the child sits on the feet. The adult straightens out his legs from time to time till he feels tired, and tells the little one to choose on which side he shall be put down.

**Women Helping in Childbirth**

In actual practice, however, the division of labour, certainly under present-day conditions, is so much against the women, that they can rarely claim any leisure at all. Then there is the arduous hazard of childbirth which these great women face cheerfully and courageously.

In delivery cases in the village an ordinary Lushai woman will be assisted primarily by some elder, one who has some claim to experience in such matters, preferably one belonging to the family. The mother suffers to the full with only Nature's clemency upon which to rely. Kneeling on her bed, gripping something or anything, sometimes leaning on some kindly friend, she stoically attempts to follow well-meant instructions to heave and to urge on delivery. This tragic but elated, little figure and her friends strive behind the simple curtain, which is their only privacy from those who remain anxious and subdued around the flickering hearth. At length, if all goes well, without any assistance, the child is born when the experience helper will take charge of it and help, or give directions to others to help, the wearied mother. The umbilical cord is crudely severed by means of a sharpened bamboo after the cord has been properly secured by cotton. The baby is washed and wrapped up in an old cloth, when it is put gently down beside the mother, who will be lying covered by the family's large bed-blanket of unspun and tufted cotton.
This woman helper examines the mother to see if there is to be any further discharge, and if she suspects this to be the case she catches hold of the mother, as if to make her stand up, which is usually found to be enough to bring about what is needed. After the birth of the child the mother is given rice-water to drink. Perhaps she may faint, or be near fainting, when she would be given some mild zufang or rice beer, slightly warmed to help to revive her. The Lushais also believe that this zu helps to alleviate the mother's pain, and she is encouraged to smoke tobacco as a sedative.

Except on the day of actual delivery, the mother looks after her newly born herself, washing both herself and the baby. She does not willingly rest, even on account of her delivery, and goes about her ordinary household duties the very day after her delivery, unless perchance she is in serious pain.

There is much which can be done to help to alleviate the ardeal these women have to suffer. Country or out-district dispensaries, under itinerating Lushai doctors, could afford a measure of antenatal advice and care, and advice concerning food before, and after, childbirth. The Lushai mother will continue to work at her usual duties, even wood and water collection, up to the very day of delivery, there still being a sneaking belief that in this way the chances of the speedy delivery are greatly enhanced. The Lushai Hills District Red Cross Committee has already done very wonderful work in this respect, placing trained nurses, to replace untutored midwives, in district villages, and publishing abbreviated booklets on the feeding and care of prospective mothers and newly born babies, arranged appropriately to take count of conditions in Lushai land. Except
for these efforts and the great individual work being done by the medical authorities and the missions, chiefly at headquarters, conditions of delivery in the out-villages remain much the same as they were before the Government came to the Lushai Hills.

There was not so long ago a case, where a mother was about to deliver her child, though she was alone in the house. She had sent words to some friends, but they delayed coming till they had finished the evening meal, which they were taking. By the time they appeared the child had been born, and they arrived in time to take charge of it, the mother being at her ordinary work the next day. On the other hand, there are the tragedies too ghastly to contemplate or to describe. But with ever-widening sophistication, alleviation should follow. The people are so resigned to complications, consequent on irregular treatment at and after deliveries, that there are still many who give no higher recognition to nurses trained in the elements of antiseptic handling and hygiene than to the old die-hard village midwives.

Cases of abortion among unmarried women have always been very rare, and methods, on the whole crude, resort sometimes being had by the mother herself to violence, in order that the unborn child should perish. As a result of contacts with other civilisations, some have prescribed quinine as means for procuring abortion, but the record of successful treatments does not seem to be impressive. The trend is, however, away from any increase in abortion, for two simple reasons. In the first place, with the exception of a Chief's illegitimate child, there is no special loss of status or stigma against the child or mother socially, in the eyes of the ordinary people, and secondly, there is the realisation that the Government might
mete out severe punishment in such matters, which might well be more calamitous than letting Nature take her normal course.

Infanticide has always been more common. On one occasion the Christian daughter of a Christian Chief was convicted of causing the death of her newborn child, and was imprisoned in the district jail. Before the British Government took over the Lushai Hills, infanticide was not considered specially culpable, which is most curious, in view of the underlying urge always to increase the strength of the community.

Responsibility to the Government and to the Community

If Lushai women are industrious and hard working, their men folk are less indolent than is sometimes imagined. When a man's larder depends much on the sweat of his brow, his house on his ability to extract his needs from Nature's jungles, and his ability to put this to profitable use, and when the financial liability to his government involves the exchange of his produce in a poor agricultural country into cash - a very rare commodity - energy, courage, and fortitude are all indeed very essential. These vital needs are mostly secured in the cold season. Cash to meet the government annual house tax of three shillings (perhaps Indian rupees three) has to be sought, and this may involve an absence of many days from home, on some of which a man may have to carry heavy loads to earn a cash wage. In addition to his personal obligations, a Lushai also has to meet unavoidable government demands for his labour on payment, while in accordance with age long custom he also has to work free on village roads and on the construction of the Chief's house when necessary. There is a ZAWKBUK, or bachelors' barrack, the church, and the school, all of which have to be maintained free by the villagers.
In fact, after close contact with people living in Lushai villages, it can safely be said that if the people are found enjoying a little leisure or basking in relaxation in the sun, the stresses and strains to which their bodies have been set fully justify such a human privilege. The only criticism which the west can fairly make is that men, who have been relieved of much of their indigenous and traditional tasks, have not adequately taken away from their women some of their tasks, as they should have done, in view of the increased demands made by life upon women, under the more settled conditions of today.\footnote{3}

The entire economy of the territory has been tribal economy with its strong grip over the inhabitants due to its past political history. This area, long before it came under effective British administration and after some initial resistance movements and even afterwards, was excluded from the purview of the various acts and regulations of the then central and provincial governments. No legislative measures were taken to develop the socio-economic structure of the area. During the British rule, the administration of the area was mainly involved in the maintenance of law and order. Welfare and development activities were only marginal. Things have since happily changed for the better after Independence and sustained efforts are being made by the central and the local governments for an over all economic development of the territory. But in a tribal area like Maram, the obstacles for economic development generally arise out of the prevailing physical, social and economic conditions. The physical conditions relate to the hilly terrain, dense forests and difficult communication and transportations.

Social obstacles are due to the people's initial apathy to any kind of innovation, lack of technical education and primitive method of production.
The economic difficulties arise on account of the dearth of capital, lack of infrastructure facilities (absence of marketing centres), limited potentialities of the area and similar other factors. The territory is devoid of any major mineral resources. Hence, there is no potentiality for large scale or medium scale industry in the territory except a small scale and rural industries which have to thrive only on the basis of internal demand for their products and the demand potential is not very high. To these obstacles and difficulties, the political conditions arising out of the subversive activities of the underground Mizos may also be added. Hence, the progress achieved has not been substantial. A planned effort is nevertheless being made to circumvent these bottlenecks and develop the area. However, the present government is trying to encourage small scale and cottage industries.

Women Engaged in All Walks of Daily Life

What strikes an outsider when he moves in Mizoram is the significant role Mizo women are found to play in all walks of their daily life. A visit to the main market places all over Mizoram reveals that almost all shops are run by ladies. As for example, Bara Bazaar in Aizawl presents the look of a women's world. Books, stationaries, textiles, drugs and a variety of other shops are all found to be run by Mizo women. Their engagement in knitting or reading of daily newspaper, magazine in their spare time at the shop appear to point out that they belong to the richer section of the society and this in its turn establishes that the role of women in middle and high middle class families is indeed a very significant one. The picture does not change basically when one goes to the vegetable market or a tea stall. These are also run almost in their entirety by Mizo women. Even in activities such as
road-making, brick laying, shifting cultivation, etc., their engagement is in no way less than that of men. 

Cottage Industries

In spite of the steady growth of industries in recent years Mizoram is still a predominantly agricultural land and over 70 percent of her people are dependent on agriculture for their subsistence. Poverty, low standard of living, unemployment and under-employment are the evils inherent in a mainly agricultural economy, and Mizoram is suffering from all these evils in the fullest measure. Of these unemployment has become so widespread both in the rural and urban areas. The only effective remedy for these evils is no doubt rapid and intensive industrialization. But there are two types of Industries—large scale or organised industries and small scale or cottage industries.

The case for development and expansion of cottage industries in Mizoram may be put as follows:

a) They do not require a large capital outlay nor expensive and elaborate plant and machinery, which are indispensable to large scale industries.

b) They can be carried on in the quiet atmosphere of the home where the workers enjoy perfect freedom. In them all members of a family—men, women and children—can take part if necessary. They can work on them in their leisure hours. By doing so they can supplement their income. They can thus get a better living. Spinning, handloom, weaving, basket-making,
cloth-printing, utensil-making, knitting, needle-craft, sericulture, poultry keeping, etc., are some important cottage industries in which the Mizo women are engaged in. They are also being done as their chief or only profession by some women. They earn their living by being engaged in these cottage industries.

c) The workers are not troubled by the rigid factory rules nor by the unfavourable conditions of work associated with large scale industries.

d) Originality and individual skill receive full play in cottage industries.

e) Cottage industries are free from the many evils inseparable from organised industries, namely, conflict between capital and labour, concentration of wealth in a few hands, the harmful effects on the health and morals of workers living in large numbers in one place.

f) Development of cottage industries will check the present day drift for rural people to migrate to industrial centre in search of employment.

g) Cottage industries have a vital role to play in the future economy of Mizoram.

"In the case of Lushai, it was a District Officer and his wife, who perceived that the Lushais possessed a great skill in cotton weaving on handlooms, traditionally in use from the times of their forefathers. The larger missions were invited to develop a connection with the Bengal Home Industries Association of Calcutta, an organisation sponsored by the..."
Government of Bengal, which has done so much to encourage the indigenous cottage industries in that Province. This invitation gave no hopeful results. Fortunately, counter to precedent, the District Officer at this time was permitted a further tenure of office, which gave him and the people a common advantage in that he knew the Lushai language, the people, and their land. With a view to introducing the skill of the Lushais to the commercial markets, so that among other things, the Lushai people could have something upon which to fall back in case of failure of the rice crop, the District Officer financed a Cottage Industries Organisation from his salary and borrowings from the government and the bank. This course might well have proved infructuous, had not the District Officer been blessed with a skillful wife, who shared in much of his work among the people. The reason that the venture was privately financed was that these two joint organisers were too alive to the unreliable qualities of the Lushai people to wish to risk a reputation by asking government to finance a proposition which could not safely be assured. Superficially, on the showing of articulate Lushai, the organisation only had to be started for it to be a success. The judgement of the joint organisers proved only too correct, articulate Lushai, in the main, having stood aside, while real Lushai made the enterprise the great success it has become.

"Experiments were put in hand on different lines. Ultimately, one was of outstanding success. After careful check, and the creative genius of Mrs JointOrganiser, this sample was given a thorough test. It was accepted for delivery to Calcutta markets. The Joint Organisers then called for volunteers from the villages to come in to headquarters to learn the preparation of the cotton and its method of introduction into the warp."
These volunteers has first to agree that they would pass on what they would learn to other willing village weavers. All this work was carried on in a broken-down old shed in the garden of the Superintendent's residence. Each rug completed to standard was paid for at the scheduled rates. The women were then sent away with orders to make one or two rugs to ensure that the product from their own homes would be in no way inferior to the one made under tuition.

"Results showed that those who had been taught preserved their standards, but the learners were too proud to be 'told', and it was in this way the Joint Organisers got a glimpse of what lay below the surface of apparent demurrry. Only two out of every ten rugs proved marketable, though full price was always paid to the beginner, the loss to the industries' finances being regarded as capital outlay. Later on the price for poorly made rugs had to be reduced, but again in the first place, to soften the bitter lessons of initial commerce, a slip was given guaranteeing to pay full price for the effective rug, if a new top standard rug was attempted and completed in such a way that it could be brought for full purchase price."

"Lushais were sent to Calcutta, where under the boundless patience and kind enthusiasm of Dr Boege, the Norwegian General Manager of the Havero Trading Company, they received a first class training in synthetic dyeing, based on the German IM bookmark dyes. Any vegetable dyes, which are locally available, were not at that time capable of commercial application, due to the lack of known mordants and the inumerable boilings which are necessary. So the Lushai Hills Cottage Industries grew from small beginnings, and the Superintendent's residence became swamped with stocks of rugs, cotton, book-
keeping, packing material, and all the paraphernalia of business. It was Sir Robert Reid, Governor of Assam, and Lady Reid, who had become the patrons of the industries, who saw the need of an adequate building. It is to them that the industries owe the fine building of Reid House, named after the patrons, which provides for an office, large stock room, dye room, and large packing room. One of the main channels of offtake is the Assam Industries Association in Shillong, the seat of the Assam Government. This Association was initiated by Lady Reid herself, who with the assistance of voluntary helpers from among the residents of Shillong, organised it for the purpose of accepting the products of Assam's clever, but isolated, cottage industry workers. Her efforts have been crowned by outstanding success, and the Assam Industries Association now stands firmly established, thanks to Lady Reid and her very hard-working helpers."

"In India an agricultural community cannot ordinarily be prosperous without a second string to its bow in the form of cottage industries, while cottage industry workers cannot be successful unless their industry is profitably and satisfactorily organised."

"Communities, who produce a minimum of 200 rugs per year, are paid a rebate of five percent on each rug bought by Reid House at full price. Half this rebate goes towards financing the needs of the Welfare Committees mentioned earlier in this chapter, and the other half to the Chief, in recognition of custom and the fact that he has had to encourage the people to become more industrious for their own good. One village at least can now maintain a trained nurse, who acts as village midwife, and the results have already made a tremendous impression on these country people."
"This concession enables an industrious community to benefit further by the self-help return of rebate, which goes to help tackle their social uplift side of life. A village, which is well established as a cottage industry village, has a second cash string to its bow, if the rice crop fails. In villages where no second string exists communities suffer for want of food. This reduces vitality, exposes the people to wasting diseases, reacts on the mothers and the unborn children and in fact, sets the whole community back for years."

"Among cottage industry workers a cementing of family friendship is noticeable, as all have a common interest in coming together in profitable enterprise. The importance of a woman, who is a clever weaver, is early recognised, and this will do far more good for her than any amount of sermons, adjuring rather indolent man to treat his women folk better. The education value in the insistence on cleanliness, precision, and perseverance, cannot easily be over-emphasized.

"The future on the whole augurs well, in no small way due to the characteristic stand taken by Miss Katie Hughes of the Welsh Mission, who is in charge of girls' education in the North Lushai Hills. She has included, on her own initiative, the growing and processing of cotton as one of her very interesting project lessons. In this way the young Lushai girls are being educationally encouraged. The girls even make up small doormats, as exercise, and these are purchased by Reid House, more or less regardless of any commercial consideration, so as to encourage the children for the future. Miss Hughes' girls frequently head the boys in the joint Middle examinations, and it is not unlikely that much of the secret lies in Miss Hughes' wisdom in knowing that academic education, which excludes training in handicrafts, is rarely productive of good results."
List of Prospective Industries (Small Scale Industries)

1. **Food Products:**
   a) Bakery and confectionery item  
   b) Potato wafers  
   c) Snack packets  
   d) Packed lunch  
   e) Flour mill (small capacity)  
   f) Masala grinding  
   g) Pickles  
   h) Fruit preservation  
   i) Canteen (restaurant)  
   j) Chowchow (noodles)  
   k) Ginger products  
   l) Supari making (small capacity)

2. **Handloom Weaving and Readymade Garments:**
   a) Handloom and decorative textile  
   b) Curtain, cloth, bed cover, bed sheet, table cloth  
   c) Handloom bags with designs  
   d) Readymade garments for gents, ladies and children's wear  
   e) Surgical bandage  
   f) Nylon socks making  
   g) Sanitary pads/towels  
   h) Apron making  
   i) Hosiery items

3. **Handicrafts Items:**
   a) Cane and bamboo products  
   b) Fibre, bamboo, straw articles  
   c) Dolls and toys making  
   d) Decorative articles in wood (wood curving), brass and coconut shell  
   e) Jute carpet making  
   f) Woollen carpet and wall hanging making  
   g) Wall painting
4. **Machine Knitting:**
   a) Woollen garments
   b) Woollen shawls
   c) Woollen socks, comforters and allied articles

5. **Paper Products:**
   a) Manufacture of exercise books, registers, and bookbinding
   b) Printing Press
   c) Paper bag and envelope making
   d) Paper Board making

6. **Chemical Products:**
   a) Washing ball shop
   b) Chalk sticks
   c) Candle manufacturing
   d) Agarbati sticks
   e) Yarn dyeing
   f) Phenyle making
   g) Hard paper making
   h) Essential drug, hair oil, Ayurvedic medicine
   i) Fibre from banana leaves and pineapples
   j) Detergent powder

7. **Leather and Canvas Items:**
   a) Shoe making
   b) Leather goods manufacturing
   c) Chappal making
   d) Canvas bags and holdall making

8. **Auxiliary Items:**
   a) Radio assembly
   b) Repairing of TV, radio, tape recorder, etc, and assembly as well
9. **Service Units (Self-Employment Units):**
   a) Stitching of clothes
   b) Woollen knitting
   c) General stores, vegetable selling, grocery shop
   d) Fruit selling
   e) Beauty parlour
   f) Restaurant (Chat house)

10. **Agro-based Units:**
    a) Piggery Scheme
    b) Goatery Scheme
    c) Dairy Scheme
    d) Poultry Scheme
    d) Duckery Scheme

**United Mizo Women Organisation (Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual Pawl)**

The first Mizo Women Voluntary Organisation was formed with the permission of MacDonald, Superintendent, Lushai Hills, on July 16, 1946. Pi Zami (Mrs K T Khuma) was the one who suggested to form this organisation.
The main objects of this Organisation are:

a) To improve the status of women so that they can become better citizens of the country and contribute more to the welfare of the society.

b) To have better relationship and more acquaintance with one another in Mizoram and outside Mizoram to find ways and means for the better health and work together successfully, etc.

c) To help the helpless people.

The first office bearers were:

President          - Pi Zami (Mrs K T Khuma)
Vice-President     - Pi Biaki (Mrs R Buchhawna)
General Secretary  - N1 Sweetie (Musuila)
Assistant Secretary- Pi Thansiama
Financial Secretary- N1 Biakliani
Treasurer          - Dr C L Kini

In 1947, Mrs L L Peters (w/o L L Peters, Superintendent) was a patron. The first conference was held in January 26-28, 1948. They discussed many important issues to be approved in the General Assembly the next year, 1949, such as:

1) **Bride Price**: To request the District Council to abolish the Bride price and to have more stable marriage.

2) **Divorce**: To improve the condition of women when they are divorced.
3) **Inheritance:** To request the District Council to allow inheritance by the widows or daughters if they have no brothers.

4) **Children:** To allow children to live with father or mother when they are divorced.

5) **Adultery:** After the death of the husband, the widow should not be treated as an adulteress, even if she commits fornication with another man.

6) **Illegitimate Child/Bastard:** The name 'sawn' (bastard) should be abolished. If a man makes the girl pregnant and does not want to marry her, let him give Rs. 80.00 for defaming her or as a fine.

In March 12, 1949, they had the first General Assembly and approved the above mentioned items. Besides, they also discussed the following items:

a) **Not to allow the children to play outside the homes at night.**

b) **Relatives of children should not interfere too much when children are quarrelling or fighting.**

c) **To dress moderately according to the status of the family.**

d) **To keep house and utensils clean.**

e) **To obey husbands**

The Organisation promotes the weaving of clothes, bags, etc. from Mizo cotton year. The Government of Assam opened Training Centre for Dhais at the Civil Hospital at the request of the Hmeichhe Tangrual Pawl.
Mr S N Barkataki, the last Superintendent and first Deputy Commissioner of Mizoram, had given a plot of land near Khātla Bazaar, Aizawl, for this Organisation’s Headquarters. A bigger land nearby was given to them by Mr Lalbuaia, the then Executive Member of Mizo District Council in 1952.

The first Maternity Centre was established by the Organisation in 1954. From 1956 the Government used that building freely for Maternity Centre till 1973.

During the famine (Mautam tam) in 1960, this Organisation distributed Cod Liver Oil, ghee, vitamins, syringes, rubber sheets, rubber bags for hot water, and enemas to every branch or village.

Loin Loom Centre was opened in 1962–67. Young women are trained in this Centre. Loin Loom Centre has five branches at Kelsih, Hualngohmun, Hiimen (3), Durtlang and Lungdai. These villages were given one sewing machine each. But at Lungdai they put handloom also.

The building of the Organisation was used for Motherless Children’s Home from 1969. During 1969–1981, 45 motherless children were cared for by this Organisation.

Working Women’s Hostel was established in 1980 with the help of the Government of India, Department of Social Welfare to help the women’s welfare.
### Leaders of Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual Pawl

#### Presidents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Zami</td>
<td>1946-1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lalsangpuii</td>
<td>1947-1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kapthluaii</td>
<td>1949-1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hmingliani</td>
<td>1950-1964</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lalngeni</td>
<td>1964-1967</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Saikhumi</td>
<td>1967-1970</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Dengziki</td>
<td>1970-1979</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>C Biakohhingi</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
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<td>1981-</td>
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#### Vice-Presidents

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Rokamlovi</td>
<td>1948-1949</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hauteii</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Lalnemi</td>
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<td>Thansingi</td>
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<td>Rohmingliani</td>
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<td>1981-</td>
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#### General Secretaries

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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sweetie (Nusuii)</td>
<td>1946-1946</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kapthluaii</td>
<td>1947-1948</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thansiam</td>
<td>1946-1947</td>
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<td>Varsiki</td>
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<td>Thankimi</td>
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<td>Thanpuii</td>
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<td>Lalchhingpuii</td>
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<td>Bunthamavii</td>
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<td>Lavmzuali</td>
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<td>Lawmasuali</td>
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**Asst Secretaries**

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<tr>
<td>Dr C L Kimi</td>
<td>1946-1947</td>
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<td>Emingliani</td>
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<td>Neli</td>
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<td>C Biakchhingi</td>
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<td>Thangdailovi</td>
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**Financial Secretaries**

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<td>1. Biakliani</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Thangpuii</td>
<td>1948-1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Denghmingthangi</td>
<td>1965-1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lalpari</td>
<td>1980-</td>
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</table>

Source: Biaksiamii: Mizo Hmeichhe Tangrual (Booklet, published on April 16, 1982)

**Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihhkhawm Pawl (MHIP)**

Another voluntary organisation of women was formed in 1976 at Aizawl.

The first office bearers were:

- **President** - Lalrintluangi
- **Vice-President (Sr)** - Neihpuii
- **Vice-Presidents** - Saihlupuii and Dr Nu-i
- **Secretary General** - Lalsangzuali
- **Add Secy General** - Darhmingthangi
- **Secy i/e Organisation** - Nuntharmawii
- **Secy i/e Public Relation** - Kawlbiakveli
- **Treasurer** - Sangchungnungi
- **Financial Secretary** - C Lawmsuali
They have 500 branches in Mizoram. They are the members of the Mizo Customary Laws Committee. This organisation is registered under the All India Women Conference. They contributed to the flood relief, famine relief, fire victims relief, Chief Minister relief fund, etc. They work together with the State Social Welfare in establishing the followings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craft Centres</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maternity Centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children's Recreational Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functioning Literacy</td>
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<td>Cooking Demonstration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Guidance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piggery</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetables Vending Loan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creche Centres (Day Nursery for infants)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balwadi Schools</td>
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<td>Condensed Course</td>
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<td>Vocational Training Centre</td>
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<td>Social Health and Sanitation</td>
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<td>Holiday Camp</td>
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War against Drugs is one of the main works of the organisation recently.

Notes and References


