Chapter 3

Rural Development in Mizoram

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CHAPTER 3

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MIZORAM

This chapter has been divided into four sections. Section I brings out the significance of rural development in the predominantly agricultural Mizoram. Section II traces the evolution of rural development in Mizoram, including the evolution of the administrative setup for rural development in the state. Section III profiles the state-sponsored rural development programmes. The New Land Use Policy, which is a state-sponsored rural development programme of the Government of Mizoram for promoting self-employment among the rural masses, currently engaged in shifting cultivation (jhum cultivation), receives a particularly detailed attention in the discussion, in this section, of the State Government's rural development programmes. In section IV, the centrally-sponsored rural development programmes, operating in the state, have been analysed.

(1) INTRODUCTION

Mizoram, one of the seven north-eastern states of India, has a unique personality derived from its land forms, climate, land use, accessibility constraints, pattern of social organisations and cultural characteristics. Mizoram is a land favoured by monsoon. Its land is fertile. Its forests are lush green. Its temperate climate is favourable for people to become hard working. Despite all congenial conditions for its prosperity, the state is economically backward. It does not produce food crops enough to meet the needs of its own people. It has no industry worth the name. It has virtually nothing to send outside the state. Trucks laden with goods enter Mizoram in never-ending lines, but they return empty. The economy of the state is solely dependent on the central budget allocations, capacity to produce its own revenue being virtually nil. Even today, more than 70% of the population of Mizoram are engaged in the jhum cultivation. The region is a net importer of food-grains to feed its increasing urban population.
The situation in respect of allied sectors is in no way better. The potential in animal husbandry, a common subsidiary activity, is grossly under utilised. Meat, eggs, fish come from outside the state. There is a tremendous scope for fish farming, yet scientific pisciculture has not found favour with the people and the availability of fish is far below the demand. There is a rich tradition of household industries, handlooms particularly, but this sector is under strain because of increasing competition from imported clothes. Industrially, Mizoram is one of the most backward states of the country. The only source of livelihood is government jobs or small business.

In this background, the State's economic development is inseparable from rural development. The route to rural development and alleviation of rural poverty is through the development of agriculture and allied sectors. It is only by increasing the productivity of agriculture, horticulture, livestock, pisciculture, forestry, handlooms and handicrafts that income of rural households can be increased. Apart from this, due to a rapid increase in population, in the absence of matching expansion of job opportunities in the government and industrial sectors, there will be an increased pressure on land and agriculture. This lends an added significance to rural development in Mizoram.

(II) EVOLUTION AND ORGANISATIONAL SETUP

The Pre-Independence Period

Rural development in Mizoram prior to the country's independence started mainly with a focus on agricultural development. Jhum cultivation was the main occupation of the rural people. Mizos were leading a nomadic life, migrating from one place to another depending on the availability of jhum areas. There was no systematic attempt at agricultural development. When British missionaries came to Mizoram, the situation began to change. British missionaries encouraged agricultural experiments in different kinds of cash crops and
cereals. Potato cultivation and rubber plantation were experimented upon. Terraced cultivation was tried. But these programmes were not successful, because there was no financial support, administrative coordination and technical guidance. Jhum cultivation continued as a dominant feature of Mizo rural economy. Rural activities remained confined to basket weaving, animal rearing and collecting things from the jungle.

It was observed in the Administrative Report of 1933-34 that the progress of agricultural work in the Lushai district (now Mizoram) was very slow mainly because of the scarcity of water and due to the fact that, with the exception of a few places, there were no arable lands, no available places for making water canal irrigation, nor were there suitable places for cattle grazing. The 1961 census reveals the poor and primitive agriculture in the overall backward economy of Mizoram. While it was one of the districts of Assam, it contributed only 1.5 percent of the state's income, being the lowest among all the districts of Assam.

**Developments in the Post-Independence Period**

After independence, the agricultural sector started to receive increased attention. Agricultural development took a new turn with the creation of Community Development Blocks in the district, on the First April 1953. Before the district attained the status of union territory, on 21st January 1972, there were nine Community Development Blocks in the district.

In 1957-58 the post of a District Agricultural Officer was created at Aizawl. A post of Sub-Divisional Agricultural Officer, at Lunglei, was also created. Three types of agricultural schemes were introduced: Normal Schemes, Development Schemes under Article 275 of the Constitution, and Grow-More-Food Schemes. Under the Normal Schemes, there were created
the posts of one Agricultural Inspector and two Demonstrators. For the Schemes under Article 275, there were four Inspectors, two Assistant Inspectors and 17 Demonstrators posted in the interior villages. For the Grow-More-Food Scheme, some personnel of the Irrigation Department were posted in the district.

During the first two Five Year Plans (1951-61) attention was mostly concentrated on the development of agriculture in Mizoram. The areas that received special emphasis were minor irrigation, soil conservation, wet paddy cultivation, land reclamation fisheries and community projects. Land reclamation work was executed by the Agriculture Department whereas other development work was taken up through the Community Development Blocks in the district.

During the third Five Year Plan (1961-66), emphasis was given to the development of means of communication, agricultural development and marketing of agricultural products. But the outbreak of the insurgency, in 1966, stalled all developmental work. In the fourth plan (1969-74) also, high priority was accorded to agriculture and allied activities, including cooperation and community development. The entire programme during the Fourth Five Year Plan suffered serious setback in Mizoram due to large scale disturbances which had started in 1966. About 20,000 families were uprooted and re-grouped into new village clusters (Grouping Centres) for security reasons. As a result, the cultivators and the common man had to depend on supplies of food-grains from outside Mizoram. It disturbed all planned development process. The insurgency came to an end after the signing of the Peace Accord in 1986. In February, 1987 Mizoram became the twenty-fourth state of the Indian Union. It had attained the union territory status in 1972.
Before Mizoram attained the status of union territory, it had nine community development blocks. In 1974, the existing nine community development blocks were redemarcated into twenty blocks. These are as under:

- Zawlnuam Development Block
- West Phailang Development Block
- Reiek Development Block
- Tlangnuam Development Block
- North Thingdawl Development Block
- Darlawn Development Block
- Aibawk Development Block
- Serchhip Development Block
- Thingsulthliah Development Block
- Ngopa Development Block
- Khawzawl Development Block
- East Lungdar Development Block
- West Bunghnun Development Block
- Luenseng Development Block
- Langlei Development Block
- Hnalithial Development Block
- Chawngte Development Block
- Lawngtlai Development Block
- Sangma Development Block
- Tuipang Development Block
The Community Development Blocks perform the following functions:

- Removal of poverty;
- To create self reliance among rural people and to uplift the day-to-day living standard of the backward communities in the rural areas;
- To populatise improved breeds of live-stock and poultry at domestic level by selling better breeds to villagers at subsidised rate;
- Construction of Community halls;
- Construction of play grounds;
- Construction of steps/culverts;
- Construction of inter-village paths;
- Construction of water points;
- Construction of urinal sheds.

The Directorate of Rural Development was established in 1972 with a special focus on alleviation of rural poverty. All the community development blocks were redesignated as rural development blocks and started function under this.

During the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-79) agriculture, community development and rural development were given top priority. With the commencement of the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85), the Community Development Block, were entrusted to implement the Integrated Rural Development Programme besides carrying out their other assigned tasks.

"The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) may be regarded as the First Plan for Mizoram". This was the observation made by the President of Mizoram Chamber of Commerce in a Seminar.
on “The Generation of Resources and Effecting Economy in Expenditure in Mizoram” which took place in Aizawl on 19.2.1992. “This was a statement of some significance. As is well known, till 1972 Mizoram was one of the autonomous districts of Assam. Since Assam had four other autonomous districts under her jurisdiction, the share of Mizo District was but meager. Not simply that; insurgency broke out in Mizoram in 1966, lasting two long decades. Finally, statehood was conferred on Mizoram in February, 1987. During the insurgency, no meaningful development works could be launched in the region. Therefore, one may safely say that the planning process in Mizoram started only with effect from the Seventh Five Year Plan, when the region launched her developmental programme for the first time under conditions of peace”.8 In the absence of development in other sectors, such as agro-based industries and other allied manufacturing and tertiary sector, agriculture continued to be the main occupation of the people of Mizoram.

Reorganisation of the Rural Development Department

The Directorate of Rural Development of the Government was entrusted to operate and supervise all activities connected with the New Land Use Policy, which had commenced with effect from the year 1990-91.

For smooth functioning of the NLUP, a major reorganisation of the Rural Development Department was effected in 1989. The Directorate was redesignated as the Commissariat. A Minister of State was placed as its political head and a Commissioner/Secretary of the IAS rank became the administrative head of the Commissariat. The personnel to man different positions in this enlarged Rural Development machinery were drawn from among the following nine departments of the Government: 

- Agriculture
The need for such diverse staff was felt due to the fact that the schemes under NLUP were spread over varied fields and these required experienced personnel in each discipline.

The NLUP was divided into three sectors: Agriculture and allied sectors, Animal husbandry and veterinary, and industry.

Each one of these sectors has been placed under the charge of a deputy commissioner at its head. The deputy commissioners are technical experts, drawn from the concerned departments on deputation. In addition to these three deputy commissioners, there is one more deputy commissioner, in charge of the overall administration of the department. The technical deputy commissioners have their own complement of staff. There is also an information and public relations section, headed by a joint director with his own staff.

The organisational setup of the Commissariat of Rural Development of the Government of Mizoram after the introduction of New Land Use Policy is presented in chart 3.1.
CHART 3.1
ORGANISATION CHART OF COMMISSARIAT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (AS IN 1991)
In a hilly region, characterised by a difficult terrain, denuded forests, heavy rain-fall, frequent land-slides, primitive methods of cultivation, and so on, the task of fostering rural development is specially difficult. The Government of Mizoram has, over the years, operated a number of rural development programmes with the objective of attacking the problem of rural poverty. This section profiles some of the major programmes of the State Government which impinge more heavily, and more pervasively, on the rural life. These are discussed under the following heads:

- Community Halls
- Rural Communication
- Rural Housing
- Housing for Project Staff
- New Land Use Policy (NLUP)

**Community Halls**

Under this programme, the Department takes up the construction of community halls with a view to create durable assets in the rural areas. Against an allocation of Rs.76 lakhs, the Department of Rural Development constructed 236 community halls during 1993-94. The total outlay approved under this scheme, for 1994-95, was of the order of Rs.86 lakhs. This expenditure was directed towards the construction/completion/improvement of 182 community halls. During the year 1995-96, 26 community halls were completed. Another 112, which are at various stages of construction, have been taken up involving a total expenditure of Rs.126.00 lakhs.
Rural Communication

The contribution of rural communication *inter alia* towards the building of the necessary economic infrastructure in rural areas can not be under-estimated. The requirement of Mizoram, in this respect, is still greater as the region has mostly to depend on a road net-work for the movement of goods and passengers within and outside its territory. Lack of adequate communication infrastructure has been one of the main reasons for the state's backwardness, and a feeling of isolation on the part of the people of Mizoram.

In this background, rural communication has been given a place of importance in the rural development effort of the state. Under this programme, the Department takes up the construction of jeepable roads, suspension bridges and culverts. With an expenditure of Rs.20 lakhs, the Department constructed nineteen kms of jeepable road, five culverts, and nine suspension bridges during 1993-94. During the year 1994-95, twenty four kms of jeepable road at a total cost of Rs.17 lakhs was constructed. An allocation of Rs.17 lakhs, during 1995-96, under this programme has been made for the construction of 13.87 kms of jeepable road, and maintenance of another stretch of 36.40 kms.

Rural Housing

Under the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) and Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90), with a view to achieving their avowed goal of providing a better quality of life for the rural poor, the Government of Mizoram had placed special emphasis on rural housing. Under the Rural Housing Programme, the Department of Rural Development provided GCI sheets, four bundles each, free
of cost to the rural families. During 1993-94, the Department incurred an expenditure of Rs.100 lakhs for the purchase of 6624 bundles of GCI sheets which were distributed to 1656 families. Out of a total allocation of Rs.100.00 lakhs, under this scheme, during 1995-96, a sum of Rs.75.86 lakhs has been utilised for relief of the people affected by natural calamities in the state, particularly the Southern part of Mizoram.

**Housing For Project Staff**

The aim of this programme is to provide quarters for the staff posted at various block headquarters and construction of block office buildings. During 1993-94, the department incurred an expenditure of Rs.22 lakhs for construction of 25 quarters. During 1994-95, the Department allocated a sum of Rs.22 lakhs for the construction of 25 block office buildings.

**New Land Use Policy (NLUP)**

In order to eradicate the traditional practice of shifting cultivation, the State Government has with effect from the year 1990-91, launched a major initiative under the label of New Land Use Policy (NLUP). The NLUP aims to wean away the jhumia families from shifting cultivation (jhumming), by providing them alternative means of livelihood.

Major features of NLUP have been profiled in the ensuing paragraphs. Thereafter, the researcher has attempted to provide a sketch of the manner in which NLUP is, in practice, operating; this description is based on the field visits conducted by the researcher.
A PROFILE OF THE NLUP

Objectives of NLUP

- To put an end to the practice of shifting cultivation.
- To induce jhumia families to take up alternative occupations under either agricultural, industrial or animal husbandry sectors.
- To take up wet rice cultivation in all the potential flat lands in order to promote self-sufficiency in food production.
- To augment the afforestation drive.
- To provide marketing outlet for produce obtained from the NLUP Programme.

Target Group Under NLUP

- Jhumia families, who depend upon shifting cultivation for their livelihood.
- Families, other than jhumia families, having no permanent means of livelihood but consisting of able-bodied members capable of undertaking physical labour.

The following categories of families are excluded from the purview of the NLUP:

- Families having permanent source of regular income, e.g., government employees, commercial dealers, registered contractors, full-time mission workers, employees of deficit schools, government-aided school, etc.
- Families owning permanent farms, with potential to yield sufficient return to sustain a family.
- Families holding developed irrigated land for wet rice cultivation and cultivating through hired labourers instead of engaging in self-cultivation.
- Families who are permanently engaged in livestock or any comparable industrial venture, deriving sufficient income.

- Immigrant families, which have earlier received assistance under NLUP from some other development block.

**The Procedure**

Under NLUP, alternative occupations are made available to beneficiaries in three sectors, viz., agriculture, animal husbandry and veterinary, and industries sectors. Each beneficiary family is allowed to choose one trade from out of the above sectors. Each family is given a plot of land measuring two hectares each. Each beneficiary is sanctioned an amount of Rs.30,000/-. This assistance is released in instalments over a period of three years. The beneficiaries are required to sign an undertaking before receiving any assistance.

**Misuse of NLUP Assistance: Criteria Stipulated by State Government**

- Beneficiaries who, after having received assistance under NLUP, migrate elsewhere without the permission of the Government.

- Beneficiaries who alienate NLUP assistance such as cash/machinery/equipment or any other inputs by way of sale or transfer without permission of the Government.

- Beneficiaries who divert the assistance to purposes other than those for which it was given.

- Beneficiaries who, after having opted for a particular trade and received assistance, dispose off the asset by way of sale or transfer without the permission of the Government.
Government, irrespective of whether the gestation period for the concerned trade is over or not. The examples may include wet rice cultivation lands, sugarcane fields, orchards etc.

Penalty for Misuse of Assistance

- Beneficiary may be barred from receiving assistance from government in future.
- The value of the assistance already given, calculated on the basis of the prevailing market rate, may be recovered in full from the beneficiary.
- In case recovery is not feasible, other forms of punishment, considered appropriate by Government, may be awarded.

Periodic Reports

Submission of reports is of vital importance for the review and monitoring of the Programme. The Block Development Officers accordingly submit monthly and annual reports on the programme to Rural Development Department.

Publicity

With a view to creating awareness among the general public, and to motivate different groups of officials involved in the implementation of the programme, the Department has taken steps to publish magazines, folders, stickers, pamphlets and leaflets with appropriate illustrations; and, besides organises plays and seminars on the subject. Camps are also organised in the rural areas and in schools and colleges, to spread awareness about the role of NLUP in facilitating Mizoram’s march towards self-sufficiency.
On the spot verification and inspection by concerned officials is one of the important means to ensure successful implementation of the programme. For this purpose, block development officers assign specific territorial units (called circles) to the field functionaries, such as extension officers and village level workers. The field functionaries verify and inspect the beneficiaries within their respective circles and record their observations into their vikas patrikas on the spot. Inspection reports are submitted by the EO/VLWs to the BDOs; thereafter they submit these reports to the Rural Development Department of the Government of Mizoram.

Table 3.1 shows the year-wise expenditure under NLUP during the period 1990-91-1995-96.

**TABLE 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>Rs.1200 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>Rs.2070 lakhs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>Rs.2220 lakhs</td>
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<td>1993-94</td>
<td>Rs.2770 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>Rs.2830 lakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>Rs.2500 lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Rural Development Department, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl.*
NEW LAND USE POLICY : THE PICTURE IN THE FIELD AND AN ASSESSMENT

NLUP has received much praise as well as criticism from various corners of the State of Mizoram. It has been, since its introduction in 1990-91, one of the most hotly discussed and widely published topics in the State. In order to be able to develop an idea of the situation in the field, it was necessary to visit the actual sites where the NLUP schemes were being implemented and to interview the beneficiaries of these schemes. With this end in view, the researcher visited some villages under Thingsulthiah Block. In the ensuing paragraphs the researcher has made an attempt to record the major findings of this effort.

The Block has a total of 26 villages, and NLUP has been introduced in 23 villages. The total number of beneficiary families in these 23 villages, as stated in records available at the State headquarters was 4654. But total number of families in these 23 villages (which are under NLUP schemes) as recorded in the Block Development Office of the Thingsulthiah Block was 4400. When a question on this discrepancy was raised, it was stated that many families have been deleted due to their migration from the villages under the block. The beneficiaries visited in the villages of this block had taken trades of piggery, carpentry, bakery, banana plantation, ginger cultivation, and orange plantation.

A principal operational lacuna pertained to delays in the distribution of instalments to the beneficiaries. This affected those with schemes in the agriculture sector most, as each operation in the cycle, i.e., sowing, cropping, etc. must occur at its appointed time. When, however, the instalments are delayed, the entire scheduling cycle is adversely affected.
In a large number of cases, entries in Vikash Patrikas were irregular; and not uncommonly incorrect.

There were also instances of politicisation of the selection of beneficiaries; the really deserving families were often superseded by the better off families. It was also reported that when an inspection was held, the beneficiaries were given knowledge of the same beforehand. Therefore, they took every precaution to present a thriving trade at the time of inspection. A mention may be made, in this regard, of cases where animals were passed on from one family to another, thereby tricking the inspectors into believing they were observing a different set of animals in each home.

One of the main aims of the NLUP is to achieve self-sufficiency in food-grain production. With this end in view, the reclamation of wasteland for WRC was accorded a high priority under the NLUP. However, going by the available records, no beneficiaries appear to have pursued the WRC schemes in this area. People are moreover not encouraged, in any special way, to take up schemes concerned with foodgrains production. There is a manifest bias in favour of trades in industry and animal husbandry sectors. This has put a big question mark on the validity of the claim of trying to make the State self-sufficient in the production of foodgrains. In fact, there was no evidence that the beneficiaries were counselled against taking up trades which required the use of raw materials from outside the state.

The most noteworthy feature of jhuming in Mizoram is that the cultivator is not the owner of the land. It is, instead, the village councils which control the land and allot jhum plots for cultivation to the villagers. However, there has been no effort to involve village councils in operations connected with NLUP. This is, evidently, a serious lapse in design, and the
Government is having to pay a price for the same. Many NLUP beneficiaries are known to continue to practise jhuming, and since the permission for jhuming is as a rule communicated orally by the village council presidents (VCPs), there are no records to show that the NLUP beneficiaries were actually permitted to jhum by the VCPs. The fact of the matter is that jhuming continues unabated; and this tends to defeat the very purpose of the NLUP.

There was evidence of irregularities in the selection of beneficiaries. Since the programme is aimed basically at stopping jhuming, most of the beneficiaries should have been those families which were practising jhuming. But in Seling Village under Thingsulthliah block, there were more than 20 families out of 116 beneficiaries which did not practice jhuming. Apart from this, one of the important objectives of NLUP is to encourage afforestation. There is, however, no mention in the programme as to how it will be done. Neither a separate fund appears to have been earmarked for this, nor has the forest department been associated with this work. Another drawback in the programme was the absence of any market support for the products manufactured by the beneficiaries in the various trades for which assistance was given. Though one of the objectives of the programme is to create marketing outlets for products from the NLUP schemes, it has not been mentioned anywhere how it will be done.

The absence of reliable statistical data on the extent of area under jhuming and the number of families involved, constitutes a major drawback of the project. This has hindered efforts to gauge the exact magnitude and ramifications of the problem at hand.

There is an apparent lack of coordination between the government officials, the voluntary organisations and the village councils. Successful implementation of the programme requires a close relationship between these agencies. The failure to forge a close relationship has resulted
in a feeling of animosity on the part of the people towards the officials.

There is also evidence of an increasing involvement on the part of the political leaders. This is because of the opportunity the political leaders see in the NLUP programme to further their own narrow party-ends. They are aware that these simple-minded villagers can be persuaded and cajoled to keep them in power though the provision of aid for which the NLUP provides a framework. The factor of affiliation with the ruling party seemed to have an important role in securing assistance under the programme.

There have been controversies regarding the funds involved and the amount which actually reaches the beneficiaries. One of the main points in the current debate involving NLUP is whether the scheme will really work successfully even if the above mentioned snags are removed. The NLUP scheme involves the uprooting of an established way of life for the concerned people. Since the NLUP interferes with the established value system of the target population, it has been viewed with suspicion by the people. The trades made available under the scheme, even though not many are new to them, have in any case never been their traditional sources of livelihood. More fundamentally, jhumming is not simply a vocation and source of livelihood for the villagers; it is essentially, and more importantly, a way of life for them. Jhumming involves social and cultural mores and rituals which bring immense meaning to the life of an average villager.

Activities such as piggery, poultry, vegetable gardening, etc. have traditionally been carried on by Mizos to meet the house-hold requirements. No effort has been made by the State Government to now make the beneficiaries see these very activities as “trades” whose commercial potential needs to be exploited. The technological upgradation, in this limited way,
has to advance in order that the traditional household activities of Mizos make a dent on rural life as commercial ventures.

More carefully planned system of monitoring at the block level should be organised. There is, presently, inadequate staff for inspection purposes at the block level. Every village should be covered comprehensively by the inspectorial personnel. More emphasis should be placed on the reclaiming of wasteland and production of foodgrains. Records must be maintained and checked by Headquarters personnel at least quarterly so that any mismanagement of funds by the block office or the misuse of aid by the beneficiaries may be detected without delay.

There is lack of involvement of Programme bureaucracy in the implementation process. The Programme personnel, who are in close touch with people, should undergo training in public-relations and inter-personal relations.

The NLUP aims to provide alternative source of income to the beneficiaries. It is, however, felt that the trade-related grants under the scheme are of an inadequate size. It is important that this aspect of the NLUP is reviewed and necessary upward revision of grants brought about.

Conscious efforts need to be made to further encourage the people's participation in the scheme. Voluntary organisations have an important role here; but they are largely preoccupied with religious and social activities. The local level Programme bureaucracy needs to be further strengthened in skills as well as motivation.
(IV) CENTRALLY-SPONSORED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

In this section, we discuss the centrally-sponsored rural development programmes which are being implemented in the state of Mizoram. The centrally-sponsored programmes being operated in Mizoram are as under:

- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)
- National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)
- Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEG)
- Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)
- Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)
- Border Area Development Programme (BADP)

**Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)**

Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is a centrally sponsored programme funded by the Central and the State Governments on 50:50 basis. The programme aims to provide means of income generation to the rural poor to enable them to cross the poverty-line through a package of assistance, including subsidy and institutional credit. IRDP is now the largest programme for providing direct assistance to the rural poor for enabling them to attain higher income and better standard of living.

IRDP was introduced in Mizoram in the year 1978-79 on a limited scale. Infact, only three blocks were covered during this period. The programme was extended to five blocks in 1979-80. From 1980-81, the programme was extended to all the blocks of the state.
The funds for implementation of the programme in Mizoram, because it was then a Union Territory, were provided by the Centre until the year 1987-88. It was only since 1988-89 (after Mizoram's elevation to Statehood in 1987) that the Centre and the State started sharing of the expenditure on the implementation of the programme on a 50:50 basis. During the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) IRDP was not a credit-linked programme in Mizoram. It was only during the Seventh Five-Year Plan, that it became a credit-linked programme. It is implemented through District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs).

Since the inception of the programme, the number of families assisted till the year 1994-95 was 57821 at an expenditure of Rs.2718.988 lakhs. The magnitude of the rural poverty is reflected in the estimated percentage of families below poverty line in Mizoram, which was 63.14% in 1988, 52.69% in 1991 and 58.50% in 1992 (figures provided by State Level Monitoring Cell, Rural Development Department, Government of Mizoram). Credit linkage with IRDP in Mizoram has always been very low, which is one of the most important reasons for the poor implementation of the programme.

**Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)**

Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) was started at the national level on 15th August, 1979. The main objective of TRYSEM is to provide technical and managerial skills to the rural youth in the age group of 18-35 from families living below the poverty-line to enable them to take up self-employment ventures in the fields of agriculture and allied activities, industries, services and business. Priority is given to rural youth from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
TRYSEM was started in Mizoram in the year 1982-83. Expenditure is shared by the centre and the state on a 50:50 basis. The number of youths trained under this programme till the year 1993-94 was 10766 (figure provided by Rural Development Department, Government of Mizoram). At the district level, the scheme is implemented through District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs).

**National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)**

National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) was started in October 1980. Expenditure for this programme is shared by the centre and the state on a 50:50 basis. The basic objective of this programme is to generate additional employment opportunities; to create durable community assets; and to improve the quality of life of rural masses.

This programme was commenced in Mizoram in 1980. It is implemented through District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs). The implementation of this programme has resulted in strengthening the socio-economic infrastructure of the rural areas in Mizoram. Under the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85) and Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) 2.93 lakh and 4.642 lakh mandays of employment were respectively generated under NREP in the state. Under NREP, during the years 1983-89, 2396 hectares of social forestry, 2075 kms of construction and widening of rural roads, 226 school buildings, and 52 pavilions have been completed in Mizoram (source Rural Development Department, Government of Mizoram). With the merger of NREP and RLEGP into Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, in 1989-90, NREP was discontinued in that year.

**Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)**

Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was started on the 15th August, 1983 with the basic objective of generating gainful employment for the rural landless labourers by creating productive assets for strengthening the rural socio-economic infrastructure and
improving the overall quality of life in the rural areas. Priority in employment is given to landless labourers, women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. RLEGP was wholly funded by the central government.

In Mizoram, RLEGP was started from the year 1983. But, as fund for the programme during the year was received only at the fag end, the amount was carried over to 1984-85. Thus the actual work on the implementation of the programme started from 1984-85 only. The programme is implemented through District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs). RLEGP was discontinued from the year 1989-90, as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) was launched in that year by merging NREP and RLEGP. During 1984-1989 period, 957.51 kms of roads were constructed improved, and 17.204 lakh man-days were generated under this programme in Mizoram.

**Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)**

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was launched in the year 1982-83 at the national level. It was formulated to provide the rural poor women with suitable avenues of income generation according to their skills and local conditions. The rationale behind this programme is that the women's incomes have a positive co-relation with nutritional and educational status of the family and in the building up of positive attitudes towards the status of women. The financial provisions under DWCRA are meant for "groups" of women only. An amount of Rs.15,000/- is given to each group of 15-20 women.

DWCRA was started in the Aizawl district of Mizoram in the year 1985-86. It was extended to Lunglei and Chhimtuipui districts in the years 1991-92 and 1992-93 respectively. The programme is implemented through District Rural Development Agencies. By the year 1993, a total of 520 groups having a membership of 7,348 women had been helped under this programme in the Aizawl district.
Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY)

The Government of India had launched a new programme, known as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY), by merging NREP and RLEGP with effect from the year 1989-90. The primary objective of the programme is to generate additional gainful employment for the unemployed persons both men and women in the rural areas. The programme started in Mizoram during 1990-91. The activities taken up under this programme in Mizoram are construction of village community halls, schools and play grounds.

Border Area Development Programme (BADP)

This is a centrally sponsored programme wholly funded by the union government. It was started in the Seventh Plan with the objective of balanced development of sensitive areas in the Western region of the country through provision of infrastructure facilities and promotion of a sense of security among the local populations. The programme was extended to the Eastern states, which have international border with Bangladesh during Eighth Plan (1992-97) and covers the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. In Mizoram, the Government is implementing this programme with an aim of developing the remote, inaccessible areas situated near the border. This programme started operating in Mizoram in the year 1993. Under this programme, 95 kms of jeepable road and 35 kms of truckable roads had been completed by the year 1995-96 in Mizoram.
REFERENCES


5. ibid, p.116.

6. ibid, p.117.

7. ibid, p.118.

8. ibid, p.52.
