

LIVELIHOODS AND DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS OF THE RURAL VILLAGES: A CASE OF MAMIT DISTRICT IN MIZORAM

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Abstract

In the era of rapid urbanisation and a globalised economy, rural areas often find itself entangled in a cycle of change and development affecting the overall livelihood of the rural population. The fast changing nature of development in the rural and urban areas has culminated into a system of economy where vicious circle of poverty still operates in rural areas. The level of living of the people shifts in an opposite direction wherein rural areas are deprived of many basic amenities and opportunities compared to their urban counterparts. Even after the introduction of PURA scheme, rural villages are lacking in almost all areas of development leading to widespread poverty and slow rate of human capital formation. This paper brings out the status of developmental indicators in and around Mamit district of Mizoram and the livelihood conditions of the people therein. It is very disheartening to see that even after seventy four years of independence and thirty four years of attaining its statehood, the rural villages are still lacking in many areas like education, public health facilities, market, availability of banking, internet facilities, skill development etc.,. All these factor has led to the over dependence of the rural population on agriculture and its allied sectors making it difficult to achieve sustainable livelihood.

Key Words : Livelihood, globalised, development, capital formation, deprivation, opportunities, poverty, PURA, sustainable.

Introduction

The term 'livelihood' has become increasingly significant in modern development process and includes in it a wide range of people's activities, skills, capabilities, assets, resources, access and profession required to earn a living. Activities and professions in farm and non-farm sectors like farmers, cultivators, engineers, contractors, teachers, masons, carpenters, drivers, manual labours, Information technology, artists, sports etc. that affects the level of economic development are all included under the ambit of livelihood^[1]. Development and livelihood go hand in hand because as a country progresses to the next stage of development, there is a change in the pattern of livelihood of the rural population. Accordingly various strategies are designed for the improvement of the economic and social life of the rural people. Rural areas

here represents the areas where the density of population is less than 5000 and the main occupation of people is agriculture (Netar,2017) ^[2].

According to the World Bank Report, an overwhelming majority of the world's poor who are settled in rural areas are mostly engaged in agriculture for their livelihood. It is estimated that about 2.3 billion people are living in poverty that is, on less than US\$1.90 per day^[3]. Even rapid urbanisation and its growing urban poverty is fuelled by large scale migration of poor people from rural areas in search of food and livelihood. In 2018, four out of five people below the international poverty line lived in rural areas (World Bank, 2018) ^[4]. Global rural poverty has been declining significantly over the years except 2020 due to the covid-19 pandemic that brought the whole world to its knee.

According to the World Bank Report, 2018, 44% of the world's population lives in rural areas the lowest percentage of which is found in North American region where 17% of its population lives in rural areas^[5]. Among the high income countries, 18% of the population lives in rural areas which is 49% in case of low and middle income countries. The largest percentage of 67% is registered by countries with low income and in these regions; the main source of livelihood is based on agriculture and allied sector. This simply shows that as a country's economic development increases, the proportion of rural population to urban population decreases over time^[6].

Over the years, the percentage of people living below poverty line has decreased significantly except in the year 2020 when the world is suddenly engulfed by covid-19 pandemic. In India, majority of people that is, 68.84% lives in rural areas (census 2011) which is expected to significantly decline in the next census which is deferred due to the outbreak of covid-19^[7]. India has not officially counted its poverty population since 2011 but according to the estimate made by the United Nations, about 364 million or 28 per cent of the population live below poverty line. This poverty level is 39 per cent in case of rural India population. ^[8].

The rural livelihood activities like farming, fishing, raising livestock, timber logging etc, depends mostly on agriculture and its allied sectors either directly or indirectly^[9]. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term (Chambers and Conway 1991) ^[10]. It is quite necessary for the rural community to diversify their sources of income so that in the event of failure in their fields, they can still cope with other means like working in a non-farm sector. For these purposes, the government of most countries are actively engaged in implementing rural - based development programmes and India as a whole and Mizoram in particular is no exception. Since rural area is largely dominated by the presence of small and landless marginal farmers, the government of India has put in tremendous efforts to uplift the living condition of the rural poor in every possible way like development of educational institutions, public health systems,

training of rural workforce and providing direct employment to rural poor people^[11]. Targeting these vulnerable sections and improving their livelihood and making them more productive is the basic objective of rural development programmes in the country (Das, 2004)

Objectives of the Study

This study focuses mainly on the several aspects of developmental indicators and the livelihood conditions of rural people living in Mamit District of Mizoram. The main objectives of the study are as follows;

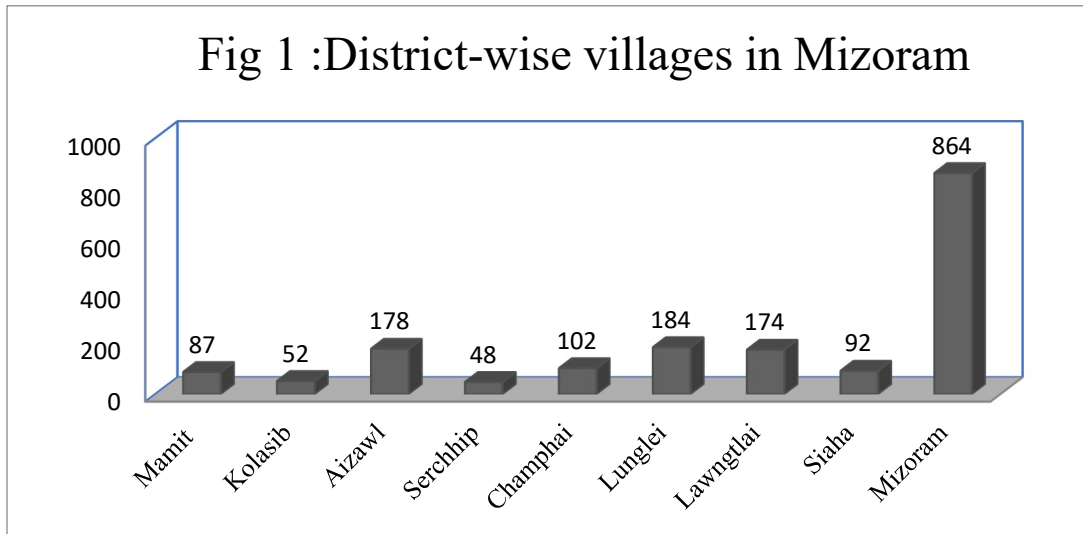
- 1) To examine the district-wise BPL households in Mizoram and compared it with the number of BPL families in Mamit district.
- 2) To briefly evaluate the state of economic inequalities prevailing in different regions by reflecting the economic condition of the State.
- 3) To study the village profile detailing the number of villages, populations, houses, sources of water, roads conditions etc, in the three rural development (RD) blocks within Mamit district.
- 4) To know the living conditions and infrastructural facilities available in the district.
- 5) To explore the livelihood profiles like the type of housing facilities, number of people engaged in agriculture, number of BPL families, Cattle population etc., in Mamit district.
- 6) To study the human capital formation like detailing the state of health, education and banking status of the rural people living in Mamit district.
- 7) To highlight the various policy measures and programmes implemented by the state government and the central government.
- 8) To identify the problems faced by rural people and suggest appropriate policy measures based on the findings.

Data and Methodology: The present study is an analytical investigation on the issue of livelihoods and key development indicators of rural population of Mamit District, Mizoram. As many as 93 villages are selected under this research taking 20 villages from Reiek RD block, 49 villages from Zonuam RD block and 24 villages from West Phaileng RD block. As such, the present study is based on the existing raw data collected and compiled from various sources like the Census of India 2011, BPL baseline survey 2018 ; Mizoram Statistical Development Agency (MSDA) and the Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-18. The study uses simple tabular and diagrams to highlight the state of rural economy of the target area so that each and every one who may encounter the paper may be able to understand the very idea and purpose of this research .

Rural Villages of Mizoram

According to 2011 census, there are 10,97,206 people living in Mizoram out of which 5,25,435, that is 47.89 per cent are living in rural areas^[12]. There are 864 villages in the state of Mizoram out of which 704 villages are inhabited^[13]. The whole state is divided into 23 sub divisions and 26 Blocks for developmental and administrative purposes. With 184 villages, the undivided Lunglei

District has the most number of villages followed by Aizawl district with 178 villages. Serchhip district has the least number of villages out of eight districts of Mizoram.



Source : Census of India 2011

Mizoram Statistical Development Agency (MSDA) which is the implementing agency of Indian Statistical Strengthening Project (ISSP), under the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Mizoram has published a BPL baseline survey 2018 the result of which is given in the following table. According to the final report, out of 2,88,191 households in Mizoram, 56,584 families live below poverty line which is 19.63 per cent of the total families^[14]. District-wise, Mamit district with 35.64% has the highest percentage of BPL in the state, followed by Siaha district and Lunglei district with a BPL per cent of 31.64 and 30.10 respectively. In absolute terms, there are 7186 BPL families in Mamit district, Siaha and Lunglei district has 4245 and 11437 families living below poverty line. Aizawl district with 8.76 % has the lowest percentage of BPL in the state followed by Champhai district with 9.35 %. In terms of absolute number, Serchhip district with 1770 BPL family has the lowest number of BPL household in the state followed by Champhai with 2715 families living below poverty line. Lawngtlai district has the highest number of BPL family with 13,162 followed by Lunglei district with 11,437 families belongin to BPL.

Table 1 :District-wise households in Mizoram

Sl No	Name of District	Total Household	No. of BPL Household	Percentage of BPL to total Household
1	Mamit	20163	7186	35.64
2	Kolasib	19359	3401	17.57
3	Aizawl	92779	12668	13.63
4	Serchhip	13841	1770	12.79
5	Champhai	29043	2715	9.35

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6	Lunglei	37997	11437	30.10
7	Lawngtlai	61593	13162	21.37
8	Siaha	13416	4245	31.64
Total		288191	56584	19.63

Source : BPL baseline survey 2018 ; Mizoram Statistical Development Agency.

The above table clearly shows that there is large scale inequality in terms of economic development among different regions of the state and there is no positive correlation between the rate of poverty and level of urbanisation in the state. According to the report of Government of Mizoram and the International Institute for Population, about 46 per cent of the rural population are directly engaged as cultivator whereas in urban areas, that rate is 9 per cent. Only 9 per cent of the total workforce in the rural areas is involved in industrial activities against 41 per cent in the urban areas. Literacy rate among the rural population is 84 per cent and the sex ration is lower in the rural areas and stands at 952 meaning that there are 952 females per thousand males in rural Mizoram.

Background of the study District

Mamit District which covers an area of 3025 sq kms under Government of Mizoram came into existence on 11th March 1998 and is the least urbanized district with 17.25 per cent living in urban areas^[15]. In other words, it is the district having the highest number of population living in rural areas. Out of 86364 peoples, 71466 people, that is, 82.75 per cent lives in rural areas (census 2011).With a sex ratio of 927 against the state’s average of 976, Mamit district also registers the lowest sex ratio among the eleven district in the state. The literacy rate is 84.93 per cent as per 2011 census and is rank at the second last among the districts. For development and administrative purpose.the district is divided into three blocks viz, Zawnuam block, Reiek block and West Phaileng block. Mamit district is bordered by Hailakandi district of Assam state on its northern border, North Tripura district in the west, Lunglei district on the south and and Kolasib & Aizawl districts on the east.

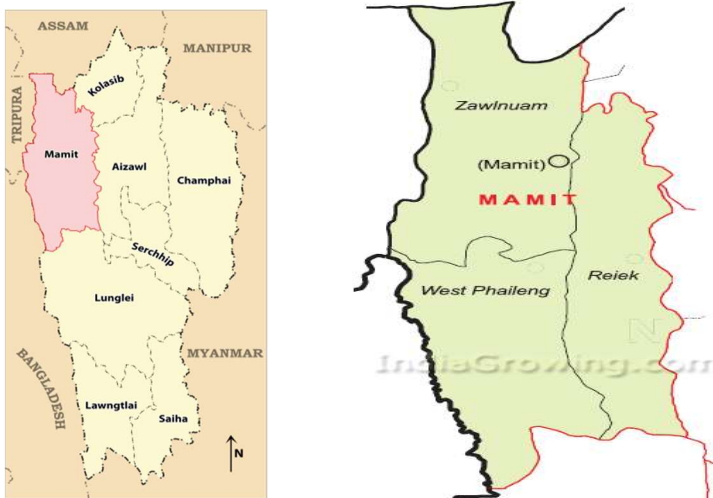


Table 2 : Primary Village Profile of Mamit District,Mizoram

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Sl No	Parameters	RD Block			Mamit Total	Mizoram
		Reiek	Zawlnuam	W. Phaileng		
1	No. of Villages	20	49	24	93	725
2	No. of population	16182	49984	28499	94668	645889
3	No. of Households	3433	9521	5352	18306	128681
4	Motorable (in use) in kms	105	71	34	210	3516
5	Motorable not useable-in kms	80	56	19	155	2599
6	Sources of Water					
	i) No. of Spring	83	194	90	367	2635
	ii) No. of public water point (piped water)	123	313	121	557	7146
7	No. of Community Toilet (in use) for defacation purpose only	03	14	03	20	259
8	No. of Public Urinal (in use) for urination purpose only	86	145	100	331	2517
9	No. of Public Playground	41	62	42	145	1016
10	No. of Registered/Recognized Library	15	13	10	38	327
11	No. of burial ground	21	55	33	109	798

Source : Compiled from Village Profile& Development Indicators 2017-18, Government of Mizoram and BPL baseline survey 2018 ; Mizoram Statistical Development Agency.

There are a total of 93 habited villages within Mamit District representing 13 per cent of the state's total village¹⁶. Zawlnuam RD block has the most number of villages at 49 followed by W. Phaileng RD block with 24 villages. Reiek RD block has the least number of villages at 20. Population wise, with population of 49984, Zawlnuam RD block is the most populous region representing 53 per cent of the total district village population which stands at 94668 .W. Phaileng village is the most populated Village with population of 2,1,309 while Saitlaw with a population of Only 59 persons is the smallest village in the Disrict. The Scheduled Tribes Population of Mamit is 95.0 % according to 2011 census. A total of 18306 families are there spreading over 93 villages and the most number of families is again found in Zawlnuam area with 9521 families, followed by W. Phaileng area at 5352 families and Reiek RD has the least number of households at 3433.

Of the 3516 kilometers long motor-able road in the state, Mamit district has one of the least motor-able roads at 210 kilometers¹⁷. The longest motor-able road of 105 kilometers falls within Reiek

region followed by Zawlnuam district with 71 kilometers of motor-able road. W. Phaileng district has the shortest motor-able road and has a stretch of road measuring only 34 kilometers. Besides, Mamit district has 155 kilometers of roads that are motor-able but not useable out of which Zawlnuam region has 80 kilometers, Zawlnuam RD has 56 kilometers and that of W. Phaileng with 19 kilometers. The district has an excellent access to PHE piped water given its location and piped water is the main source of water for the majority of families in Mamit district. A large number of families also sourced their required water supply from the natural spring maintained by the local administration. There are a total of 367 spring water and 557 PHE water points within Mamit village areas. Of these, Zawlnuam RD has the most number of springs as well as most number of public water points at 194 and 313 respectively ¹¹⁸. Reiek RD has 83 springs and 123 piped water. A total of 121 PHE piped water points are there within W.Phaileng RD along with 90 spring water. The district administration is working every corner to cover all villages with sufficient and clean piped water supply in the near future.

Mamit district has as many as 20 community toilet that is in use for defecation purpose which constitutes 7.7 per cent of the state's total. Again, Zawlnuam RD has the most number of community toilet with 14 of such facilities within the region. Reiek and W.Phaileng region has three each of such facility. Of the 2517 public urinal available in the entire state, Mamit district has 13,2 per cent of the total which is 331 of such facility. Reiek region has the least number of public urinal at 86, followed by W.Phaileng at 100 and Zawlnuam RD has the most number of such assets maintaining as many as 145. Out of 1016 available playgrounds in the entire state, 145 belongs to Mamit district with Zawlnuam having the most number of public playground at 62. Villages in Mamit district has a total of 109 burial grounds maintained by the Village Council as well as NGOs of each village.

Results and Discussions

The economy of Mamit district is based on agriculture and its allied sectors wherein paddy is the most important crop¹¹⁹. The major allied activity in the district is Animal Husbandry like piggery and Poultry. The economy of all the 93 villages of the district are greatly influenced by a kind of livelihood related to agriculture. Out of a total household of 18306 in the district, as many as 8798 families are directly engaged in Jhum cultivation representing 42.7 per cent of the total households¹²⁰. Zawlnuam block has the most number of households engaging in jhum cultivation, followed by W.Phaileng and Reiek regions respectively. Besides, 318 families in the district are pursuing wet rice cultivation. It is also important to note that there are 3671 families in these 93 villages who are living below poverty line(BPL) representing 32.8 per cent of the rural population. Zawlnuam region has the highest rate of people living below poverty line at 48.7 per cent, followed by Reiek and W.Phaileng region where the share of BPL stood at 40.03 per cent and 32.8 percent respectively. The state's BPL status is 19.6 per cent according to the report of Government of Mizoram, published by Planning and Economic department.

Table 3 : Livelihood and developmental profile of Mamit District (Block-Wise) vis-a-vis Mizoram (2017-2018)

Sl No	Parameters	RD Block			Mamit Total	Mizoram
		Reiek	Zawlnuam	W.Phaileng		
1	No. of Villages	20	49	24	93	725
2	No. of population	16182	49984	28499	94668	645889
3	No. of Households	3433	9521	5352	18306	128681
4	No. of households living in Kutcha House	172	4929	2711	7812	32385
5	No.of families pursuing Jhum cultivation	1456	4566	2776	8798	60681
6	No.of families pursuing wet rice cultivation	19	184	115	318	10166
7	Total Number of Family	3280	4843	11204		288191
8	BPL Family	1313	2358	3671		56584
9	BPL Population	6270	10959	19122		-
10	Percentage of BPL family	40.03 %	48.7%	32.8%		19.6%
11	Area under oil palm	0	10	0	10	4105
12	Cattle population (in Numbers)	99	441	166	706	19911
13	Pigs population(in Numbers)	2264	4655	1515	7434	79809
14	Goats population (in Numbers)	158	1193	347	1698	15744
15	Mithun population (in Numbers)	0	0	0	0	4224
16	No. of Private Fish Ponds	151	923	179	1253	7799
17	No. of Commercial Banks	0	0	0	0	11
18	No. of Cooperative Banks	0	01	0	01	04
19	No. of Rural Banks	02	01	01	04	38
20	Electricity	20	20	44	124	-
21	No. of Self Help Group	132	234	179	545	4881
22	No. of Grocery Shop	120	303	140	563	4296
23	No. of Cooperative Society Shop	03	0	02	05	97

24	No. of Functioning Agricultural Marketing Society	03	01	0	04	53
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Source : Compiled from Village Profile& Development Indicators 2017-18, Government of Mizoram & BPL baseline survey 2018 ; Mizoram Statistical Development Agency

Apart from jhum cultivation, many families of the people living in villages of the district are engaged in allied sectors like poultry, logging, animal husbandry, dairy farming etc, as an alternative means of livelihood. According to the report published by Government of Mizoram on “Village Profile& Development Indicators 2017-18”, there are a number of families whose livelihood depend on the cultivation of oil palm which is quite very meagre compared to other districts. Oil palm is cultivated on ten hectares of land^[21]. In case of cattle production, Zawlnuam region has the most number of cattle like buffalo, oxen, cows, bison, yak followed by W.Phaileng and Reiek RD villages. Again, the district is lacking behind with other district by a huge distant when it comes to production of cattle. One of the most important supporting source of income for rural village people in the district is rearing of pigs and poultry. W.Phaileng region has the least number of pigs and poultry in the district and Zawlnuam RD region has the most number of pigs. The total pig population is estimated to be around 7434 which is 9.3 per cent of the total pigs population of the state. Another delicious food supplement called mutton is produced in small areas where the estimated number of goat reared in the district is 1698 representing 10.8 per cent of the total population of the state. As many as 1253 fish ponds are there and more is expected to come up in the near future. Fish produced by farmers are quite fresh and delicious and there is no problem in selling them at the market enabling the farmers to earn a sizeable income every year.

An important indicator of rural development is type of housing, infrastructural development like good connectivity, abundant and uninterrupted power supply, the existence of an active banking, marketing and co-operative societies which can be easily accessed by the rural population^[22]. On this front, the district lacked behind its peers in almost every front. There are 7812 families living in Kutcha House in 93 villages representing 43 per cent of the total household highlighting the true nature of level of living of the rural villages. All the villages are accessible with road but the quality of road is dilapidated and there are still some villages where electric connection is not yet activated and people are deprived of basic amenities every passing day. On the financial front, there are no commercial banks in these villages, one co-operative banks is operating along with four regional rural banks. These shows the pathetic condition of rural people of the district as most of the rural people are financially illiterate and is against the spirit of financial inclusion. The three RD blocks together has 545 self-help groups who are actively operating on various fields benefiting a large number of families especially the rural women. There are as many as 563 grocery shops run by private households and Reiek region has the least number of grocery shop among the three divisions. Apart from this, there are five Cooperative society shop run and backed by the

government for meeting the requirements of the people. Four agricultural marketing societies are functioning in these villages that cater to the needs of the farmers in selling and disposing of their products.

The level of economic development greatly influenced the nature of livelihood of the entire population. In all the villages under study, agriculture is the backbone of the economy and employs the largest share of the total workforce. So, when it comes to rural livelihood, it is more or less synonymous with that of agricultural-based activities like a) agricultural labourers who are landless workers, b) Farmers who cultivate their own fields, c) cultivators having other source of income like rearing animals, milking, working in mills, logging etc, d) rich farmers who employs other workers, e) labourers working at agricultural markets, middlemen etc^[23]. Besides these, access to banking is quite limited in most villages, the level of education and the eventual quality of the institutions is quite unsatisfactory at its present level. All these has a great bearing on the overall economic development of the rural population.

Human Capital Formation in Mamit Villages

One of the most important concepts for achieving sustainable rural development is improvement in human capital formation resulting in increasing productivity of the people. Human capital formation is the process of acquiring and increasing the number of persons who have education and experience which is essential for the economic and political development of a country” (Meier, G.M. 1976)^[24]. It is often said that the two major sources of human capital formation is that of investment in health and education. Accumulation of knowledge, training, skills, experience, abilities, migration and investment in health of the people is vital for ending extreme poverty, creating inclusive societies, narrowing inequalities and uplifting the rural population as a whole. For achieving effective and faster human capital development an internal consciousness and ethical formation is essential. If sustainable development encompassing the entire rural population is to be achieved, that region must invest more in education, skills development, training and improves the state of the healthcare system^[25]. One of the most serious problem facing Mizoram in general and Mamit district in particular is lack of adequate improvement in capital formation. This is clearly shown by the state of the present status of the district shown below.

Table 4 : Profile of Human Capital Formation and Development in Mamit District.

Sl No	Parameters	RD Block			Mamit Total	Mizoram
		Reiek	Zawlnuam	W.Phaile ng		
1	No. of Villages	20	49	24	93	725
2	No. of population	16182	49984	28499	94668	645889
3	No. of Households	3433	9521	5352	18306	128681
4	No. of Aganwadi Centres	69	107	76	252	1562
5	Primary School (in Numbers)					
	i)Total	30	98	45	173	1319

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	ii) No. of School with pure drinking water	27	56	36	119	918
	iii) No. of School with common toilet for boys and girls	23	58	33	114	807
6	Middle School					
	i)Total	23	56	34	113	942
	ii) No. of School with pure drinking water	18	38	24	86	701
	iii) No. of School with common toilet for boys and girls	20	32	24	76	602
7	High School					
	i)Total	14	17	13	44	369
	ii) No. of School with common toilet for boys and girls	07	11	09	27	259
8	Higher Secondary School 1					
	i)Total	0	01	01	02	54
	ii) No. of School with common toilet for boys and girls	0	01	0	01	42
9	No. of College	0	01	0	02	28
10	No. of Registered/Recognized Library	15	13	10	38	327
11	No. of Hospital	02	0	0	02	63
12	No. of PHC	03	04	01	08	57
13	No. of Sub-centre	14	15	26	55	372
14	PHE piped water	17	19	37	73	-

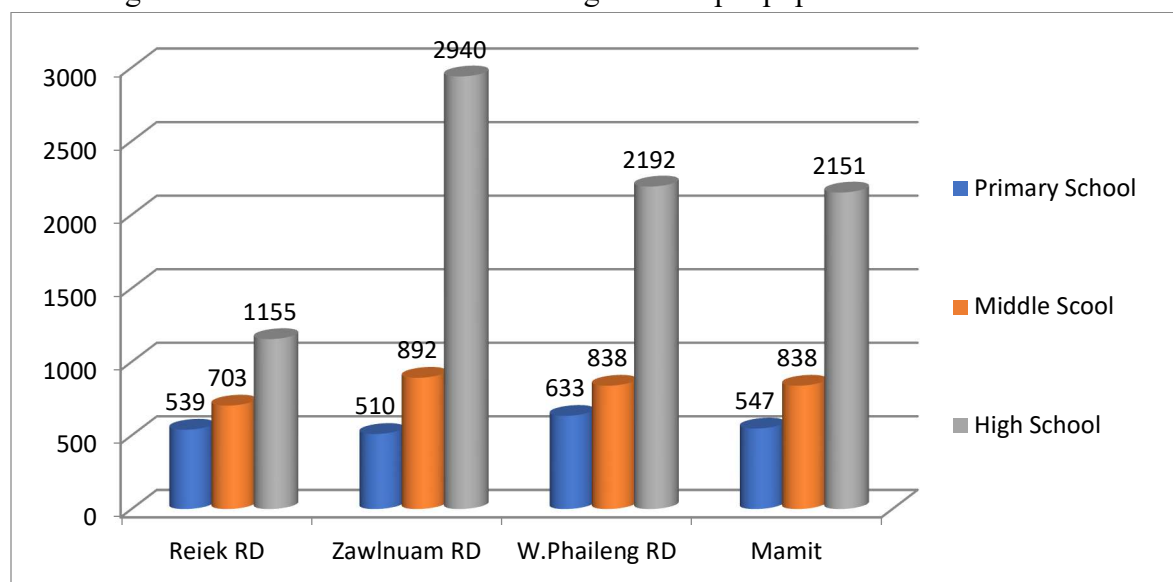
Source : Compiled from Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-18, Government of Mizoram & BPL baseline survey 2018 ; Mizoram Statistical Development Agency

Education is the gateway to development and a good institution is the most sought destination by parents of Mamit district. But due to financial constraints and primitive educational background, many parents are unable to send their children to the elite institutions of the state. Starting from the basics of education, there are 252 Anganwadi centres in the district and each village is blessed with a well-established Anganwadi centres. Anganwadi centres is a type of rural child care centre started by the government of India in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition. Anganwadi means "courtyard shelter" in Hindi.

A total of 173 primary schools are functioning run by government, private and churches representing 13.2 per cent of the total primary school of the state. Zawlnuam circle has the most number of both anganwadi centres and primary school. This means there is one primary school for every 547 population in the district. Out of these 173 schools, 119 schools are equipped with clean drinking water representing 68.8 per cent which is slightly lower than the state's average of 69.6

per cent. In Reiek circle, 3 schools do not have pure drinking water in the school premises while the number of school that do not have clean drinking water stands at 42 and 9 in Zawlnuam and W.phaileng circles respectively. Besides,65.9 per cent of all primary school have common toilet for boys and girls, that is, 114 out of 173 schools have such a facility. As many as 40 schools in Zawlnuam circle,12 schools in W.Phaileng circle and 7 schools in Reiek circle do not have a common toilet for boys and girls. From this information alone, we can clearly picture the state of the standard of education in these schools and the eventual ripple effect it could cause in the way of human capital formation.

Fig.2 Number of Instituitons below high school per population in rural Mamit



Source: Compiled from Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-18, Government of Mizoram & Source 2: BPL baseline survey 2018 ; Mizoram Statistical Development Agency

Villages under Mamit district together have 113 middle schools representing 12 per cent of the state's total middle school. There is one middle school for every 703,892 and 838 people in Reiek circle, Zawlnuam RD and W.Phaileng RD respectively indicating that on an average, there is one middle school for every 838 people in the whole district. There are some villages without middle school while some villages have more than one middle school. Zawlnuam region has the most number of middle schools at 56, followed by W.Phaileng with 34 middle school and Reiek region stands at the bottom of the line with 23 middle schools. Out of 113 middle school, only 86 schools are provide with pure drinking water, that is, 76 per cent of the total. The number of middle school who do not have sufficient clean drinking water is 5 in Reiek region, 18 in Zawlnuam region and 10 in W.Phaileng region. As many as 67.3 per cent (76 schools) of the school have a common toilet for boys and girls at their school premises. The number of middle school who do not have common toilet for boys and girls is 3 in Reiek RD, 24 in Zawlnuam and 10 in W.Phaileng region making the total middle school in the district with no common toilet for boys and girls at 37.

A precarious scenario is witnessed when it comes to higher education. According to report of the Village Profile & Development Indicators 2017-18, Government of Mizoram, there are 44 high schools within Mamit villages representing 12 per cent of the total high school of the state. Out of 14 high school available in Reiek circle, 7 schools have common toilet for boys and girls, 11 high schools out of 17 has a common toilet for boys and girls, the figure for the same stood at 9 out of 13 in case of villages under W.Phaileng circle. It is very distressing to note that among the 93 villages under Mamit district, there are 2 higher secondary schools and only one college representing a meager 2 per cent of total higher secondary school of the state. Reiek and W.Phaileng region do not have higher secondary school at the time of collecting this information and Zawlnuam region has one. This turns out to be one higher secondary school for every 47,334 people in the district. There are two colleges within Mamit district including the one inside Mamit town. This clearly shows that many of the students from this remote district are unable to find suitable higher educational institutions for pursuing further studies.

One of the most important factors responsible for increasing the rate of capital formation is that of improvement in the health sector. A brief summary of the state of the health sector in rural villages of Mamit district is shown in Table No.4. To build up the knowledge based of the rural people, there are as many as 38 registered libraries under Mamit area wherein Reiek circle has the most number, followed by Zawlnuam and W.Phaileng respectively. There are two hospitals in the entire region catering the medical requirement of the district. As many as eight Primary Health Centres (PHC) are there in bigger villages, three of them under Reiek RD block four under Zawlnuam block and the remaining one PHC under W.Phaileng. Besides, there are 55 sub-centre catering to the needs of villages under Mamit district out of which 26 belongs to W.Phaileng region, 15 are from Zawlnuam circle and 14 sub-centre are from Reiek RD circle. For improving the health of the people in general, easy access to clean drinking water is a must. On this front, as many as 73 villages has uninterrupted access to PHE piped water under Mamit district of which the least number is found in Reiek RD block. Apart from these parameters, there are a number of indicators of human capital formation like training centres, pattern of migration, moral reformation, access to banking, internet, regular power supply etc, all of which are crucial in increasing the productivity of the people.

Rural Development Programmes in Mamit District

1. Members of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development (MLA-LAD) : Introduced in 2000-01 under which MLA has the choice to suggest to the concerned authority to create local need based infrastructure, assets of public utility and to remove regional imbalances in development. Each MLA is sanctioned MLALAD fund of Rs.2 crore per annum for their respective constituency and is an important instrument in increasing the pace of rural development.

2. The Border Area Development Programme (BADP): Initiated in 1993-94 for meeting special developmental needs and well-being of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas near the International Boundary (IB). The programme covers the border blocks of the 17 States (including

8 North Eastern States), which have international land borders with Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh.

3. The New Economic Development Policy (NEDP) : Initiated in 2016 by government of Mizoram with proper vision and well defined guiding principles so that development programme undertaken in the State will be accommodative of the culture, tradition and lifestyle of the Mizo people, and be holistic, inclusive and provide long term sustainability for the State's Economy^[26].

4. The New Land Use Policy (NLUP) : Introduced in 2011 by government of Mizoram under congress ministry for the upliftment of the rural poors specially the shifting cultivators, creation of self-sufficiency, better livelihood for them. The NLUP project aims to helps farmer move away from the traditional slash and burn method of cultivation to move sustainable land-based means livelihood. Under this scheme, more than 80,000 families are given financial assistance by the state government over o period of ten years viz,.2008-2018.

5. Socio-Economic Development Policy (SEDP) : Initiated in 2019 as a flagship programme by the present MNF government of Mizoram to uplift the rural and urban poors through systematic and targeted assistance by the government of up to 3 lakhs per family. This scheme is an on-going project and covers all sorts of activities that supports livelihood of the poor families. A total of 14 boards, each headed by a minister, has been created to serve as nodal agencies for successful implementation of the SEDP.

6. Public Distribution System (PDS): Started in 1992 for implementing a systematic distribution of subsidized food and non-food items to India's poor. Almost all households in Mamit villages benefited this schemes in the form of cheap ration and is vital for meeting the basic needs of the rural villages.

7. Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) : Introduced in 1995 to Provide meals to school children and improving their nutritional status. This schemes is extended to all primary as well as secondary schools run by the government in the districts and provides nutritional meals to rural poor people on every working day. Children not only received their mid –day meals to fill their stomach but also enjoys having their lunch together with friends and helps in promoting the spirit of brotherhood and love for their schools.

8. National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) : Initiated in 1995 to provide financial compensation to kin in case of the natural death of a below poverty line primary breadwinner. 1995

9. National Old Age Pension : A pension scheme for people of old age started since 1995.

10. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) : Started in 2006 for providing livelihood security of minimum 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household in rural areas. In Mizoram, the first implementation started in Lawngtlai and Saiha Districts during the year 2006-07 and covered all the other districts in 2008. So far 1.7 lakh Job card was issued in the state (GOM)

11. National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) : Launched in 2011 for reducing poverty through building a strong grassroots institutions for the poor and enables them to access gainful self-

employment and skilled wage employment opportunities, resulting in an appreciable increase in their incomes, on a sustainable basis.

12. Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) : Launched in 2009-10 with the objective of restoring the ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, vegetative cover, and water.

13. Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awaas Yojana (PMGAY) previously known as Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was launched in 2017 as a housing scheme for the rural poor.

14. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) : Introduced in 2014 to ensure financial inclusion by ensuring access to financial services in an affordable manner.

15. Sansaad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) : Launched in 2014 as a village development project under which each Member of Parliament will take the responsibility of developing physical and institutional infrastructure in three model villages.

8. Mission Antyodaya : Adopted in Union Budget 2017-18, Mission Antyodaya is a convergence and accountability framework aiming to bring optimum use and management of resources allocated by 27 Ministries/ Department of the Government of India under various programmes for the development of rural areas. It is envisaged as state-led initiative with Gram Panchayats as focal points of convergence efforts. In Mizoram, 183 villages are selected under the Scheme for achieving sustainable livelihood.

V. CONCLUSION

The livelihood status and development image of villages under Mamit district revealed an important insight into the plight of the rural population wherein agriculture remains the main supplier of employment and income. The study highlights the importance of improving the non-farm sector as an alternative source of livelihood for the rural people. To increase the rate of human development in the area, more investment in education and healthcare facilities is the need of the hour. Since many rural development programmes has been running simultaneously over the years launched by the central and state government, the condition of rural people is improving day by day but due to their poor implementation and lack of co-ordination among various monitoring agencies, these schemes have not been able to achieve the desired objectives. Therefore, in order to ensure sustainable development and reduce poverty in the rural areas, the development of both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors is essential.

SUGGESTIONS As is seen from the above discussions and informations, much needs to be done to improve the livelihood and overall economic development of the rural villages in Mamit district. For this end, the following suggestions are presented for consideration by the authority ;

1. Strong Political Will : The root of almost every blunder in development is due to lack of political will on the part of the ruling party. So, it is strongly suggested that strong political will from the top is the key to cracking poverty and underdevelopment in rural areas. It is not lack of funds that slows down development but lack of quality of expenditure which is can be easily resolved with a good political will.

2. **Development of Infrastructure:** As we see from the report that some villages are still inaccessible during rainy season due to lack of metal roads and bridges. Besides, the state do not generate enough power supply to support the growing needs of the village people. As such, it is imperative for the government to construct and maintain more roads for ensuring all-weather connectivity and find ways to generate more power whether hydro, solar or any other means for meeting household demands as well as industrial requirements.
3. **Development of Marketing Facilities:** Since the livelihood of rural villages of Mamit district is largely dependent upon agriculture and its allied sectors, setting up of marketing facilities is vital for disposing of their products. For easy transportation and connectivity, and for bringing their products to the market with ease, building of a good network roads is a must.
4. **Financial Inclusion :** Most farmers are financially illiterate and efforts needs to be undertaken so that the largest possible section of the rural population can make use of our banking systems, gets easy access to loans as seed money so as to bring them out of the clutches of poverty. Besides, farmers needs to be taught about the importance of maintaining savings and insurance to meet unforeseen contingencies.
5. **Easy access to Internet :** What used to be a luxurious item has now become a necessary item especially during lockdowns where all activities including schooling/learning is done online. Easy access to internet and uninterrupted flow of data is the need of the hour and only government is capable of providing this facility in rural areas.
6. **Promotion of Non-Farm Sectors :** To provide alternative livelihood other than jhum cultivation to villagers, the government should make some concrete arrangement for the setting up of Khadi, Village and Micro Enterprises in the rural areas. This will not only improve employment among the rural youths, but will also bring many households out of poverty. The promotion of non-farm sector is essential for securing security of income of the farmers because in almost all countries of the world, the share of non-farm sector is increasing as the economy grows.
7. **People's Participation Through Self-Help Groups:** More involvement of the concerned people in policy making, planning and implementation is highly recommended for the success of any programmes launched by the government. Besides, motivating the rural people to form self-help groups for achieving a common targeted initiative also helps in bridging the increasing gap between rural rich and poor communities.
8. **Development of Horticulture :** Apart from improving production of food-grains, efforts needs to be undertaken for the development of horticulture like oranges, ginger, banana, Mizo chillies, turmeric, alecament. Increase production and productivity through human capital development would have a huge positive impact on the rural economy especially in areas cordial for their plantation such as Mamit district.
9. **Floriculture :** Promotion of floriculture especially cash producing flowers like anthurium and roses is highly recommended. Since the district temperature is cordial for developing these two floricultural flowers, farmers can cultivate them for the purpose of export to other states. The seed money may be provided by the government as more money is required at their initial stages of cultivation like building large greenhouses, procuring seeds, tanky etc.,.

10. Improvement in Livestock: One of the most important alternative source of income for rural village people of Mamit district that of livestock. Almost every poor family having a spacious compound have their own domesticated animals especially pigs and chicken. Besides these, a number of families are engaged in rearing of buffaloes, goats, mithuns and produce milk, eggs, meat for own consumption as well as for sale in the market. As such, it is suggested that rural people should be encouraged to invest in livestock production so as to diversify their livelihood.

11. Development of Aquaculture : An new window of opportunity of the rural areas of Mamit is that there are many arable lands that can be easily converted into a fish ponds. If more effort is given in this front, then the entire state's demand for fresh fish could be easily met from Mamit district alone.

12. Removing Red Tapism: An integral part of poverty alleviation and development booster strategy is the effective implementation and monitoring for various government schemes and policies. As such, for strengthening the effective implementation of policies, it is strongly suggested that more efforts be given to do away with red-tapism to save time and establish a strong and vibrant monitoring mechanism.

13. Cooperation: A harmonious and co-ordinated action among various stake holders like strong Local council members, village elders, NGOs, Party workers is needed for the successful implementation of development works in and around the village so that the greatest number of families may benefit irrespective of their party affiliation, sex, caste, race etc.,

14. Providing Awareness: Information is a powerful tool in uplifting the rural population in various ways. Many a times, rural poor people are not aware of the existing schemes of the central government and cannot benefit from them. This led to underperformance of various development and poverty alleviation policies of the central and state governments. So, state government in general and the district administration in particular should give proper and timely awareness and information to the rural people about the updated schemes and give them training if required. An informed citizen is a good asset for the government.

15. Improvements of Educational Institutions : Since the state of the rural educational system is crumbling, and since education is the backbone of human capital formation, more efforts need to be put to make sure that all children have access to free education and those who wants to pursue higher education are able to do so. Building of more schools, improving the existing buildings and classroom with modern equipment is the need of the hour in all the villages.

16. Cold Storage: Farmers do not reap the fruits of their hard work even during bumper season due to steep fall in their prices. This situation is called as 'Agricultural Paradox'. The main reason is that these products are perishables and due to lack of storage facilities, farmers are compelled to sell their products at lower price immediately. Building of large cold storage facilities is the need of the hour for storing fruits and vegetable products so as to help the farmers earn more from their products.

17. PURA : Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas is the idea floated by Dr A.P.J.Abdul Kalam which is very relevance and every government should provide and promote building modern infrastructure in rural areas like educational institutions, health facilities, industries,

power, transportation etc., This will help develop rural areas and prevent large scale migration of rural population to urban areas causing brain drain of the rural areas and would help in reducing the problem of urban poverty to a great extent.

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