

Field Study Report
on Hmuifang Village
Government Aizawl College Adopted Village



Department of Sociology
Government Aizawl College

2021

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Field study conducted and report prepared by VI semester, Department of Sociology
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Table of Content

Introduction	1
Objectives	1
Methodology	1
1 Hmuifang Village	2
1:1 Demography	2
1:2 The Village	2
1:3 Satellite Map of Hmuifang	3
2 Literacy	3
3 Economy	4
3:1 Agriculture	4
3:2 Animal Husbandry	4
3:3 Pisciculture	5
3:4 Challenges of Market Economy	5
4 Education	5
4:1 Educational Institution	5
4:2 Midday Meal	6
4:3 Library	6
4:4 Co-curricular Activities	6
4:5 Education and Cleanliness	6
4:6 Education and Covid-19	7
5 Health and Sanitation	8
5:1 Health Care System	8
5:2 Health Care and its Challenges	8
5:3 Health Awareness	9
5:4 Sanitation	9
5:5 Water Resources	10
5:6 Covid-19 and Health Services	10
6 Development	11
6:1 Government Schemes	11
6:2 Road Connectivity	11
6:3 Transportation	11
6:4 Electricity and Cooking Gas	11
6:5 Daily Wage and Food Consumption	12
6:6 Tourist Resort	12
Conclusion	13
Limitations of the study	13
Field Note	13
References	16
Appendix	17

Introduction

A field study on Hmuifang village has been conducted by the Department of Sociology, Government Aizawl College. Sociology department had the opportunity to closely observe the various forms of intervention and interactions taking place within the village and understand the impact of such intervention on the lives of the people and the village. The study conducted may be different in terms of accountability and in-depth understanding conducted by sociologists and anthropologists. However, the field study conducted on Hmuifang village, which is Government Aizawl College adopted village provides the students a clear understanding of the text syllabus, as well as enhancing sociological understanding of the society and social structure of Hmuifang village.

Objectives

The study of the village aims to achieve certain objectives:

- 1) To understand the socio-economic structure of Hmuifang village.
- 2) To map out sectors of health care.
- 3) To delineate the role of NGOs and Hmuifang village during the Covid-19 pandemic and safeguarding the social order.

Methodology

The study covered 46 respondents out of which 14 are key respondents comprising opinion makers of the village such as Village Council Members, Young Mizo Association leaders, Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl leaders, Mizoram Upa Pawl leaders and school teachers. The sample size was difficult to structure as the study was for one day only. Most of the village residents were in their agricultural field, therefore we have to collect data using snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is referred to as a sampling technique used when it is not possible to collect data from large scattered community or population (Babbie, 2008; Krippendorff, 2013). In this technique the subject introduced another subject as a respondent due to the difficulty in locating the members which the researcher wants as respondent in the research field.

As majority of Hmuifang village population comprise of Mizo tribe, the interview was conducted in Mizo which is then transcribed and translated into English. During the

interview, hand written documents are used for collecting data. Photographs are collected as memory document.

During the study, both primary and secondary data are used. Government Census Report and National Sample Survey Report are extensively studied for the demographical research of Hmuifang village. Semi-structured questionnaire is used, with open ended questions for interviews, and group discussions are also conducted.

1 Hmuifang Village

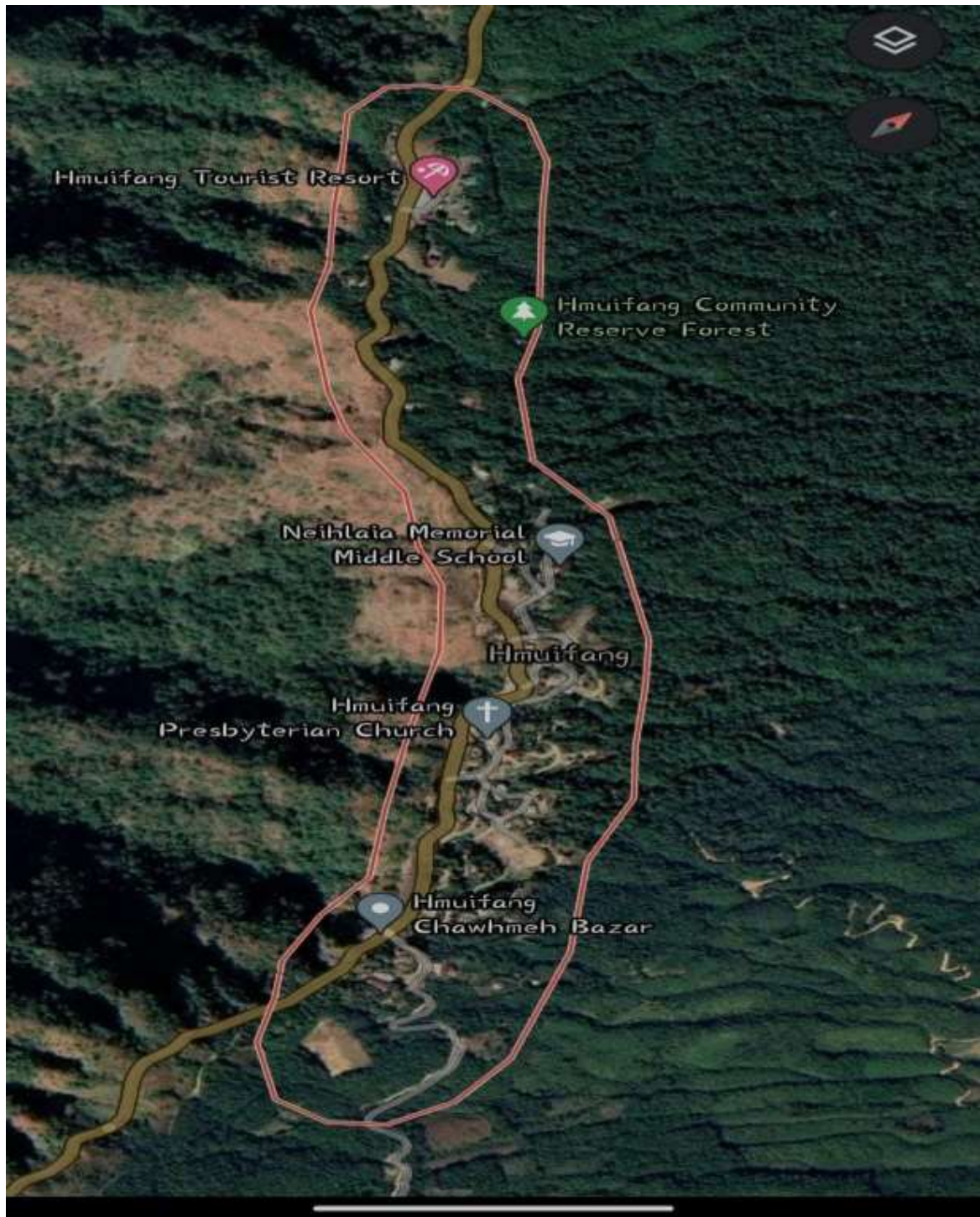
1: 1 Demography

Hmuifang is a village situated in Aibawk block of Aizawl district, Mizoram. The village is 4 km from Aibawk and is 50 km south from Aizawl. Hmuifang village has a population of 292 of which 153 are males and 139 are females (2011 census). However, during the study it has been reported that about 395 people are living in Hmuifang as on 12th March 2021, latest record maintained by Young Mizo Association (Y.M.A). The population of children age between 0-6 is 57 which is 19.52% of the total population of the village. The sex ratio of Hmuifang is 908 which is lower than the state average of 976. Child sex ratio as per 2011 census is 900 against the state average of 970.

1:2 The Village

Hmuifang was given to Mr. Neihlaia by the British Government for cattle rearing and for farming potatoes. The village was formed in the year 1915. At first, it was allowed to have seven (7) houses only. Later, people from other villages migrated and currently it is said that there are about 112 houses. Approximately, there are about 40 families recorded by the Y.M.A. Most of the villagers are Christians and the Presbyterian Church is the only congregation in the village.

Hmuifang has a pleasant climate with curvy roads surrounded by hilly terrain and forest. Houses are constructed on top and slope of the hill along the road. Most houses are constructed in three types; Assam type, RCC buildings and traditional Mizo house constructed with bamboos and woods. The village is divided into two localities: Vengchhak and Vengthlang. The main occupation of the village is jhum cultivation and few are government employees. Today, Hmuifang is one of the most prosperous tourist places in Mizoram.



1:3 Fig. Satellite Map of Hmuifang

2 Literacy

According to 2011 census, Hmuifang has a literacy rate of 99.57% which is higher than the state record of 91.33%. Male literacy stands at 99.19% while female literacy is

100%. The village population has a high record of scheduled tribe comprising 95.5% of its population.

3 Economy

3:1 Agriculture

About 70% of the villagers engage in agriculture and about 30% are government employees or engage in other occupations. The village terrain and climate are not suitable for seasonal farming, and due to the hard soil not all crops can be grown by the villagers. Rice is the most popular food among the villagers, and maize is also popular. However, they have to cultivate such crops down the valley of the village as the soil is more fertile than in the hill, and are considered not profitable. Therefore, production do not meet the demand of the village people. This led to the import of staple foods like rice, pulses, potatoes, fruits, dairy and others. The villagers highly depend on the monthly ration benefited by the bonafide citizen of India. The people also cultivate green leafy vegetables, and ginger is considered to be the most profitable crop among which they have grown. However, due to the infertile soil of their land, the village people consider agriculture farming as not much profitable.

3:2 Animal Husbandry

Every family in the area rear animals of which piggery farm is most popular among the village people. Animal rearing is not their main source of income unlike crop farming; however, the village residents consider it more profitable than crop farming though agriculture continues to be the main occupation of the people. Rearing piggery farm is very popular among the people. From the house survey conducted by one group, it has been examined that out of 16 households, 13 households engaged into raising pigs and only 5 households engaged in poultry farming. The study learnt that about 10 years ago, the village had about 50 cows and their main occupation was cattle rearing. But after Swatch Bharat mission was introduced in India and in Mizoram, the Hmuifang villagers were compelled to sell their cattle due to the restrictions of Swatch Bharat mission. There were complaints on the uninviting smell of cow dung as Hmuifang is one popular tourist place. A cleanliness mission impacted upon the loss of their main occupation and now the villagers have to rely on agriculture farming which barely meet their demands.

3:3 Pisciculture

Pisciculture or Fisheries farming is recently introduced to the people of Hmuifang. However, it requires a good terrain of land and water which demand a great challenge for the people.

3:4 Challenges of Market Economy

Various schemes and missions are launched for the people; however, the village people feel that schemes and missions instituted for them are unreliable and too challenging. Insufficient facilities, equipment and material generated low productivity and waste of labor. Required items like crop seeds, fertilizers, irrigation machinery are often delayed. Funding money of certain schemes are distributed in instalment and a long gap of time for next instalment led to drawback of the village people. As argued by the respondents during the study, under New Land Use Policy (NLUP) piggery traders were given piglets only after a year of completing construction of pigpen. And piggery farmers have to repair the pigpen and refill other necessary supplies to run the piggery farm. This causes a dismay situation and the villagers are afraid of engaging in market economy in fear of falling into debt. Therefore, the village people prefer not to engage in certain schemes and policy that would do harm instead of uplifting them economically.

4 Education

4.1 Educational Institution

Hmuifang has one primary school with 23 students and 4 female teaching staff. The school is run by the state government. The village has one government aided middle school and currently has 33 students with 6 teaching staff, 3 male and 3 female teachers. As the village has a small population there is only one independent school named Mount Hermon. The school has teaching aid and facilities opened for young learners from nursery to tenth grade, supervised by 10 teaching staff. Mount Hermon has students coming from neighboring villages like Sumsuih and Thiak. The village with its 99.57% literacy rate gives importance to early learning and is established with angadwadi for children with 1 staff who attend the children.

4.2 Midday Meal

Government run angadwadi, and primary school are covered by midday meal scheme in which nutritional food items like dal, potatoes, eggs, soya bean are given to pupils. The scheme focuses to promote school attendance and reduce drop out percentage. The villagers greatly benefited the scheme. The students on the other hand also gather fresh products of their farm and distribute to other students free of cost.

4.3 Library

Library resource has been provided to the people. This library has been set up by the Young Mizo Association and is utilised by both students and non-students of the village. The library is accessible for two hours every day except on Sunday. The library has a collection of books for educational purpose and story books that would encourage the villagers to engage in reading and learning. However, due to Covid-19 pandemic the library has been closed for a year now.

4.4 Co-curricular Activities

Students are actively involved in learning outside the classroom too. Students are often taken to field trips to important landmarks like *Rihdil*, *Reiek Tlang*, *Khuangchera Puk*, *Tui Rihiau* and other places. Sport events are conducted for students and youngsters of the village. This help students form a broader horizon while maintaining a good exposure to learning beyond book text. Students are also actively involved in utilising their talents such as art, carpentry, knitting, weaving and others. While interacting with the village NGOs leaders, they express many limitations the village is facing in terms of education and curricular activities. The village leaders raise their concern for playground, at least one volleyball court for the village. The village schools also encounter with many challenges in providing quality education, specially in the field of science as no schools in the village are equipped with science laboratory. The government schools are not efficiently provided with facilities including sports materials.

4.5 Education and Cleanliness

Cleanliness is an important project for Hmuifang village. As the village is a tourist place which attracts tourists from different corners of the country, villagers are instructed on the importance of sanitation and cleanliness from school going children to the oldest member

of the village. Cleanliness is strictly maintained in the school and cleanliness drives are often taking place. School administrations and students are doing respectable job in maintaining cleanliness.

4.6 Education and Covid-19

Covid-19 pandemic has affected Hmuifang not only in terms of the economy but also educational institution and classroom learning. Since March 2020 after the breakout of Corona virus (Covid-19), all educational institutions are closed down. Unlike schools in Aizawl city, Hmuifang schools could not afford to continue with online classes due to many reasons of which financial problem is one. To tackle the issue, teachers are working hard and sorting the best alternatives so that students of Hmuifang village can continue with their studies during the pandemic. Teachers make notes and distribute reading materials which are handed-out to the students. At the same time, students would visit their teachers at their residence to submit their assignments and projects. The village has high consideration for education and make sure that no student is left out from accessing education even in the trying times of pandemic.

Hmuifang village also promotes training on construction work activities, handloom and weaving and tailoring. There are computer course graduates and other professional graduates too.

In this field study, it is learnt that there is a great relationship between NGOs and school administrations. NGOs of Hmuifang village take keen interest in uplifting education and challenging young learners to pursue higher education. The study also acknowledges the relationship of teachers-students, teachers actively involved in their students' needs. Teachers in all the government and private schools are well trained and do not employ any substitute teachers on their behalf. Teachers take their role seriously and carry out their duties diligently. There have been no drop-out students so far, and students' scholarship are handled by their teachers and see if the students spend their scholarship wisely for educational purpose.

A feedback received from the villagers is that as Government Aizawl College adopted the village, they have higher expectation from the college in terms of free remedial courses that would challenge young learners, giving them career guidance for their future besides five seats reservation for Hmuifang students in the under-graduate admission.

5 Health and Sanitation

5: 1 Health Care System

As Hmuifang village is a small village with less population compared to its neighboring villages like Sialsuk and Sumsuih, the village has one sub-centre which is under Aizawl West District, Aibawk Administrative Block. The Nearest Primary Health Centre (PHC) is Sialsuk PHC which is 6.9 km from Hmuifang village.

From the study, it has been learnt that the mortality rate of Hmuifang village is very low and life expectancy of the village residents is high. NGOs leaders stated that the average number of death cases is only 2 in a year. There are many senior citizens aged between 70–90-year-old which can indicate that the life expectancy is quite high among Hmuifang people though there has been no research study to validate the statement. On questioning what could be the main reason for their life expectancy, the villagers believe that it could be because of their peaceful and prosperous lifestyle. The villagers, as well as NGOs leaders stated that there are no drug abusers or addiction to alcohol among the village people. There is not a single brothel in the village or drug peddler. This could argue that in many courses of action, the quality of life and lifestyle of the people contribute to a great extent in the health care management.

Another interesting fact learnt during the study is that, according to the villagers and the NGOs record, there has been no death case due to cancer in the village. This is quite surprising as Mizoram state mortality rate of cancer is quite high.

5:2 Health Care and its Challenges

There has been no major project or big infrastructure program undertaken for Hmuifang village in terms of health care. Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) is one project enjoyed by the village community. The sub-centre provides health care services in the prevention of diseases and promotion of health and sanitation at the grassroot level. It gives out vaccination drive for polio, measles, and others to the village residents. However, the village face certain challenges and issues regarding health care services provided by sub-centre. There often is shortage of medicine or unavailability of drugs. The village has one health worker assigned by the government. And due to official on call duty, the health worker often leave the station which causes difficulty in times of medical emergency.

This brings to reason the need for PHC for the village for the convenience and welfare of the village. The study tried to understand if there has been any action taken up for such demand, it has been answered that no proposal has been made yet. The village leaders are anxious of their small population and are not confident that the government would meet their demand for PHC.

5:3 Health Awareness

Health awareness on certain diseases, health education and other beneficial related to health care are taking place in Hmuifang village and NGOs leaders ensure such drive and campaign are attended by the village people. Mizoram State AIDS Control Society (MSACS) conducted HIV/AIDS awareness in 2018, and the village are hoping for another awareness campaign as they felt that it is educational and create awareness among the people. The village is aware of Golden Card or Health Card. Some respondents delightfully answered that they have not been in serious illness to utilise the health card. This, they proudly claimed themselves, “a happy healthy village”.

The villagers stated that they are more than satisfied in the work of the NGOs and Village Council for the development of health in their village but are not the satisfied with the work of the State Government. They believe that the government can do much more for their village and positively hopeful that the government will acknowledge their needs.

5:4 Sanitation

Maintaining sanitation and waste is one huge challenge Hmuifang village is facing. Unlike the urban areas of Mizoram, Hmuifang Village has not yet segregated its waste. The village has its own separate dumping ground at *Saphal Kham*, near Chamring village. Wastes collected are either dump or burn which is not eco-friendly and hazardous for the environment, and health of the people. It is surprising to see the mismanagement of waste product for a popular tourist place, and it is necessary that immediate measures need to be taken in concern with the dumping ground.

In spite of the mismanagement of the waste product, however, Hmuifang village residents claim that the village try its best in maintaining cleanliness and beautifying the place. The study observes that wastebins are set up in different corners of the village, and social drive cleanliness day are organised by the village NGOs. Hmuifang, as a popular

tourist destination face issues in maintaining sanitation as the village do not receive any special aid or support when it comes to waste management. Some of the villagers received wastebins from SIPMUI. The villagers however, expect more support and assistance from the government as Hmuifang village is one important place for tourist attraction.

The village as part of maintaining hygienic lifestyle and health awareness constructed 1 public toilet and 4 public urinals in the village. These toilet and urinals are taken care by the Village Council. And it is the Village Council who provides garbage truck to collect waste from every household once every week, and the wastebins in the street are also cleaned every week.

5:5 Water Resources

The main source of drinking water is from the Public Health Engineering Department (PHE). The village receives about 5000-7000 litres of water a month and during dry season, March and April, the village faces water scarcity. There is not enough water to meet their needs. The village has three huge water tanks for storage and one is under construction. If all the four tanks are filled then water storage will be enough to support the village. However, the main issue is the scarcity of water specially during early spring season. Other water sources include spring water, *tuikhur*, *kham tui*, etc. The villagers manage and clean these water sources once every year.

5:6 Covid-19 and Health Services

Hmuifang village fight a battle against the Covid-19 pandemic. The community come together to maintain social order and safeguarding their village. From March 2020 when the first positive case of Covid-19 was detected in Mizoram to March 2021 when the field study was conducted there has been no single Covid-19 positive case among the village residents. The village leaders give positive response on how the village all take dispensable role in protecting the village from the virus. The pandemic has not caused much problem and obstacle in their daily activities. Working at the agriculture farm or rearing their animals are not affected by the nation and state's lockdown. This is one reason why the village do not suffer much compared to other villages and cities in terms of economic problems. The village also receive helping hand from Government Aizawl College in which the college donated an amount of basic food essentials and other things.

Village Level Task Force (VLTF) was set up in March 2020 in which different leaders form the force – members from the Village Council, Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), Mizoram Upa Pawl (MUP) and representatives from the church. VLTF consistently inspect and strictly check if there are any tourists coming in during lockdown. The government has set up one quarantine centre in which the VLTF also volunteered as part of the executive team. Two persons are alternatively assigned with daily duty. Vaccination drive for Covid-19 has not been carried out till the time of the field study.

6 Development

6:1 Government Schemes

1) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS): Most of the people of Hmuifang registered under MGNREGS which is a scheme under the Central Government aiming to provide security of people in rural India by providing them 100 days of wage employment.

2) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY): Under this scheme, the village witness road connectivity development and construction of culverts in the village. There are many schemes and development programmes carried out by the Government of India and Mizoram towards progressing Hmuifang village economically and politically.

6:2 Road Connectivity

Hmuifang village is well connected with other villages. As it is one important tourist place, sealed road is constructed made of concrete cement mixed with tar. However, the village people complained that the roads are of poor conditions and need repair.

6:3 Transportation

The study examined that most of the village population has their private vehicle which is an essential for work and travelling to the state capital for essential needs.

6: 4 Electricity and Cooking Gas

Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana- Saubhagya aims to see that all villages in India are electrified by December 2018. This scheme provides energy access and electricity connections in all households both in rural and urban India. Hmuifang village too

has access and get electricity connection 24 hours a day. The village people also give up using fire woods for cooking as there is a regular supply of LPG cooking gas for every household.

6:5 Daily Wage and Food Consumption

The minimum wage labourer rate is Rs. 400 per day, in which woman and man are equally paid. People engage in different menial jobs from working in a construction site to daily labourer in the field. The wage however remains the same for all menial jobs.

Hmuifang village has a local bazaar which is opened daily except on Sunday before the Covid-19 pandemic. During the field study, lockdown was not imposed therefore, we had the opportunity to explore the market area and interact with shopkeepers. Most of the vegetables and fruits sold are coming from outside the village. Some of the village products like fresh vegetables are also sold in the market. However, it has been mentioned that not much has been produced by the villagers enough to feed the whole village. The Village Council controls the price of meat where 1 kg of pork cost Rs. 400 and 1 kg of beef cost Rs. 500.

The village people largely depend on the government ration schemes. 60% of the village population are registering under Above Poverty Line (APL) family. 30% are Below Poverty Line (BPL) and 10% are Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) family.

6:6 Tourist Resort

Hmuifang village, due to its scenic beauty and pleasant climate is one of the favourite tourist destinations in Mizoram. Tourist Resort was created and constructed by the Government of Mizoram. The resort has six double rooms and a cafeteria. There are road sides restaurant and petty shops manned by contract shopkeepers. Though the resort may attract many tourists, however the study examined that most of the shopkeepers are from other villages who signed a contract agreement with the government. The village people do not benefit much in terms of developing their economy, but have to put up with the waste left behind by tourists.

Conclusion

The field study, though it was only for a day, enormously explains the socio-economic condition of the village and helps to understand the social structure of the village. The study unfolds the importance of institution, the strong bond of association and society, the significance of family and social members, values and norms, the beauty of culture and tradition. Society indeed is a web of relationship, which is built by different systems that are all interdependent yet unique in its own structure.

The field study of Hmuifang village aims to provide a platform for the students in learning and getting acquainted with the process of organising and conducting a study or field work. The study highlights the strong bond of members specially in times of the pandemic, which give a sense of relationship between community and individual, of mankind and society. Students interacted and conducted interviews with different NGOs leaders and local residents. The field study was a success in terms of enhancing sociological understandings of the students on topics including education, socio-economic and religious settings which are all a part of their syllabus, and comprehending the inside story from outsiders' perspectives.

Limitations of the Study

The study has been conducted only for a day, and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Due to this there cannot be sufficient data and it challenges the students to conduct a more comprehensive study in the future. While conducting interview with the local residents, most family heads were out in the field for work. This propose that if field study could be conducted with more respondents, more account in understanding the social structure and narratives would be possible. Furthermore, in-depth study is required to give an account on Hmuifang village structure and social settings, which however, in this study, students have already incorporated an interest in conducting further research and study.

Field Note

On 29th March, 2021 the Department of Sociology of Government Aizawl College took a trip to Hmuifang village to conduct a field study and collect data on the various sectors of the village. At 9:30 AM we gathered at the college campus, Sikulpuikawn. We started our trip and head at about 10:05 AM, the trip took for about 2 and a half hours, and reached

Hmuifang at 12:37 PM. 47 students attended this field study accompanied by 5 teaching faculty.

We were warmly welcomed by their Village Council Members and their NGOs leaders at Neihlaia Memorial Middle School. We sat down for briefing from the Village Council Members and our teachers inside the school building. We were divided into five groups-A, B, C, D and E. Each group was assigned with specific topic to focus on, based on which data is to be collected, like education, socio-economic, social settings, health supervised us by our teacher Dr. Lalmangaihi Chhakchhuak, and we prepared a set of questionnaires, discussed together with our teachers through online meeting the night before the field study.

Each group went to different places after the briefing and were accompanied by Hmuifang NGO's leaders (representatives). We sat down and discussed on topics based on our set of semi-structured questionnaires.

Group C's main objective was to collect data on the agricultural aspects of the village. We went down behind the school into the forest not very far and sat under the trees with 3 of the village women. Later, we were joined by our teacher Miss Hmangaihi and one of the heads of the NGOs of the village. Productive conversations and discussions on the village agricultural status and sector were discussed. We had great conversations and there were many funny moments too. We gained knowledge about the village and notice the hardships the people were going through. Like most villages in Mizoram, the people of Hmuifang had low income and low economic status. They do not gain much profit but were able to keep themselves from starving.

Group B collected data on health and sanitation. We observed that the people of the Hmuifang are mostly neglected. Through our interactions, we learnt and gained knowledge of the problems and hardships of village. The village depended on farming crops which was not much profitable. They cannot start new business because of lack of funds, and even if they could, they were afraid to invest money because they could lose it again, example like their experience with cattle rearing because of failures of schemes and policies. Our field study helps us understand to see certain situation through sociological imaginations. It assists us to grasp a knowledge on the socio-economic and political situation of Hmuifang village, and acknowledge the need for development and support specially in terms of health care and

sanitation. Our study helps us aware that if better planning and implementation on economic development schemes are arranged, Hmuifang village can escalate economically and contribute larger scale in developing the state's economy as the people are hardworking and diligent.

After we interviewed the village heads and representatives, we gathered again at the school ground. We had lunch, which we brought in tiffin, and *arsa sawhchiar* which was prepared by the village leaders on behalf of the college. After the lunch and brief rest, we took group photo, and our teachers gave a cooking stove to Hmuifang NGOs leaders for the village community on behalf of our college Principal. Then we set out to collect some data from the local residents in groups.

The field study was wrapped at 4:30 PM and we returned to Aizawl and reached at around 5:30 PM.

The trip was a fun experience for each one of us and helps us all in gaining knowledge and experiencing field study. We saw team work and we each learnt to care for our friends. We build a deeper connection with our classmates and become closer to our teachers.

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Appendix



Photo 1: Teaching faculty and students with Hmuifang Village Council Members and NGOs leaders.



Photo 2: Miss Lalsangpuii, HoD gifted cooking stove to the village on behalf of the college Principal.



Photo 3



Photo 4

Photo 3 and 4: Students conducting interviews with Hmuifang village NGOs leaders.



Photo 5



Photo 6

Photo 5 and 6: Students conducting interviews with Hmuifang village residents in the market area.



Photo 7: Students conducting interview with Hmuifang village school teachers.



Photo:8 Interaction and briefing with Hmuifang Village Council Members and NGOs leaders.