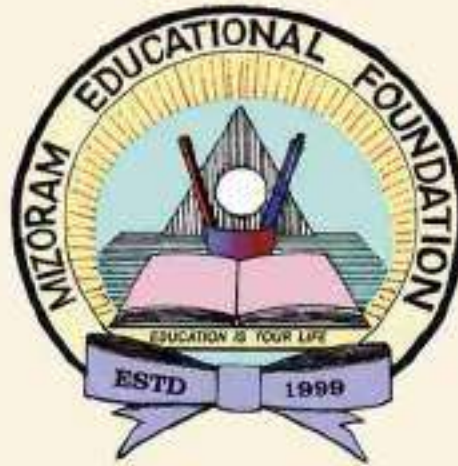


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From the Desk of the Chief Editor

Mizoram Educational Journal is proud to bring out the first issue for the year 2026, March. The present issue holds 9 articles from various disciplines and not just from the department of education.

Christina Lalrammawii and Zairemmawia Renthlei wrote on psychological counselling needs of secondary and higher secondary school students in Aizawl West-III area with interesting findings.

Lalawmpuia, Lalremruati and Lalrinawmi Rawite studied burden, quality of life and depression in caregivers of children with attention hyperactivity disorder and caregivers of children with normal mental health. They found, among other things, that quality of life had a negative relation with depression and burden, and burden significantly predicted depression and quality of life which invites the need to pay attention to caregivers to children with ADHD by giving psychological care and other amenities.

Lalrinawmi Rawite and Zokaitluangi studied gratitude relation to perceived stress and well-being among higher secondary students. Their study implied the need of school-based interventions where gratitude practice could serve as an instrument to lower students stress and enhance their well-being.

Lalrambuatsaihi and Zairemmawia Renthlei studied human rights awareness in Chaltlang community and through their findings study advocates for targeted, grassroots initiatives to foster a more informed and empowered citizens.

Lalremchhungi and Lallianzuali Fanai in their study on patterns of technology use among Bru adolescent students in mamit district, mizoram. Their study highlights the importance of improving digital access and providing appropriate guidance to promote balanced and productive technology use among adolescents

PC Lalremruatpuii and Pooja Walia studied levels and variations in problem-solving ability among higher secondary school students These findings emphasize the need for to take required reforms which will incorporate critical thinking across all subjects and call for enhanced resources and teaching standards in government schools to promote equitable cognitive development.

Lalchawimawii Ngente, Lalmawipuii Chawngthu conducted a study on ‘A Comparative Study of Science Achievement between students using the SCERT and the Oxford ‘*Connect with Science*’ Textbooks at Elementary Stage in Aizawl District. The study concluded that textbook type is a significant factor influencing science achievement, with the Oxford textbook showing a more noticeable association with higher achievement.

Samuel L Chuaungo studied the dilemma of referencing Ropuiliani as a role model for woman empowerment: a special consideration for young girls. This paper observed that a scrutiny of role models and their achievements, such as the case of Ropuiliani, shows important nuances of empowerment; and claims that such nuances would be lost on the minds of young minds especially girls – simply because they are yet to garner sufficient life experiences.

Zodinsangi Sailo and Lalhlimpuii conducted a comparative analysis of the study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary schools at Champhai district and found that students' academic success and achievements are largely influenced by their study habits.

We hope that insights from these findings may widen your horizon and fill at least a small research gap for your journey.

Lynda Zohmingliani

A Comparative Analysis of the Study Habits of Science and Arts Students in Higher Secondary Schools at Champhai District

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Abstract

Good habits are prerequisites for achieving anything meaningful in life. Not surprisingly, it is important to have a proper study habits in order to have significant achievements in one's academic pursuits. Good study habits form the foundation upon which students build their academic success. Students' academic success and achievements are largely influenced by their study habits. Multiple studies have revealed that students differ greatly in their study habits. To ensure academic success, it is very important that students not only have good study habits but that their study habits are systematic, efficient and effective. The present study is a systematic deep dive in to the study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary schools at Champhai district and a comparison of the same.

Keywords: Study habits, Science Students, Arts Students, Government Higher Secondary School Students, Private Higher Secondary School Students

Introduction

Study habits involve various behaviors, routines, and strategies for effective learning. Developing good habits requires setting realistic goals, creating a conducive environment, and using techniques like summarizing, self-discipline, and seeking support to enhance academic performance and promote lifelong learning skills. Sherafat & Murthy has defined study habit as, "...a skill that facilitates students' learning. It is one of the most important topics in the educational research" (as cited in Ahmed et. al., 2018, p. 18). The purposes for which each student studies or maintains study

habits could vary from obtaining good grades in the examinations or for improving their learning in general. In other words, study habit can be defined as-

The definition of study habits as a "well-planned and deliberate pattern of study, which has attained a form of consistency on the part of the students towards understanding academic subjects and passing examinations" encapsulates the essence of effective learning strategies. A well-planned study routine involves breaking down tasks, setting realistic deadlines, and dedicating daily study time. Consistency is key, with successful students viewing studying as an ongoing process. Good study habits focus on understanding material and preparing effectively for exams to demonstrate proficiency and mastery.

Review of Related Literature

Researching study habits of higher secondary school students is crucial for educators and policymakers to understand their learning approaches. Identifying effective habits informs targeted support, while revealing patterns that hinder learning enables intervention development. This research contributes to educational reform, curriculum development, and improving outcomes, ultimately enhancing student well-being and understanding of effective learning processes. Reddy and Nagaraju (2001) investigated the influence of locality and gender on study habits of secondary school students on a sample consisting of 200. The outcomes were established and tabulated from the analyzed data. Results exposed that gender had insignificant effect on study habits.

Annaraja and Mohanan (2006) conducted a research entitled "Inter-relationship among academic achievement, study habits, and level of aspirations: A study on higher secondary students" on a sample of 211 students through t-test, and Pearson correlation and discovered that men and women had significant difference in study habits. The female students were found to have better study habits than the male students. The students from private schools were found to have better study habits than that from the government schools.

Sud and Sujata (2006) investigated academic performance between self-handicapping, test anxiety and study habits. They chose a group of 200 students from govt. senior secondary schools. The results revealed that female students were better than their male counterparts in study habits.

Rationale of the study

Good study habits play a crucial role in academic success. Research shows that poor study habits are a leading cause of examination failures. Developing effective study habits is essential for students to achieve academic success and overcome failures.

In today's digital age, students often prioritize convenience over reliability, neglecting valuable resources like books and libraries. This approach reveals a lack of discipline and commitment, leading to poor academic performance. To improve learning outcomes, instilling good study habits in higher secondary school students is crucial. This study aims to provide insights and practical strategies to help students develop better study habits, enhancing their academic performance and laying a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Firstly, effective study habits guidance benefits both teachers and parents. Teachers can provide targeted support, empowering students to become self-directed learners. Meanwhile, parents are informed of their vital role in fostering academic success outside the classroom. By creating a supportive home environment, parents can instill strong study habits, laying the foundation for their children's academic achievement and future success.

Additionally, the study will underscore the importance of fostering collaboration between teachers, parents, and students to create a cohesive support system for students' academic endeavors. By working together, stakeholders can identify areas for improvement, implement targeted interventions, and monitor students' progress effectively.

Moreover, good study habits have inherent value beyond academic success, benefiting students in personal and professional life. These skills help students stay on track, achieving success in various areas. To address poor study habits, it's essential to understand the prevailing habits of higher secondary school students, enabling tailored recommendations and interventions to address the root causes.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the prevailing study habits of higher secondary school students in Champhai district.
2. To compare the study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary school at Champhai district.
3. To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school students and private higher secondary school students in Champhai district.

4. To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students.
5. To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary schools at Champhai district.
2. There is no significant difference in the study habits between government and private higher secondary school students in Champhai district.
3. There is no significant difference in the study habits between government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students in Champhai district.
4. There is no significant difference in the study habits between government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students in Champhai district.

Delimitations

Due to time constraint and availability of resources, the study was delimited to higher secondary school students at Champhai district.

Methodology

The proposed study is an attempt to find out the study habits of science and arts students among higher secondary school students in Champhai district. Considering the nature of the present research, descriptive survey method was used.

Population of the study

The population for the proposed study consisted of all the higher secondary school students in Champhai district.

Sample

For the proposed study, a sample of 100 students were randomly selected from higher secondary schools within Champhai town; in which 50 students were selected from science stream and another 50 from arts stream of higher secondary schools.

Tools and techniques of collecting data

To achieve the objectives, study habits tool developed by Dr. Lajwanti, Prof. N.P.S. Chandel, and Mr. Ashish Paliwal was adapted by the researcher.

Reliability

Split-half method was applied for testing of reliability of inventory. Product moment correlation coefficient value is 0.89. The Spearman-Brown Prophecy Formula was used to find the reliability of the full test that was found to be 0.94. This shows that the test is highly reliable.

Validity

SHI has been developed in consultation with experts of the field. The items of the inventory were judged by 10 experts. Experts were requested to rate the items on a 10 point rating scale on the criteria whether the item is able to assess the dimension of study habits for which it has been framed. The items which were rated 7 or above by all the 10 experts were retained and the rest were dropped. Thus the inventory consists of construct validity.

The inventory was validated by calculating co-efficient of correlation (Product moment) between the score of 100 sample units on Study Habit Inventory developed by M. Mukhopadhyay & D. N. Sansanwal (1992) and on the present inventory. The co-efficient of correlation was found 0.79 which is significant at .01 level of significance and shows that the inventory is valid.

Procedure for collecting data

Data was collected through personal visit by the researcher after obtaining the due permission from the Headmasters of the school visited. Rapport with the students was built and the objectives were thoroughly explained. The researcher also stressed that confidentiality would be maintained.

Data analysis

For analyses of data, the following statistical techniques were employed:

1. Frequency distribution to find out the mean and standard deviation of different groups of respondents.
2. Percentage to find out the level of study habits.
3. 't'-test to find out the significant difference between the study habits of arts and science students, government and private school students, government school male and private school male students, government school female and private school female students in Champhai district.

The collected data for the present study is depicted in tabular form as per the sequential order and flow of the objectives of the study:

To find out the prevailing study habits of higher secondary school students in Champhai district

The first objective of the study was to find out the prevailing study habits of higher secondary school students in Champhai district. For achieving the objective, study habits tool developed by Dr. Lajwanti, Prof. N.P.S. Chandel, and Mr. Ashish Paliwal was used. The calculated scores are shown in the following table:

Table 4.1

Students' level of study habit

S/No.	Range of z-Scores	Raw Score	No. of Students	Percentage	Level of Study Habits
1	+2.01 and above	162 and above	9	9%	Extremely High
2	+1.26 to +2.00	145 to 161	12	12%	High
3	+0.51 to +1.25	128 to 144	33	33%	Above Average
4	-0.50 to +0.50	104 to 127	34	34%	Average/Moderate
5	-0.51 to -1.25	86 to 103	12	12%	Below Average
6	-1.26 to -2.00	69 to 85	-	-	Low
7	-2.01 and below	68 and below	-	-	Extremely Low

Analysis and Interpretation:

From the above Table, it was found out that 34% of the students in higher secondary school at Champhai district have average/moderate level of study habits; 33% of the students have above average level of study habits; 12% of the students have high level of study habits; another 12% of the students have below average level of study habits and 9% of the students have extremely high level of study habits as far as their level of study habits was concerned.

Generally speaking, students in higher secondary schools are expected to have good levels of study habits, but studies have often revealed something contrary. According to the findings, out of 100 as much as 34% of the students were found to be having average/ moderate level of study habits. Similarly, as much as 33% of the students were found to be having above average level of study habits. There could be several reasons contributing to the unsatisfactory level of study habits in the students. Surprisingly, it was found that as much as 12% of the students were found to be having below average level of study habit which is quite disappointing. Accordingly, it was found that 12% of the students had high level of study habits; and 9% were found to be having extremely high level of study habits. The findings indicate that these students had a satisfactory level of study habits and this should be facilitated by the teachers and other concerned persons.

To compare the study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary school at Champhai district

The second objective of the study was to compare the study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary school at Champhai district. In order to find out the difference in study habits between science and arts students in higher secondary school, calculation of mean value and standard deviation was done followed by t-test. The following table shows the comparison of study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary school:

Table 4.2

Students' level of study habit based on streams, i.e., Science and Arts

Stream	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	Level of significance
Science	49	143.75	16.80			
Arts	51	116.14	14.62	98	8.78	Significant at 0.01

Analysis and Interpretation:

The cursory glance at Table 4.2 shows the comparison made on the levels of study habits of higher secondary school students based on streams i.e., science and arts. It can be seen from Table

4.2, out of the total 100 students, there are 49 science students and 51 arts students. The mean score of science students is 143.75 with standard deviation of 16.80. On the other hand, the mean score of arts students is 116.14 with standard deviation of 14.62.

The calculated value of 't' is 8.78, which is greater than the critical value of 't' at 0.01 level of confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference in the study habits of science and arts students in higher secondary schools at Champhai district is rejected. Thus, the conclusion made based on the comparison is that there is a significant difference in the study habits among science and arts students in higher secondary schools at Champhai district. The students of science stream have higher mean score between the two groups, indicating that the students of science stream have higher level of study habits than that of arts stream.

To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school students and private higher secondary school students in Champhai district

The third objective of the study was to compare the study habits of government higher secondary school students and private higher secondary school students in Champhai district. In order to find out the difference in study habits between government higher secondary school students and private higher secondary school students, calculation of mean value and standard deviation was done followed by t-test. The following table shows the comparison of study habits of government higher secondary school students and private higher secondary school students:

Table 4.3

Students' level of study habit based on organization of the school, i.e., Government and Private

School	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	Level of significance
Government	50	134.54	23.24	98	2.38	Significant at 0.05
Private	50	124.8	17.17			

Analysis and Interpretation:

The cursory glance at Table 4.3 shows the comparison made on the levels of study habits of higher secondary school students based on organization of the school i.e., Government and Private. It can be seen from Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 that out of the total 100 students, there are 50 students each in government school and private school. The mean score of government school students is 134.54

with standard deviation of 23.24. On the other hand, the mean score of private school students is 124.8 with standard deviation of 17.17.

The calculated value of 't' is 2.38, which is greater than the critical value of 't' at 0.05 level of confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference in the study habits between government and private higher secondary school students in Champhai district is rejected. Thus, the conclusion made based on the comparison is that there is a significant difference in their study habits among the students of government and private schools in higher secondary schools at Champhai district. The students of government higher secondary school have higher mean score between the two groups, indicating that the students of government higher secondary school have higher level of study habits than that of students of private higher secondary school.

To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students

The fourth objective of the study was to compare the study habits of government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students. In order to find out the difference in study habits between government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students, calculation of mean value and standard deviation was done followed by t-test. The following table shows the comparison of study habits of government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students:

Table 4.4

Male students' level of study habit from Government and Private schools

Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	Level of significance
Government Male	24	138.46	28.19			
Private Male	24	119.96	16.99	46	2.75	Significant at 0.01

Analysis and Interpretation:

The cursory glance at Table 4.4 shows the comparison made on the male students' levels of study habits from government and private schools. It can be seen from Table 4.4 and Figure 4.4 that out of the total 48 students, there are 24 male students each in government school and private school. The mean score of government school male students is 138.46 with standard deviation of 28.18. On

the other hand, the mean score of private school male students is 119.96 with standard deviation of 16.99.

The calculated value of 't' is 2.75, which is greater than the critical value of 't' at 0.01 level of confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference in the study habits between government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students in Champhai district is rejected. Thus, the conclusion made based on the comparison is that there is a significant difference in their study habits among government school male students and private school male students in higher secondary schools at Champhai district. The students of government school male students have higher mean score between the two groups, indicating that the students of government school male students have higher level of study habits than that of private school male students.

To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students

The fifth objective of the study was to compare the study habits of government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students. In order to find out the difference in study habits between government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students, calculation of mean value and standard deviation was done followed by t-test. The following table shows the comparison of study habits of government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students:

Table 4.5

Female students' level of study habit from government and private schools

Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-value	Level of significance
Government Female	26	130.92	17.31			
Private Female	26	129.27	16.39	50	0.35	Non-Significant

Analysis and Interpretation:

The cursory glance at Table 4.5 shows the comparison made on the female students' levels of study habits from government and private schools. It can be seen from Table 4.5 and Figure 4.5 that out of the total 52 students, there are 26 female students each in government school and private

school. The mean score of government school male students is 130.92 with standard deviation of 17.31. On the other hand, the mean score of private school female students is 129.27 with standard deviation of 16.39.

The calculated value of 't' is 0.35, which is lower than the critical value of 't' at the required level of confidence (0.01=2.63, 0.05=1.99), indicating the insignificance of difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference in the study habits between government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students in Champhai district is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the female students of government higher secondary school and the female students of private higher secondary school do not differ significantly in their study habits.

Findings of the study

The major findings along with the objectives of the study are given side by side for understanding the level of study habit among Science and Arts students of higher secondary school students in Champhai district. These are:

1. To find out the prevailing study habits of higher secondary school students in Champhai district.
 - It has been found that majority of the students consisting of 79% were found to be falling in above average, average and below as far as their level of study habit was concerned. This is quite unsatisfactory. Also, as little as 21% of the students were found to be falling in high and extremely high levels, which does not make up even half of the selected sample. This disparity highlights a significant gap in the study habits among students, which has profound implications for their academic performance and overall success.
2. To compare the study habits of the science and arts students in higher secondary school at Champhai district.
 - As far as the study habits of science and arts students are concerned, the findings indicate that the science students had a slightly higher level of study habit in comparison to the arts students.
3. To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school students and private higher secondary school students in Champhai district.
 - Concerning the level of study habits of government school students and private school students, it has been found that the government school students had a slightly higher level of study habits in comparison to private school students.

4. To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school male students and private higher secondary school male students.

- The findings of the study indicate that government male students had a higher level of study habit than private male students.

5. To compare the study habits of government higher secondary school female students and private higher secondary school female students.

- The findings of the study indicate that there is no significant difference in the study habits of government female students and private female students.

Conclusion

The level of study habits among students can be influenced by various factors, including interest, motivation, and environment. Interestingly, the study found that government school students exhibited higher levels of study habits compared to private school students. This raises questions about the perceived quality of education in private versus government schools. Despite private schools being regarded as superior, the findings suggest that government school students performed better. The study's results also indicate that the overall level of study habits among students is subpar, with most students falling below average. To address this, it is essential for teachers, parents, and responsible individuals to take this matter seriously and work towards developing better study habits in students. Encouraging good study habits is crucial for long-term academic success, optimal learning outcomes, and achieving academic goals.

The finding that government school students have better study habits than private school students challenges the perceived superiority of private education. Factors such as teaching methods, resources, and support systems vary significantly between schools, regardless of type. A critical examination of these factors is necessary to understand their impact on study habits and inform education policy and practice.

In addition to examining the differences between government and private schools, it is crucial to address the overall unsatisfactory level of study habits among students. The fact that the majority of students were found to be only average or below average in their study habits underscores the need for intervention at multiple levels. Teachers, parents, students, and other stakeholders must work together to create a supportive learning environment that fosters the development of effective study habits.

To improve study habits, students need explicit instruction on study skills and motivation. Educators and parents can foster a positive attitude towards learning by emphasizing education's value and encouraging goal-setting. Recognizing and rewarding efforts can boost confidence and motivation.

Moreover, creating a supportive learning environment is essential for promoting good study habits. This includes providing students with access to resources such as textbooks, technology, and academic support services.

Developing good study habits isn't subject-specific. Fundamental principles of effective studying apply across all areas of learning. Educators should integrate study skills instruction into the curriculum to help all students develop these essential skills.

Ultimately, the goal of promoting good study habits is to enable students to achieve academic success in the long run and to prepare them for lifelong learning. By investing in the development of effective study skills, educators, parents, and students can empower individuals to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

In conclusion, the findings indicating higher levels of study habits among government school students challenge common assumptions about the quality of education provided by public and private schools. Instead of focusing solely on the type of institution, we should consider the specific factors that contribute to students' study habits and academic success. By addressing the underlying challenges and implementing targeted interventions, we can create a supportive learning environment that fosters the development of effective study habits among all students, regardless of their background or school type.

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A Comparative Study of Science Achievement between students using the SCERT and the Oxford 'Connect with Science' Textbooks at Elementary Stage in Aizawl District

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Abstract

The study aimed to assess and compare the science achievement of elementary school students using the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl. A descriptive research design was adopted, with a sample of 200 students of Class VIII —100 students using the SCERT textbook and 100 using the Oxford textbook. Data were collected using a 40-item multiple-choice Science Achievement Tool developed by the investigators. Descriptive statistics (percentages, mean, standard deviation) were used to assess achievement levels, and an independent sample t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the two groups. Findings revealed that a significantly larger proportion of students using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbook (50%) achieved the 'Distinction' level compared to students using the SCERT textbooks (38%). The t-test result ($t = 2.33$) confirmed that the difference in mean achievement scores was statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The study concluded that textbook type is a significant factor influencing science achievement, with the Oxford textbook showing a more noticeable association with higher achievement.

Keywords: Science achievement, Elementary School Students, SCERT, Oxford, Descriptive research.

Introduction

The elementary education system in Mizoram has a rich history, starting with early missionary efforts before it was taken over and run by the government. This system comprises of

distinct levels: Primary Schools, which include the Foundational and Preparatory stages from Class I to IV, and Middle Schools, which cover Classes V to VII. A major change took place at the beginning of the 2011 academic year, when Class VIII moved from the secondary school level to the middle school level. This change effectively redefined elementary education to cover an eight-year span from Class I to VIII (Mizoram School Education Department, 2024).

According to current data from the UDISE+ 2024-25 NEP structure report, that there are 1,442 Primary Schools with 6,351 teachers serving a large student body of 157,532 learners. The Middle School level is even larger, with 1,556 schools and a strong teaching staff of 11,224 educators instructing 59,985 students (Ministry of Education, n.d.).

Textbooks are the most commonly used learning resources in school systems. They reflect curriculum goals, teaching methods, language choices and examples that influence what teachers instruct and what students learn. In many Indian states, including Mizoram, SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training)/adapted NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) textbooks set the standard curriculum. Meanwhile, non-government and private boards like CISCE (Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations) offer alternative curricular series that often focus on different teaching strategies and sequences.

A “good” textbook is usually assessed based on how well it matches curriculum goals, the correctness of its content, the clarity and flow of ideas, teaching methods like activity and inquiry-based learning, suitability for different cultures and languages, and how easy it is for teachers to use. The physical presence of textbooks is small compared to their theoretical influence. However, textbooks can guide nearly every decision a teacher makes while preparing for a day, a week, a month, or the year (Miller, 2015).

Empirical studies indicate that textbooks exert a direct influence on students’ achievement, motivation and engagement by shaping the cognitive demands placed upon them. Li and Wang (2024) found a significant correlation between students’ textbook use and their academic interest and attitudes toward learning science.

Textbooks play an important role in developing skills and encouraging inquiry-based learning. Choosing, designing and evaluating Science textbooks cautiously is essential for improving learning outcomes in elementary and middle schools. The National Education Policy 2020 calls for creating enjoyable materials in local languages and moving towards competency-based, hands-on learning. It also stresses the need for high-quality, bilingual Science textbooks. Additionally, the policy allows schools and teachers to select materials that combine national and local content, helping to meet the needs of diverse learners (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Science education is vital at the elementary stage for developing curiosity, logical reasoning and problem-solving abilities in children. Early exposure to scientific thinking enables learners to connect classroom learning with everyday experiences, fostering creativity and critical inquiry (UNESCO, 2017). Hence, the quality and approach of Science textbooks greatly affect how students see and interact with Science. This made it important to compare them and assess achievements to improve Science education at elementary schools in Mizoram.

Rationale of the Study

Textbooks are a foundational element of classroom instruction, directly shaping the cognitive demands placed on students and influencing academic outcomes. A well-designed Science textbook that aligns with curricular competencies can significantly support inquiry, experimentation and the development of higher-order thinking skills, thereby improving motivation, engagement and overall achievement (Ministry of Education, 2020). Consequently, comparing the learning outcomes associated with different textbooks is essential for understanding their relative effectiveness and impact on student performance.

On the other hand, textbooks that focus heavily on rote memorization or lack relevant context can limit understanding and curiosity. Science is generally seen as a popular subject that encourages curiosity and problem-solving. However, research shows that limited time, inadequate resources and insufficient prioritization often restrict the depth of science instruction in many classrooms (Moran, 2022). To tackle these gaps, a comparative analysis of student achievement resulting from different textbooks can reveal the relative effectiveness of these core educational materials.

In Mizoram, examining this issue is particularly important for understanding how well elementary-level Science textbooks reflect the vision of “enjoyable and inspirational” learning set out in the National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020). While some research has focused on students’ interests, attitudes and motivation toward science, a direct comparison of achievement levels linked to specific textbook types is notably absent. This study fills that gap by providing an empirical basis for evaluating textbook effectiveness.

A rigorous comparison of the science achievement of elementary students in Aizawl using different textbooks is crucial, as it can definitively determine if differences in textbook design and pedagogical approach lead to significant variations in learning outcomes. This analysis will offer solid, data-driven evidence to inform textbook selection, curriculum development, and teacher support systems in the state.

Literature Review

Young & Lee (2005), in their study "The Effects of a Kit-Based Science Curriculum and Intensive Science Professional Development on Elementary Student Science Achievement" in the United States, employed a comparative design. The science achievement of 226 fifth graders using a kit-based inquiry curriculum with professional development was compared to 173 fifth graders using non-kit materials without systematic PD. Findings revealed that students in kit-based classrooms scored significantly higher on science assessments than their non-kit counterparts, despite having fewer minutes of science instruction. However, no significant difference in achievement was found between kit-based students taught by teachers with high PD hours versus those with low PD hours.

Awasthi and Agarwal (2013) conducted a study titled "A Comparative Study of I.C.S.E., C.B.S.E. and U.P. Board Students regarding Comprehension of Environmental Issues" in Lucknow, India. The study compared the environmental concepts grasped by Class VIII students using a self-constructed "Environment Comprehension Test." Disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a sample of 100 students from each board. The findings revealed that I.C.S.E. students ($M=38.56$) performed significantly better than C.B.S.E. students ($M=36.76$), who, in turn, outperformed U.P. Board students ($M=24.33$).

Agbaje and Awodun (2014) examined the "Impact of school location on academic achievement of science students in senior secondary school certificate examination" in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study adopted an ex-post facto survey design, drawing a sample of 120 science students from six public secondary schools. Data were collected from WAEC computerized result sheets in Biology, Chemistry and Physics. Findings revealed no significant difference in achievement between rural and urban schools. Overall, urban schools outperformed their rural counterparts.

Cherthangpui et al. (2023) in their study titled "Comparative Study of Class IX Science Textbook between NCERT and MBSE" conducted in Mizoram, employed a descriptive and analytical research design to evaluate and compare the NCERT and MBSE Class IX science textbooks. The textbooks themselves served as the main tools for analysis, focusing on parameters such as curriculum load, content organization, activities, pictorial representations, assessment items and other physical aspects. Findings revealed that MBSE's science textbook was overloaded with exercises and curriculum content, which may burden both teachers and students.

Pareek and Verma (2025) undertook a study titled "A Textbook Analysis of NCERT and SIERT Environmental Studies for Class Four Students" in Rajasthan. A qualitative textbook analysis method was employed, where the researchers compared NCERT and SIERT EVS textbooks for class IV. The study focused on the four main areas - content, sequence, standard and language. It was found that both textbooks provided systematic and logical organization of content, supported the development of scientific knowledge and avoided gender stereotyping. Differences emerged in medium of instruction (English for NCERT, Hindi for SIERT) and minor variations in content weightage.

Statement of the Problem

The study is entitled as, "A Comparative Study of Science Achievement between students using the SCERT and the Oxford 'Connect with Science' Textbooks at Elementary Stage in Aizawl District."

Research Questions

1. What is the science achievement among elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks in Aizawl district?
2. What is the science achievement among elementary school students using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl district?
3. Is there a significant difference in science achievement between elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks and the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl district?

Research Objectives

1. To assess science achievement of elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks in Aizawl district.
2. To evaluate science achievement of elementary school students using Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl district.
3. To compare science achievement between elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks and the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl district.

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in science achievement between elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks and those using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl.

Research Design

The present study employed a descriptive research design to assess science achievement and determine differences in learning outcomes based on textbook type.

Population

The population of the study comprised all students studying at the elementary level in Aizawl district.

Sample

A simple random sampling method was employed to select schools using each textbook type. From these schools, 200 students of Class VIII were randomly selected - 100 students using the SCERT science textbooks and 100 students using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks. Data was collected from Class VIII students only as it represents the culmination of elementary education, where learning outcomes are most measurable.

Tool Used

The tool - "*Science Achievement Tool for Elementary School Students in Mizoram*" developed by the investigators to evaluate students' conceptual understanding and achievement in Science was used for the present study. It consisted of 40 multiple-choice objective-type items designed to assess knowledge, comprehension and application.

Scoring

The tool was designed to generate a total score ranging from 0 to 40. It comprises 40 multiple-choice items, each carrying one mark for a correct response with no marks allocated for incorrect or omitted answers. A higher score indicates greater level of achievement in science, while a lower score reflects limited achievement.

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics like percentages, mean, and standard deviation, along with an inferential independent samples t-test to compare the mean scores of the two groups.

Analysis and Interpretation

1. Findings with regard to Objective No.1 - To assess science achievement of elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks in Aizawl district.

To determine the science achievement of elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks in Aizawl district, the test scores were categorized into five predefined levels.

The following table and figure present the overall distribution of these achievement levels among the participants.

Table-1
Science Achievement of Elementary School Students Using the SCERT Textbooks (N=100)

Score Range	Levels	Count	Percentages
30-40	Distinction	38	38%
24-29	First Division	42	42%
20-23	Second Division	14	14%
14-19	Third Division	6	6%
0-13	Fail	0	0%
Total		100	100.00%

Discussion

The findings indicated that the use of the SCERT textbook is associated with high science achievement at the elementary level in Aizawl. The complete absence of students in the lowest category and the strong concentration of students in the upper divisions suggest that the textbook's content, language and presentation are well-aligned with the learning objectives and are accessible to students. This high level of achievement could be attributed to the textbook's focus on the local context (Mizoram) or its alignment with the state-prescribed curriculum.

2. Findings with regard to Objective No.2 - To evaluate science achievement of elementary school students using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl district.

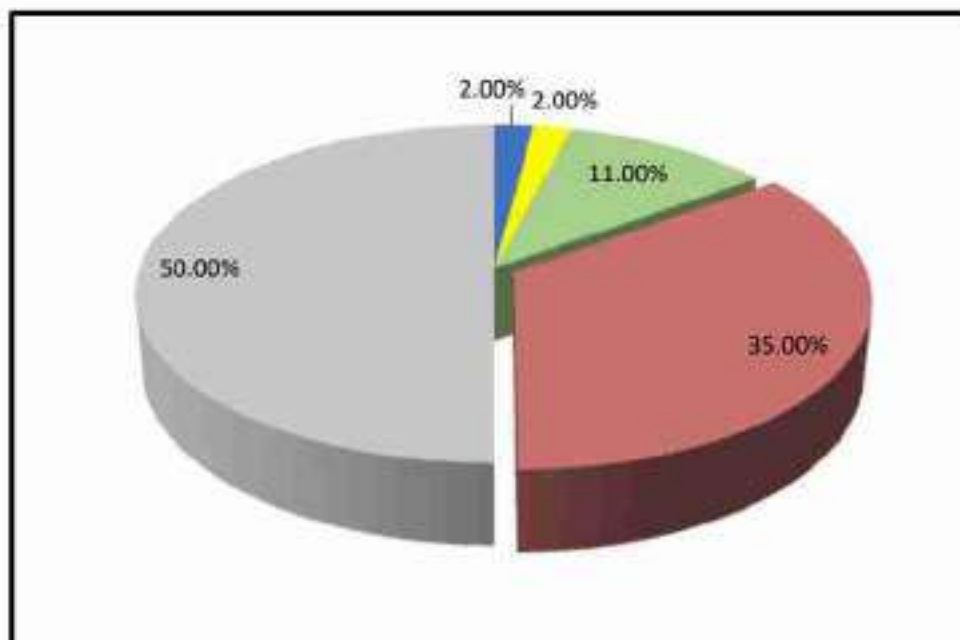
To assess the science achievement of students using the Oxford textbook, their test scores were classified into the five predefined achievement levels.

The distribution of these levels among the Oxford textbook group is presented in Table 2 and Figure 2 below.

Table-2
Science Achievement Level of Elementary School Students Using Oxford Textbooks (N=100)

Score Range	Levels	Count	Percentages
30-40	Distinction	50	50%
24-29	First Division	35	35%
20-23	Second Division	11	11%
14-19	Third Division	2	2%
0-13	Fail	2	2%
Total		100	100.00%

Figure-2
Pie chart illustrating the percentage distribution of science achievement among elementary school students using Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks



A review of Table 2 and Figure 2 indicates a high concentration of students in the top achievement bands. The data shows that half (50%) of the students using the Oxford textbook attained a 'Distinction', while more than a third (35%) secured a 'First Division'. The remaining students were distributed across the lower divisions, with 11% in the 'Second Division', and a small minority of 2% in both the 'Third Division' and 'Fail' categories.

Discussion

The analysis demonstrated that the use of the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbook is also linked to notably high science achievement. The fact that a commanding 85% of students achieved either a Distinction or First Division, with half the cohort reaching the highest tier, strongly suggests that the textbook effectively facilitates advanced learning outcomes. The very small proportion of students (4%) in the combined lowest categories indicates that the resource is successful for the vast majority. This high performance could be attributed to the textbook's modern pedagogical approach, and visually rich content that emphasize conceptual understanding.

3. Findings with regard to Objective No.3 - To compare science achievement between elementary school students using the SCERT textbooks and the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl district.

The science achievement of Class VIII students using the SCERT textbook and those using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' was compared to examine whether the type of textbook had any significant influence on their achievement. The mean and standard deviation (SD) for both groups were computed, and an independent samples t-test was employed to determine whether the observed difference in mean scores was statistically significant.

Table 3 and Figure 3 below present the summary of this comparison.

Table-3

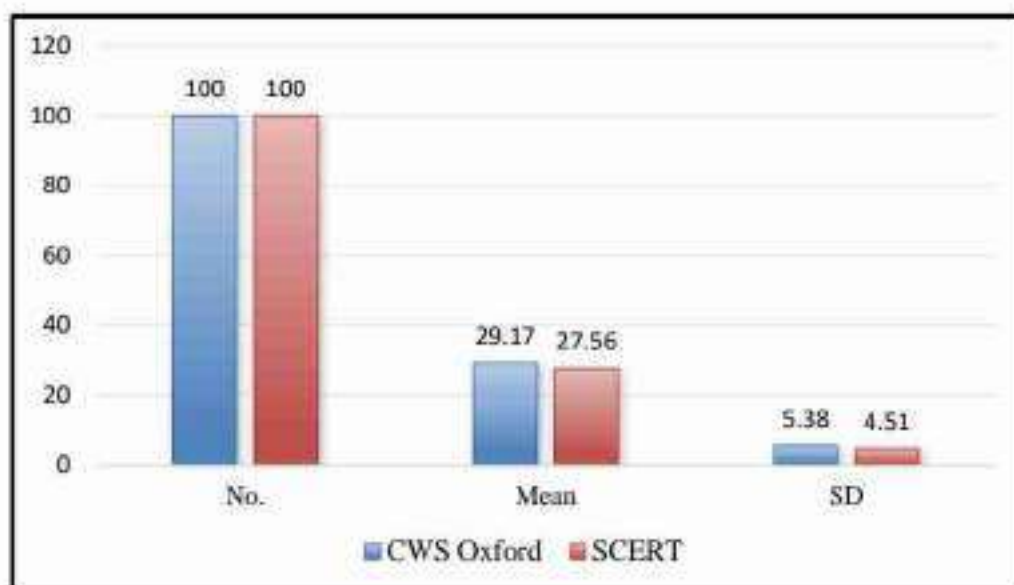
Comparison of science achievement of elementary school students using two different textbooks

Textbook	No.	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Inference
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Oxford	100	29.17	5.38	198	2.33	Significant at 0.05
SCERT	100	27.56	4.51			

Figure 3

Bar graph showing Comparison of science achievement of elementary school students using two different textbooks



A perusal of the data presented in Table 3 and Figure 3 reveals that students using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' scored higher ($M = 29.17$, $SD = 5.38$) than those using the SCERT textbook ($M = 27.56$, $SD = 4.51$). The obtained t-value ($t = 2.33$, $df = 198$) was found to be significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that the difference in science achievement between the two groups is statistically significant.

Hence, the null hypothesis stating that "There is no significant difference in science achievement between elementary students using the SCERT textbooks and those using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks in Aizawl" is rejected.

Discussion

This finding indicated that the type of textbook used had a significant influence on students' science achievement in the present study. Students who used the Oxford 'Connect with Science' demonstrated higher mean achievement scores compared to those who used the SCERT Science textbook. This suggested that the Oxford textbook may provide richer conceptual explanations or better alignment with learners' cognitive levels, thereby enhancing comprehension and performance.

The significant difference also implied that textbook quality and presentation can play a crucial role in supporting learning outcomes. While both textbooks were designed to meet curriculum standards, the supplementary content, illustrations and inquiry-based approach often found in private publications like Oxford may have contributed to better student engagement and understanding.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that while both the SCERT and the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbooks were associated with high science achievement, the choice of textbook has a statistically significant impact on student outcomes. Students using the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbook not only achieved a higher mean score but were also substantially more likely to reach the top 'Distinction' level (50%) compared to those using the SCERT textbook (38%). This finding directly challenges the notion that textbooks are a neutral variable and confirms that their pedagogical design is a decisive factor in learning efficacy.

The superior performance linked to the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbook suggested that its modern, inquiry-based approach and emphasis on conceptual understanding provide a distinct advantage in fostering higher-order scientific skills. This validates the trend of schools seeking out such materials to meet higher academic standards. Therefore, the study concluded that the quality, structure and pedagogical approach of a textbook are critical components that significantly influence science achievement at the elementary level.

Suggestions

1. **Revision and Enhancement of the SCERT Science Textbook:** The Mizoram SCERT should undertake a strategic revision of its science textbook. While preserving its local contextual strength, the revision must prioritize integrating the elements that made the Oxford 'Connect with Science' textbook effective: more inquiry-based activities and visual aids to explain complex concepts, that develop critical thinking and application skills.
2. **Teacher Professional Development on Diverse Pedagogies:** To maximize the benefits of any textbook, especially those with an enriched design, intensive teacher training programs should be implemented. These programs should equip teachers with the skills to effectively facilitate inquiry-based learning and utilize textbooks as a dynamic resource for fostering conceptual understanding, rather than merely following them as a static syllabus.

3. Establish a State-Level Textbook Review and Adoption Framework: The State Education Department should create a formal mechanism for the regular review and approval of textbooks. This framework would allow schools to choose from a panel of quality-assured textbooks (including an enhanced SCERT version and selected private publications) that meet and exceed state learning outcomes, thereby fostering healthy competition and giving schools the autonomy to select the most effective resources for their students.

Acknowledgment

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A Study on Human Rights Awareness in Chaltlang Community

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Abstract

This study assesses human rights awareness among residents of the Chaltlang community in Aizawl, Mizoram, employing a mixed-methods research design with a sample of 200 participants. Quantitative data were gathered using the Human Rights Awareness Test developed by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. Arti Anand (2005), supplemented by qualitative data from structured open-ended interviews designed to capture participant experiences and perspectives. The results indicate that 66% of respondents possess average or below-average levels of awareness. While qualitative findings suggest a widespread conceptual recognition of human rights as innate, universal and protective. Consequently, the study advocates for targeted, grassroots initiatives to foster a more informed and empowered citizenry.

Keywords: Human Rights, Chaltlang, mixed- method, open-ended, citizenry.

Introduction

Human rights represent the fundamental and immutable freedoms intrinsic to all individuals, allocation as the essential foundation for a life of dignity, equality, and peace. These rights are characterized as universal, indivisible, and interdependent, encompassing civil, political, economic, and social dimensions that protect individuals from exploitation and discrimination (United Nations, n.d.). However, the mere existence of legal frameworks and international covenants is insufficient to ensure the protection of these liberties; a civilized and democratic society can only thrive when its citizenry is actively aware of their rights and the corresponding obligations toward others. Within the Indian context, persistent social challenges such as systemic inequality, marginalization of vulnerable groups, and various forms of exploitation often stem from a profound lack of public awareness regarding these constitutional and moral guarantees (IISRR, 2022).

In the state of Mizoram, which is characterized by a unique socio-cultural fabric and high literacy rates, the promotion of human rights values remains a critical objective for sustainable development and communal harmony. While the region is often recognized for its egalitarian principles, contemporary challenges—including gender disparities in traditional structures and issues affecting the youth—necessitate a deeper investigation into the actual levels of rights-based literacy (GANC, 2021). Education serves as the primary instrument for this transformation, as it equips individuals with the cognitive and ethical tools to recognize violations and seek institutional redress (Mubangizi, 2005). This study, focused specifically on the Chaltlang community in Aizawl, seeks to bridge the gap between abstract legal concepts and the lived realities of residents, providing empirical data to inform localized, culturally relevant human rights education programs.

Rationale

The necessity of assessing human rights awareness within a community lies in its foundational role in promoting social justice, democratic participation, and the protection of human dignity. Human rights education is not merely a theoretical exercise but a transformative mechanism that empowers individuals with the confidence to identify and challenge systemic injustices (Smith, 2019). Localized awareness initiatives serve as the cornerstone for building cohesive societies where diversity is respected and the rule of law is upheld (Khan & Lopez, 2020). Conversely, a lack of awareness regarding fundamental rights often results in the perpetuation of systemic abuses, social exclusion, and the marginalization of vulnerable groups (Amnesty International, 2021). By examining the specific knowledge gaps and lived experiences within a particular population, this study seeks to provide the empirical evidence required to develop culturally relevant and targeted educational interventions. Such efforts are essential for transitioning from a passive recognition of rights to an active, informed citizenry capable of exercising legal protections effectively (Mubangizi, 2005).

Literature Review

Ashraf (2013) conducted a study titled “A Study of Human Rights Awareness among Prospective teachers”. The study used survey type descriptive research method was adopted. 200 prospective teachers of teacher training institutes of Bhopal District of Madhya Pradesh State were selected. A finding of the study reveals that the level of Human Rights Awareness among prospective teachers is average.

Manna and Gosh (2014) conducted a research titled "Awareness about Human Rights: A Case Study among Final Year College Students" where the primary goal of this study is to find out how knowledgeable college students are of human rights. Descriptive survey approach was used by the researcher to accomplish the study's goals. The sample of 150 students was taken from AKPC Mahavidyalaya. The tool used for the study is Awareness Scale developed by the researcher. The findings of the study indicates that the college students have high level of human rights awareness.

Binjha (2022) conducted a study titled "Students' Awareness of Human Rights Education at Higher Secondary School level" The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the levels of awareness of these rights amongst students of higher secondary school levels. The study followed the descriptive survey design method and stratified random sampling techniques were adopted to select the sample. A self-developed awareness scale and focus group discussion were used to collect data The findings of the study indicated that many of the students are aware of fundamental human rights while limited awareness about the right to education as a human right and its provisions.

Research Questions

1. What is the overall level of human rights awareness among the residents of Chaltlang?
2. What are the common opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community?

Research Objectives

1. To assess the overall level of human rights awareness among the resident of Chaltlang.
2. To explore the opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community.

Research Design

The researcher employed a mixed method research where the quantitative aspect of the study has consisted of a descriptive survey and has been appended with a qualitative aspect focusing on personal opinions and experiences.

Tools Used for the Study

The investigator used the Human Rights Awareness Test (2005) developed by Dr. Vishal Sood and Dr. (Mrs.) Arti Anand which was published by National Psychological Corporation.

A structured open-ended interview schedule has also been developed to collect opinions and experiences of participants. The interview has been translated into the Mizo language to ensure the participants' better comprehension of the questions. All the interviews were conducted in Mizo, transcribed, and then translated into English.

Population

The population comprised all residents of Chaltlang, Aizawl. The total population amounts to 6106.

Sample of the Study

The study employed a purposive sampling method where 200 individuals were selected for the study, 10 people were selected for face to face open ended interview session.

Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected was scored and tabulated in excel sheets which was analysed using simple percentage.

The interview transcripts are analyzed using a deductive analysis approach of the respondents' open-ended responses.

Findings

Objective No.1 - To assess the overall level of human rights awareness among the resident of Chaltlang.

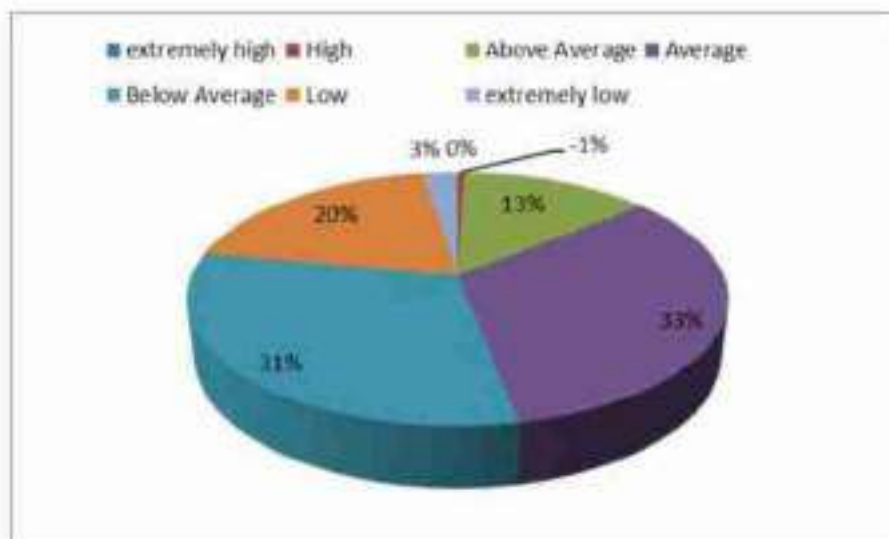
The level of Human Rights Awareness among Chaltlang Community is presented in the table 1.1 and figure 1.1 below.

Table: 1.1
Human Rights Awareness among Chaltlang Community

LEVEL	Frequency	PERCENTAGE
Extremely High	0	0%

High	1	0.50%
Above Average	27	13.50%
Average	66	33%
Below Average	62	31%
Low	39	19.50%
Extremely Low	5	2.50%
Total	200	100

Figure: 1.1
Human Rights Awareness among Chaltlang Community residents



As shown in Table 1.1 and Figure 1.1 the distribution of Human Rights Awareness among the 200 respondents from the Chaltlang residents reveals that none of the participants (0%) fell into the "extremely high awareness" category. Only 1 (0.5%) demonstrated high awareness. A total of 27 (13%) exhibited above average awareness, while 66 (33%) fell within the average category. Below average awareness was recorded for 62 (31%), and 39 (20%) were categorized under low awareness. Lastly, 5 (3%) were found to have extremely low awareness.

Discussion

This result indicates a clear gap in deep and comprehensive knowledge of human rights within the Chaltlang community. The fact that over half of the respondents fall at or below the average level of awareness is concerning, especially in a society where awareness is a crucial precursor to both the protection and practice of human rights. The complete absence of any extremely high awareness scores may reflect the lack of institutional or community-based initiatives to educate citizens about their rights. This could be attributed to insufficient integration of human rights education in school curricula, limited outreach by civil society organizations, or poor media representation of rights-based issues. The finding emphasizes the need for community-centric awareness programs and the inclusion of human rights education at multiple levels—beginning with primary education and extending into adult education.

Objective No.2 - To explore the opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community through open ended interview comprising a thematic analysis

The opinions and experiences of Chaltlang residents concerning human rights in the community is given in detailed description below.

1. Defining Human Rights

The concept of Human Rights is widely recognized by the interviewees as fundamental, inherent, and universal. Most participants defined it in simple yet powerful terms that emphasize its basic and inclusive nature. For instance, one person stated,

“A right we have from the moment of our birth,”

highlighting the innate aspect of human rights. Similarly, one person referred to it as

“Universal... also called birthright,”

Reinforcing the idea that these rights are not earned but automatically possessed. Another person emphasized its protective function, calling it

“Protecting every individual’s rights,”

which suggests that human rights act as a safeguard for dignity and fairness.

2. Identifying Local Human Rights Concerns

The interviewees expressed concern over several human rights challenges, though perspectives varied based on personal experiences. One person pointed to

"Gender inequality, especially in church,"

indicating that traditional structures may contribute to unequal treatment. Another person raised the issue of economic disparity, stating,

"I think economic inequality among the community,"

suggesting that social stratification remains a barrier to equal rights. Meanwhile, one male and others identified substance abuse as a major problem, with his quote,

"I think it is drugs and alcohol abuse"

reflecting a broader societal concern that affects the rights to health, safety, and development.

3. Awareness and Response to Rights Violations

Though many participants responded with "No," a few shared real encounters and their reactions. One recalled,

"Yes, during my school days, I used to experience and fight back,"

suggesting early activism and awareness. Another person mentioned a more subtle but deeply personal form of violation, stating,

"Some of my friends experience discrimination within the family..."

which points to the often-hidden nature of rights violations within households. One person, meanwhile, expressed solidarity and action with peers, saying,

"I respond by standing and fighting back with my friends,"

showing that youth may take a proactive stance when they feel empowered.

4. The Role of Education in Promoting Awareness

Education was unanimously seen as a cornerstone for promoting human rights. One person summed it up by saying,

"Promoting awareness in school and college,"

highlighting formal education's role. Another person observed,

"They can be aware the individual rights from their childhood,"

underlining the long-term impact of early education. Meanwhile, some person emphasized both timing and method, stating,

“Help in educating individuals from the middle school stage,”

which implies that structured curricular integration can foster early rights consciousness.

5. Community-Based Initiatives

While not all participants had witnessed such initiatives, some highlighted efforts that made tangible impacts. One person referenced community action through NGOs, stating,

“The action taken by NGO especially MHIP when the rape had taken place,”

describing how civil society can mobilize to defend victims. Another person spoke about progress in child protection, remarking,

“The absence of Child Labour in our community...”

and credited organizations like Women and Child Development. One of the people noted inclusive development, saying,

“They promote women's rights and background.”

suggesting an expanding focus on marginalized groups.

6. Strategies for promoting human rights

Many participants believe that promoting human rights starts with community-based awareness and education. One person suggested using social institutions, saying,

“Through awareness in Community programmes and churches”

which reflects the trusted role of religious and communal gatherings. Another person supported a multi-platform approach, stating,

“Through education, NGOs, and awareness in the Church,”

emphasizing collaboration between civil society and educational systems. One person added that

“...invite a resource person and provide them a platform.”

can enhance credibility and impact by involving knowledgeable individuals in community outreach.

7. Personal Action in Defence of Rights

This question revealed that while many have not directly intervened in such situations, a few did share powerful personal experiences. One person reflected on his school experience, saying,

“I step in to stop ragging and promote human rights,”

demonstrating moral courage during his youth. Another person described a serious incident involving his friend, saying,

“It was a hectic case that went to the human rights case like SHRC... I stood up for him and informed the teacher,”

revealing the real risks involved in defending others. Similarly, one person recalled,

“I fought back for my friend’s rights,”

showing a spirit of solidarity and action among young people.

8. Engaging Youth

Most participants emphasized the importance of targeted outreach through platforms relevant to young people. One person proposed,

“Awareness through social media,”

Leveraging the digital tools that youth are most familiar with. Another person emphasized active participation, saying,

“Engage through social awareness and promote more in NGO programmes and meetings.”

underlining the importance of structured programs. One person further recommended trend-based communication, saying,

“Promote human rights through recent trends,”

which implies integrating human rights messages into pop culture and viral content.

9. Addressing Gender-Based Violence

Addressing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) was seen as requiring both legal measures and societal mindset changes. One person recommended structural solutions, stating,

“Through Government laws and regulations and give equal rights, attitude and opportunities to all genders,”

calling for both policy and culture shifts. One person emphasized community dialogue, saying,

“By addressing it on more platforms and raising awareness in the community,”

showing the need for continuous, open conversation. Another person focused on direct support systems, saying,

“By putting more awareness and providing a helpline for every woman,”

showing that safety mechanisms and access to help are essential components.

10. Promoting Human Rights in Schools

The role of schools as early intervention points for human rights education was a recurring theme. One person advocated for formal integration, stating,

“By adding to the syllabus... we should let the children be aware and practice it,”

which points to curriculum reform. Another person proposed peer-led models, saying,

“By establishing a club or group to promote Human rights,”

encouraging student participation. One of them offered a practical strategy:

“By inviting a resource person to the school and letting them have time,”

ensuring that students are exposed to expert knowledge in a structured way.

Discussion:

The qualitative component of this study provides context-specific depth, revealing that while quantitative awareness scores were low, participants maintain a meaningful conceptual understanding of human rights. Respondents identified critical issues—such as gender inequality in religious institutions, substance abuse, and economic disparity—linking human rights directly to social justice and human dignity. Despite this recognition, a significant gap exists regarding legal protections and institutional procedures, a finding consistent with Mubangizi (2005).

Education emerged as the primary catalyst for improvement, with participants advocating for the integration of rights-based values in schools and colleges (Padmavathy & Pallai, 2015; Falk & DuMez, 2006). Furthermore, the emphasis on utilizing churches, NGOs, and social media aligns with existing research (Lahon, 2012; Saikia & Padmavathy, 2022) suggesting that localized, participatory outreach is essential. The community's readiness to engage underscores a high potential for successful

intervention, provided that future programs remain culturally relevant and receive structured support from civil society and faith-based groups

Conclusion

This study, titled "A Study on Human Rights Awareness among the Chaltlang Community," investigated public understanding of human rights through a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative analysis of 200 participants revealed that a significant majority possess average or below-average awareness, with a notable absence of high-level proficiency. This indicates a profound gap in civic education within the community.

The qualitative findings supplemented these data, showing that while participants define human rights in fundamental terms; their understanding is primarily shaped by lived experiences of gender inequality, economic disparity, and substance abuse. Education was identified as the essential vehicle for progress, with respondents advocating for localized, community-driven outreach involving schools, faith-based institutions, and digital platforms. The study concludes that while current awareness is limited, the community's high readiness for engagement presents a significant opportunity for transformation. Effective intervention will require a multi-stakeholder approach to embed human rights discourse into the cultural and institutional fabric of human life.

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Burden, Quality of Life and Depression in Caregivers of Children with Attention Hyperactivity Disorder and Caregivers of Children with Normal Mental Health

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between Burden, Quality of life, and depression among Caregivers with ADHD and normal children. 80 Parents of ADHD diagnosed by the professional of the state government, 80 parents of children not with any mental illness, age ranging between 30 to 45 years of age, residing in Aizawl, were selected using purposive random sampling to serve as a sample. The study used the Zarit Burden Interview (Zarit, Reever & Bach-Peterson, 1980), Quality of Life (WHO Quality of Life-BREF, 1996) and the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck, Steel & Brown, 1996) for the collection of data. Results showed that caregivers of ADHD showed lower Quality of Life compared to caregivers of normal children while the former showed higher mean scores on Depression and Burden. Quality of life had a negative relation with depression and burden, and burden significantly predicted depression and quality of life which invites the need to pay attention to caregivers to Children with ADHD by giving psychological care and other amenities.

Keywords: *depression, quality of life, anxiety, caregiver, children*

Introduction

It is common for individuals to experience mental problem from time to time when faced with life difficulties. However, these challenges may develop into mental illnesses problems signs and symptoms persists and cause frequent stress and impair the ability to function. Mental illness and mental health disorders are often used interchangeably, to describe a wide range of mental health conditions, that impact mood, thinking and behaviour. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), Fifth Edition recognises 300 mental illnesses (Peterson, 2019), and categorized these different mental disorders into five distinct groups: neurodevelopmental disorders, internalizing disorders, externalizing disorders, neurocognitive disorders, and other disorders.

Among the many mental illnesses, Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) falls under neurodevelopmental disorders according to the DSM-5 classification. Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurobehavioral disorder marked by inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. ADHD have heterogeneous and variable impacts on functioning and daily activities for affected children and their caregivers. In the paediatric population, Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) has a prevalence of 5 to 7.1% (Polanczyk et al., 2007; Willcutt, 2012). Its symptoms, inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity symptoms, results in clinically significant impairment to the patient (APA, 2013).

Caregiver burden refers to the psychological distress experienced by individuals who provide care. It is specific to the care and varies from anxiety and depression to other emotional and more general responses (Given et al., 2001). Overall burden of psychiatric morbidities that are linked to poor child outcomes, policies and strategies primarily benefit children with neuro-developmental disorders (Mahbub et al., 2022). There is a paucity of research concerning the effects of parenting children with NDD and their vulnerability to different psychopathologies in India (Purva et al., 2022). Because the mother's health directly affects the health of her kid and the family, it is crucial to close this gap (Asfana & Komal, 2023).

The concept of Quality of Life (QoL) generally refers to an individual's subjective perception of physical, emotional, and social well-being (Göz et al., 2007) which encompasses both cognitive (satisfaction) and an emotional component (happiness). Quality of Life (QoL) can be affected by various proximal factors, such as family and friendships, as well as distal factors, including socioeconomic and cultural influences. The presence of a chronic illness is considered one of the most significant risk factors for lower QoL scores (Harpin et al., 2005; Göz et al., 2007; Xiang et al., 2009; Kim et al., 2014).

The caregivers' capacity to take care of both the person they are caring for and themselves may be impacted by carer burnout. Long-term carers are more likely to experience burnout and be more susceptible to physical and mental health issues (Richard & Paula, 2008). The caring responsibilities of children with disabilities may cause them to put off routine check-ups with their physician or, worse, to put off the necessary treatment for a persistent medical condition. If symptoms of mental health disorders, such as anxiety or depression, remain untreated, there is a consequent decline in the quality of life for both the individuals affected and their loved ones. The health of their loved one may also deteriorate. Extreme stress and sadness brought on by burnout can, in rare and extreme circumstances, endanger the lives of carers (François & Janie, 2021).

Having a child with developmental disabilities constitutes a crisis event, how parents respond to the associated stresses of raising their child with special needs depends upon a multitude of factors that influence their ability to cope. These factors include their interpretation of the crisis event, the

family's sources of support, community resources, and family structure. Additionally, the personality characteristics of the family members, their financial status, educational level, problem-solving skills, and spirituality significantly affect a family's coping capacity. Strong marital relationships and social support are also critical determinants of parental adjustment (Thwala et al., 2015; Fazil et al., 2004). Parents of children with autism and ADHD encounter a set of distinct set of challenges related to providing care for their children. Depending upon the nature and severity of the disability, the child may necessitate substantial personal care and monitoring to ensure their wellness and safety, with parents typically serving as the primary caregivers. Given other responsibilities that parents generally have in maintaining stability for their family, the additional obligation of providing extensive care for their child indefinitely may challenge parents' ability to maintain balance in their own lives. This may lead to stress for parents, potentially compromising their capacity to effectively care for their child.

Review of Literature

The study conducted by Cussen et al. (2012) assesses the QoL and depression among 202 primary caregivers of children with ADHD, comparing them to a control group. The findings indicated that parents of children with ADHD poorer family QoL and higher levels of parental depression and anxiety disorders. Similarly, Akvardar and colleagues (2006) compared the QoL scores between patients with psychiatric disorders and a control group, revealing that individuals with mental reported lower satisfaction compared with patients with normal controls. Craig and colleagues (2020) conducted a systematic review of coping strategies employed by parents of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

The presence of ADHD significantly impacts not only the patients but also their family members who provide care (Harpin, 2005). Caring for a child with ADHD can lead to family, marital, and parental problems, diminish parenting efficacy, and elevate parental stress levels (Danckaerts et al., 2010). Additionally, it is often accompanied by feelings of guilt which increase vulnerability to depression (Johnston & Mash, 2001) and result in diminished quality of life (Faraone et al., 2005; Desidério et al., 2010). The caregivers' capacity to take care of both the person they are caring for and themselves may be impacted by carer burnout. Long-term carers are more likely to experience burnout and be more susceptible to physical and mental health issues (Richard & Paula, 2008). The caring responsibilities of children with disabilities may cause them to put off routine check-ups with their physician or, worse, to put off the necessary treatment for a persistent medical condition. The quality of life declines for them and their loved one if mental health symptoms like anxiety or depression are not treated. The health of their loved one may also deteriorate. Extreme stress and sadness brought on by burnout can, in rare and extreme circumstances, endanger the lives of carers (François & Janie, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Behavioural issues in children adversely affect family adaptation, including quality of life and psychological well-being. Parents may experience feelings of helplessness, overwhelm, and fear in response to such behaviours, often leading them to question their parenting abilities and experience guilt over perceived inadequacies. Parents of children with ADHD face distinct challenges in providing care for their children.

In the Indian context, mothers often assume primary responsibility for raising and caring for a child with a disability. Given the additional responsibilities mothers typically bear in maintaining family stability, the ongoing care required for their child may strain their ability to maintain personal balance. This situation can lead to parental stress, potentially compromising their capacity to effectively care for their child. Parents employ various positive and negative coping strategies to manage this psychological stress. Notably, significant differences in coping behaviours have been observed among parents with varying marital and socioeconomic statuses.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that quality of life (QoL) may be compromised due to the presence of ADHD (Harpin et al., 2005; Sawyer et al., 2002; Akvardar et al., 2006; Cussen et al., 2012). However, there is a paucity of research examining QoL among ADHD caregivers (Andrade et al., 2016). To address this research gap, the present study aims to explore the coping mechanisms of parents of children with ADHD, with the objective of promoting positive coping strategies and assisting these parents in identifying supportive resources.

Objectives: The study set forth objectives based on the literature available as under:

- 1) To determine any variations in Psychological Quality of life and Depression between caregivers of children with ADHD and those with normal mental health.
- 2) To examine the association between depression and Psychological Quality of Life among caregivers of children with ADHD.
- 3) To examine the predictability of Psychological Quality of Life from Depression among caregivers with ADHD and parents of normal mental health.

Hypotheses: In consistent with the study's objectives, the following hypotheses have been formulated for the current research:

- 1) Caregivers of children with ADHD and caregivers of children with normal mental health will not differ in terms of Psychological Quality of life and Depression.
- 2) There will be no significant positive correlation between Psychological Quality of life and Depression.
- 3) There will be no significant predictability of Depression on Psychological Quality of life among caregivers of children with ADHD and caregivers of children with normal mental health.

Methodology

Sample

The study sample consisted of 160 Mizo caregivers comprised of 80 caregivers of ADHD and 80 caregivers of children with normal mental health. The caregivers of children with ADHD were identified and selected from those whose children had been diagnosed with ADHD and were receiving treatment at the Department of Psychiatry at Kulikawn Hospital, as well as from special schools, the Child Guidance Centre, the District Early Intervention Centre, and private clinics in Aizawl, Mizoram. The caregivers of children with normal mental health were selected to closely match their counterparts in terms of socio-demographic variables, with both groups comprising individuals aged 25 to 50 years. The samples from both groups were well-matched on socio-demographic variables such as age, ecological background (urban and rural), educational level, and other factors, to facilitate a comparative analysis of psychological quality of life and depression.

Tool Used

1. **Socio-Demographic Profile (Lalawmpuia, 2021):** The instrument was specifically developed by Lalawmpuia (2021) for the purpose of screening, with the aim of controlling confounding demographic variables and ensuring accurate representation in accordance with the study's design. It encompasses data on socio-demographic variables, including age, sex, religion, education, marital status, residence, and occupation of the participants.
2. **Informed Consent Form (Lalawmpuia, 2021).** It was developed by Lalawmpuia (2021) to secure informed consent from participants following the provision of information regarding the current study.
3. **WHO Quality of Life-BREF (1996):** The World Health Organization's quality of life assessment, developed by the WHOQOL group, is designed for cross-cultural applicability. It comprises a total of 26 questions. The internal consistency coefficient for the domains ranges

from 0.70 to 0.75. The the test-retest reliability coefficient at the item level varies from 0.41 to 0.79.

4. **Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (Beck, Steer& Brown, 1996):** The instrument was developed to assess the severity of depression and comprises 21 items, each rated on a 4-point scale. It demonstrates a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92 and a validity coefficient of 0.98 (Beck et al., 1996). The test-retest reliability was determined, yielding an average correlation of 0.93.

Design

A correlational design was employed to discern the pattern of variations befalling caregivers of ADHD children and children of normal mental health to examine significant differences between the groups and the relationship between the variables under investigation and regression analysis to ascertain predictability.

Procedures

The required psychological tests were collected and made necessary preparation, and ready for use. The parents of ADHD parents' samples were randomly selected from the Department of Psychiatry at Kulikawn Hospital, various special schools, the Child Guidance Centre, a private clinic, the district early intervention centre, and the education department of Aizawl-Mizoram. Conversely, parents of children without ADHD or mental illness were selected from different regions of Aizawl to ensure a well-matched comparison with the parents of children with ADHD. All necessary permissions were obtained from the relevant authorities. Confidentiality was maintained, and informed consent was obtained from parents and participants in accordance with the manual and the APA code of ethics for research.

Results

Psychometric adequacy check

The test scales were constructed for other cultures and needed to be checked its applicability to the targeted population. For which, the normality, reliability and homogeneity were checked as presented in Table-1.

Table 1

Normality (Mean, SD, Kurtosis, Skewness), Reliability and homogeneity for the Zarit Burden Interview, Quality of Life and Beck Depression for the samples

Statistics	PTSD	Insomnia	Depression
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Normality	Mean	35.15	34.73	15.65
	SD	5.32	4.14	3.34
	Kurtosis	-0.75	0.74	-0.78
	Skewness	-0.77	0.87	0.76
Reliability coefficient		.80	.84	.81
Test of homogeneity (Levenes F statistics)		.75	.67	.74

The reliability of the tools used was checked for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha. The result divulged a consistent pattern of response indicating that the three measurement tools are a reliable instrument for measuring Burden, Quality of Life and Depression among the target population.

Homoscedasticity was checked using Levene's test to discern whether the distribution of variances in Burden, Quality of Life and Depression are equal across the two caregiver groups. The result imparted a non-significant F statistic ($p > .05$) which indicates that we cannot reject the null hypothesis thereby indicating the similarities of the distributions.

Objective-1: To determine any variations in Psychological Quality of life and Depression between caregivers of children with ADHD and those with normal mental health.

An Independent t-test was employed to determine the significant difference between caregivers with ADHD and normal children on Burden, QoL and depression which is presented in Tables-2 &3.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics (Mean, SD, Kurtosis and Skewness) for the Caregivers to ADHD and normal mental health children on Burden, Quality of Life and Depression of the samples

Independent Variables	Statistics	Dependent Variables		
		Burden	Quality of Life	Depression

Caregivers of ADHD	Mean	29.74	13.25	16.78
	SD	3.794	2.316	3.29
	Kurtosis	-0.73	-.87	-0.85
	Skewness	0.78	-0.76	0.79
Caregivers of Normal children	Mean	25.50	17.48	13.53
	SD	4.84	0.847	0.71
	Kurtosis	0.93	-0.57	-0.73
	Skewness	0.78	.85	0.33

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics on Burden, Quality of Life and Depression separately for caregivers of ADHD and normal children along with Skewness and Kurtosis statistics. The skewness and kurtosis statistics showed that the distribution for caregivers of ADHD and normal children on all three scales approximates normal distribution. Caregivers of ADHD have a higher mean score than caregivers of normal children on the Burden and Depression scales. On the other hand, Caregivers of normal children scored higher mean on Quality of Life compared to caregivers of ADHD children. Although subsequent analysis would reveal the significance of differences in their mean scores, it is noteworthy that Caregivers of ADHD may have a higher burden imposed upon them, and may show depressive symptoms compared to their counterparts.

Table 3

Independent sample t-test for Caregivers of ADHD and Caregivers of Normal children on Burden, Quality of Life and Depression.

Variables	Mean difference	T	df	Sig (2-tailed)
Burden	4.24	2.46	158	.000
Quality of Life	-4.23	-3.25	158	.000
Depression	3.25	2.65	158	.000

Table-3 showed the independent t-test result for discerning differences between Caregivers of ADHD and Caregivers of Normal children. Results for the Burden scale were statistically significant indicating that ADHD caregivers have more weight in terms of the burden imposed upon having children with ADHD. The overall quality of life was also significantly lower among caregivers of ADHD (Moshe et al., 2017). The impact of caregiving for individuals with ADHD on quality of life is comparable to that associated with other mental health conditions and severe physical disorders. An increase in symptom severity and impairment is predictive of a diminished quality of life (Marina et al., 2010). In contrast, Depression was significantly higher among Caregivers of ADHD (Hui Wen et al., 2021). Results suggested not accepting hypothesis 1.

Objectives -2: To examine the association between depression and Psychological Quality of Life among caregivers of children with ADHD.

The Pearson Correlation was used to examine any significant relationship between burden, Qol and Depression among the samples, and presented in Table-4.

Table 4
Showing Pearsons' Correlation between Burden, QOL and Depression

Dependent variables	Quality of Life	Depression
Burden	-.45**	.51**
Quality of Life		-.47

** = significant at .01 level

The correlation between the three variables was estimated using the Pearson correlation coefficient. There was a moderately significant negative correlation between Burden and Quality of Life ($r^2 = -.45$; $p < .01$) but a positive relationship between Burden and Depression ($r^2 = .51$; $p < .01$) There was a statistically significant positive correlation between total burden of care and total psychological distress among studied caregivers (Miriam et al., 2023) while Quality of Life and Depression ($r^2 = -.47$; $p < .01$) had a negative relationship at significant levels. Results suggested not accepting hypothesis 2. The severity of children's ADHD symptoms has a detrimental impact on parents' quality of life, family functioning, and family burden. (Calvo et al., 2021).

Objectives -3: To examine the predictability of Psychological Quality of Life from Depression among caregivers with ADHD and parents of normal mental health.

The simple linear regression analysis was used to investigate the prediction of burden on QoL and Depression and is presented in Table-5.

Table 5
Predictability of Quality of Life and Depression from Burden

Criterion	Dependent variable	B
Burden	Quality of Life	-.21
	Depression	.27

Regression analysis was employed to examine the prediction of Burden on Quality of Life and Depression which revealed that Burden predicted 21% of Quality of life and 27% of depression among the samples. Research indicates that numerous parents of children with ADHD report elevated stress and that they deal with increased familial and marital discord. These parents often report heightened parental stress, feelings of guilt, vulnerability to depression, increased alcohol consumption, and a reduced quality of life (QoL), particularly in the domains of emotional and family activity (Shuliweeh et al., 2024). Results suggested not accepting hypothesis 3.

Discussion & Conclusion:

Results revealed that Caregivers of ADHD scored a higher mean score on Burden and Depression while a lower mean score was observed on Quality of Life. There is a variation between caregivers of children with ADHD and normal mental health on depression and anxiety (Cussen et al., 2012). Caregivers of children with ADHD reported low family Quality of life. Caregivers of ADHD reported lower levels of satisfaction than patients with normal controls, according to the QoL scores (Akvardar et al., 2006). Furthermore, taking care of a child with ADHD increases stress levels for parents and decreases parenting efficacy, hence attracting marital, family, and parental issues (Danckaerts et al., 2010). The present study also confirmed that there was difference between Caregivers of ADHD and normal children on Burden, Quality of Life and Depression. It is crucial that

Caregivers of ADHD have proper remedy from burden and depression due to caregiving children having difficulty in attention and hyperactive (Saeid et al.,2018). The overall Quality of Life was also lower than caregivers of normal children, it is imperative to prepare a module to improve their life satisfaction level. The correlation between Burden and Quality of Life showed that increasing burden among caregivers of ADHD could decrease the Quality of Life and increase levels of depression (Juana et al.,2019).

Limitation

The present study was unable to include single parents in its analysis. The small sample size employed in this study restricted the generalizability of the findings and limited the examination of psychological variables.

Significance of the study

This study has made a significant contribution to understanding the burden, quality of life, and depression experienced by caregivers, an area previously unexplored. It underscores the necessity for psychological interventions to support them.

Suggestion

While the present study has yielded significant findings, it is not without limitations, which suggest several considerations for future research. First, the inclusion of a larger sample size is recommended to enhance the reliability of the findings and facilitate the generalization to the target population. Second, incorporating a broader range of mental health patients for comparative analysis could provide more comprehensive insights into the caregiver burden associated with mental health conditions. Third, the inclusion of additional mental health symptoms would contribute to a deeper understanding of psychological issues, thereby informing the development of prevention and intervention strategies for the target group. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for more research on the psychosocial well-being of parents and caregivers of children with disabilities.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Gratitude Relation to Perceived Stress and Well-Being among Higher Secondary Students

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Abstract

Globally, youth mental health is deteriorating due to broad societal changes and megatrends (The Lancet Psychiatry Commission, 2024). The study aimed to investigate the role of gratitude on perceived stress and well-being by comparing the two levels of gratitude (high and low) and two genders (male and female) of higher secondary school students of Aizawl city. The study employs correlational design. Participants of the study were drawn by simple random sampling. GQ-6 (McCullough et al., 2002), the Perceived stress scale (Cohen et al., 1983) and WHO-5 (WHO, 2024) were employed for psychological evaluation. All the precaution for maintaining ethical principle of research were strictly followed. The findings portrayed the role of gratitude along with gender difference on perceived stress and well-being, and gratitude had positive relation with well-being but negative relation to perceived stress, and perceived stress and well-being were negatively related. The study implies the need of school-based interventions where gratitude practice could serve as an instrument to lower students stress and enhance their well-being.

Keywords: *perceived stress, gratitude, well-being.*

Introduction

The word grateful originated in the sixteenth century (Ayto, 1990). Gratitude derives from Latin "gratus" meaning thankful. Rashid and Seligman (2018) defined gratitude as thankfulness that involves appreciating positive moments in everyday life. McCullough et al. (2002) describe gratitude disposition as the tendency to acknowledge others' benevolent actions contributing to positive experiences. They note that grateful individuals are less likely to take positive events for granted, helping maintain well-being during challenges. Gratitude broadens positive emotions and builds personal resources valuable in crises (McCullough et al., 2002).

Cohen et al. (1983) defined perceived stress as an individual's assessment or appraisal of how much the demands in their life surpass their capacity to cope. This concept captures a subjective

experience of stress encompassing feelings of unpredictability, uncontrollability, and overload in one's life circumstances. Rather than focusing on objective stressors, perceived stress emphasizes how people interpret and respond to stress based on their coping resources.

Well-being represents a favorable state for individuals and societies, serving as a resource for daily life shaped by social, economic, and environmental factors. It encompasses quality of life and the ability to contribute meaningfully to the world, helping monitor resource distribution and sustainability (World Health Organization, 2021). Well-being reflects how individuals feel and function personally and socially, and how they evaluate their lives (Michaelson et al., 2012).

Higher Secondary School students, typically aged 16-18 years, are in Class 11 or 12 of pre-university education (Ministry of Human Resource Development & UIS, 2014). According to WHO (n.d.), adolescence (ages 10-19) is crucial for establishing good health foundations. This phase involves physical, cognitive, and social changes, with mood fluctuations that can increase vulnerability to psychological distress (Labey et al. 2017).

Review of literature

Gratitude, Perceived stress and Well-being among higher secondary school students

Anand et al. (2021) found a significant relationship between gratitude and quality of life among adolescents aged 16-18 years, with mindfulness as a potential mediator.

Keerthi and colleagues (2024) found significant stress in 34.1% of South Kerala higher secondary students, with 8.7% reporting severe perceived stress, suggesting stress reduction as a priority.

Borah and Nisanth PM (2024) studied psychological well-being of secondary students regarding gender and locality. Among 215 participants, most reported average psychological well-being, with gender differences noted.

Relationship between dependent variables

Engaging high school students in gratitude practices significantly improves their mental health (Bono et al. (2023). Hussain and Chandel (2023) reported a significant negative relationship between gratitude and stress among youth. Chauhan et al. (2025) found gratitude positively correlates with life satisfaction. Thorsén et al. (2022) found associations between perceived stress and psychiatric symptoms in adolescents, with higher rates in girls. Aggarwal et al. (2024) found no gender differences in psychological well-being and stress levels, indicating complex relationships between stress and psychological well-being in students.

High and low gratitude difference on perceived stress and well-being

Studies show adolescents with higher gratitude experience lower stress, helping them better interpret challenges and maintain well-being (Li, Yang, & Liu, 2023). Rey et al. (2019) found gratitude negatively correlated with bullying victimization and suicide risk. While gratitude levels were similar across genders, girls with higher gratitude showed lower suicide risk when bullied.

Gender difference

Kumari and Parshwal (2025) studied gratitude's effect on well-being in 107 adolescents aged 11-18 years, finding a weak relationship but no gender differences. Similarly, Palani and Jayasurya (2023) found no gender differences in gratitude, optimism and personal growth among adolescents and young adults.

A study conducted by Varsha and Jain (2023) reveals that there is no significant gender difference on perceived stress among adolescents while other study reports higher perceived stress in girls (Garg, 2023).

Campbell et al. (2021) found no notable gender disparities in adolescent mental health across cultures. Majumdar and Srivastava (2023) explored the gender difference in mental health among late adolescents' results reveal females exhibiting poorer emotional, social and psychological well-being and overall poorer mental health.

Gratitude and gender interaction effect

- **Gratitude and gender difference on perceived stress and well-being**

Kumar et al. (2019) conducted a study in India exploring the moderating roles of gender and religiosity on the relationship between gratitude and perceived stress. The study found a significant negative relationship between gratitude and stress, with gender significantly moderating this relationship, with stronger negative association with perceived stress among females.

Kashdan et al. (2009) found gender differences in gratitude. Women reported higher trait gratitude, experienced stronger genuine gratitude and better fulfilled psychological needs like belongingness. Men were more critical of gratitude, less willing to express it, and gained fewer benefits. This shows gender roles influence how gratitude affects well-being, with females gaining more benefits.

Statement of the Problem

During adolescence health attitudes and behaviours are formed and influence all aspects of an individual's health throughout their life course (Henriksson et al. 2017).

Despite the growing literature of negative impacts of stress on well-being of adolescents, protective factors that may act as a buffer against stress is much less investigated. Although previous researches have established the association between these variables, the role of gratitude requires

further exploration, particularly among school going higher secondary students in this particular culture. In light of this, the current study was conducted with the following objectives:

Objectives

Based on the available literature the following objectives will be attempted in the study.

- 1) To investigate any difference between male students and female students' difference on perceived stress and well-being among higher secondary school students.
- 2) To investigate any difference between High and low practicer of gratitude on perceived stress and well-being among higher secondary school students.
- 3) To examine the relationship between gratitude practice, perceived stress and well-being among samples.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were framed based on the objectives of the study

- 1) Male students were expected to have a lower perceived stress but higher well-being than female students among higher secondary school students.
- 2) The high level of gratitude practicers will have a lower perceived stress but higher well-being than low level of gratitude practicers among higher secondary school students.
- 3) Gratitude practice will have a positive relation with well-being but negative relation with perceived stress.

Methodology:

Sample

The study participants were randomly selected from higher secondary schools in Aizawl using a list from the Department of School Education, Mizoram. The sample comprised 326 participants (N=326), with equal gender distribution (males, n=150; females, n=176), aged 15-18 years. Sociodemographic variables were equally distributed to minimize extraneous effects.

Tool used

- 1) *Demographic Information Form (Rawite, 2025)*: It was constructed by the researcher to collect certain demographic variables such as age, gender, family type, religion etc.
- 2) *Informed Consent Form (Rawite, 2025)*: This was designed to ensure ethical compliance including inform the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, confidentiality etc for ensuring their willingness to participate.
- 3) *Gratitude Questionnaire-6 (GQ-6; McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R. A., & Tsang, J., 2002)*: GQ-6 is a six-item self-report tool measuring dispositional gratitude in everyday situations.

The total score is calculated by summing all items, with higher scores indicating greater gratitude.

- 4) *Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-4; Cohen, S., Kamarck, T., & Mermelstein, R., 1983)*: The PSS-4 assesses perceived stress and views of life events as uncontrollable over the past month with 4 points scale. The total score indicates stress level, with higher scores showing greater perceived stress.
- 5) *World Health Organization – Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5; World Health Organization, 2024)*: This self-report tool evaluates mental well-being through five statements about emotions, energy, and life interest over two weeks and measure with 5 point scale, with higher scores indicating better well-being. Scores below 13 show poor well-being.

Design

The study utilizes a Correlational design to determine the relation between gratitude, perceived stress and well-being between male and female among higher secondary school students. The study also compares the two levels of gratitude (low and high) on perceived stress and well-being. Furthermore, the study also investigated gender difference on the studied variables.

Procedure

The researcher developed informed consent and demographic forms and verified their applicability to the targeted population through pilot study. The samples were randomly selected from Higher secondary schools located in Aizawl. Necessary permissions and informed consent were taken from school authorities and participants. Administration of psychological scales were done by following manuals and APA code of ethics. Completed questionnaires were collected after response verification.

Results and discussion

After checking missing responses and outliers, psychometric properties of the scales were verified as they were constructed for another culture. The scales' normality, reliability and homogeneity were suitable for the target population (Table 1). With parametric assumptions met, Independent t-tests compared gratitude levels on perceived stress and well-being, gender effects, and Pearson r correlation examined variable relationships.

Objective -I: To investigate any difference between male students and female students' difference on perceived stress and well-being among higher secondary school students

The normality, reliability and homogeneity of the sample was checked. Independent t-test was employed to see the gender difference on the studied sample.

Table 1

Showing the normality, reliability, homogeneity for scales; independent t-test between male and female students on the Gratitude, Perceived Stress, and wellbeing.

Group	Statistics	Perceived Stress	Wellbeing
Male Students	Mean	9.45	19.32
	SD	2.56	4.16
	Kurtosis	0.76	0.88
	Skewness	0.82	0.78
Female Students	Mean	12.98	15.21
	SD	3.01	3.84
	Kurtosis	0.71	0.86
	Skewness	0.82	0.77
Total Samples Students	Mean	11.22	17.27
	SD	2.79	4.00
	Kurtosis	0.74	0.87
	Skewness	0.82	0.78
Reliability (α)		0.90	0.88
Homogeneity (Levene test)		0.21	0.19
Independent t-test between male and female students		2.32**	2.97**

**= significant at .01 levels

The Mean, SD, Kurtosis and Skewness showed the normality of the variances across males, females, and the total sample. Reliability indices (Cronbach's Alpha) fell between 0.88 and 0.90 which reveals that the behavioural measures of perceived stress and well-being were appropriate for the target population. The Levene's statistics shows the homogeneity of the variance and appropriateness for the use of parametric statistic for further analysis. The mean score of the total sample was found to be 11.22 for perceived stress and mean score of 17.27 on well-being.

Male students reported lower perceived stress ($M=9.45$, $SD=2.56$) and higher well-being ($M=19.32$, $SD=4.16$) compared to female students as they show higher perceived stress ($M=12.98$, $SD=3.01$) and lower well-being ($M=15.21$, $SD=3.84$). The difference between male and female students were statistically significant for both perceived stress ($t=2.32$, $p<.01$) and well-being ($t=2.97$, $p<.01$). These results suggest that gender play a significant role as, with females reporting higher stress and lower well-being compared to their male counterparts. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 can be accepted.

Previous studies on perceived stress also observed that females reported experiencing higher level of stress than males (Rodriguez-Rivas et al., 2023). Studies across different cultures highlights

gender gap in mental health in adolescence with girls tend to have poorer mental health compared to boys (Cambell et al., 2021).

Objective -2: To investigate any difference between High and low practicer of gratitude on perceived stress and well-being among higher secondary school students

Table 2

Showing the Mean, SD, Kurtosis, Skewness, Reliability and Independent t-test (between high and low practicers of gratitude students) on the Perceived Stress, and wellbeing.

Group	Statistics	Perceived Stress	Wellbeing
Higher gratitude practicers	Mean	8.72	19.23
	SD	2.34	3.89
	Kurtosis	0.79	0.85
	Skewness	0.83	0.82
Low gratitude practicers	Mean	13.72	15.01
	SD	3.23	3.57
	Kurtosis	0.73	0.83
	Skewness	0.82	0.69
Total Samples	Mean	11.22	17.27
	SD	2.79	4.00
	Kurtosis	0.74	0.87
	Skewness	0.83	0.78
Independent t-test between high and low practicers		2.45**	3.13**

** = significant at .01

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics on perceived stress and well-being for higher and low gratitude practicers along with the Skewness and Kurtosis statistics. The skewness and kurtosis values indicate that the distribution of perceived stress and well-being in both groups approximates normality. The total sample mean on perceived stress and well-being (M=11.22; 17.27, SD= 2.79; 4.00). The skewness and kurtosis of the total sample show a normal distribution.

Results of Independent t-test revealed a significant difference between higher and low level of gratitude practicers on perceived stress and well-being, with higher level of gratitude practicers reporting lower level of perceived stress than low level of gratitude practicers (M=8.72, 13.72; t= 2.45; p<.01). Higher level of gratitude practicers scored higher than low level of gratitude practicers on well-being (M=19.23, 15.01; t= 3.13; p<.01). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted.

The results reveal that higher level of gratitude practice experience lower perceived stress as compared to low level of gratitude practice. Gavian et al. (2011) found that students with higher gratitude levels experience less stress, anxiety, and depression, as gratitude helps reframe stressful situations positively. According to Li et al. (2023), adolescents who exhibit higher levels of trait gratitude tend to experience greater subjective well-being. Senger & Gallagher (2023) found gratitude being a more significant predictor in reducing psychological distress and enhancing well-being than hope.

Objective- 3: To examine the relationship between gratitude practice, perceived stress and well-being among samples.

Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between gratitude practice, perceived stress and well-being among the sample and presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Showing significant relationship between level of Gratitude practice, Perceived Stress, and wellbeing for the whole samples.

Dependent Variables	Gratitude practice	Perceived Stress	Well-being
Gratitude practice	1	-0.35**	0.29**
Perceived Stress		1	-0.31**
Well-being			1

** = significant at .01

The correlation between the studied variables were estimated using the Pearson correlation coefficient. The results reveal a significant negative relationship between gratitude practice and perceived stress ($r = -0.35$, $p < .01$), a significant positive relationship between gratitude practice and well-being ($r = 0.29$, $p < .01$), and a significant negative relationship between perceived stress and well-being. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was accepted.

The present study found a significant negative relationship between gratitude practice and perceived stress. This result is consistent with the findings of previous studies that perceived stress is negatively associated with both gratitude and well-being (Lee et al., 2018; Yildirim and Alanazi, 2018).

The present study finding of significant positive relationship between gratitude practice and well-being is in line with other researches. Manalo et al. (2024) reports gratitude predicts 41% of adolescents' well-being. Wolanin and Rybak (2022) investigation of gratitude relationship with quality of life reports a significant positive association between the variables.

The study's finding that perceived stress is significantly negatively associated with well-being is supported by the findings of Kumar et al., (2020), a study on perceived stress and psychological well-being among adolescents reports significant negative relationship, Slimmen et al. (2022) reports a negative association between perceived stress and mental well-being.

Conclusion and Implication

The study shows gratitude practice significantly reduces perceived stress and enhances well-being among secondary school students. Higher gratitude practitioners experience lower stress and higher well-being than low gratitude practitioners. Gender differences were found, with female students showing higher stress and lower well-being than males. The negative correlation between gratitude and stress, and positive correlation with well-being, demonstrates gratitude's protective effects on mental health. These findings suggest incorporating gratitude into school mental health programs and developing gender-sensitive interventions.

Limitations of the study

The sample size of the study was relatively small; thus, limiting generalizability. The study is limited to correlational study and does not explain any cause and effect of the variables. The study did not account for the type of educational institution (government or private) which could potentially influence the variables under study. Future studies can include larger sample size and include intervention base study to better understand the interconnection upon these variables.

Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interests between the author

Declaration

The research original and exact of the pilot study of the Ph D research, and not been published or submitted for publication elsewhere.

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Levels and Variations in Problem-Solving Ability among Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract

Problem-solving ability embodies the practical wisdom and knowledge an individual acquires through life experience, education and a deeper intuitive understanding shaped by one's cultural and spiritual values, enabling them to address both anticipated and unforeseen challenges effectively. The present study examined the problem-solving abilities of higher secondary school students in Lunglei District, Mizoram, with a focus on variables including gender, academic stream, and school management type. Employing a descriptive survey approach, data were gathered from 284 students across four randomly chosen schools—comprising two private and two government schools. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of both male and female students demonstrated very low levels of problem-solving ability. Further, a significant difference was found between genders, academic streams, and school management type. Male students exhibited higher problem-solving abilities than their female counterparts, with science students displaying superior problem-solving skills compared to those in the arts stream. Additionally, students from private schools significantly outperformed those from government schools. These findings emphasize the need for to take required reforms which will incorporate critical thinking across all subjects and call for enhanced resources and teaching standards in government schools to promote equitable cognitive development.

Keywords: Problem-Solving Ability, Gender Differences, Streams of Studies, Type of School Management, Higher Secondary Students,

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India envisions a transformative approach to education, aiming to develop students' problem-solving abilities as a key outcome. The relationship

between problem-solving ability and NEP 2020 is intrinsic, as the policy recognizes the importance of nurturing critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. The policy recognises that memorisation alone does not equip students to navigate the complexities of the modern world. Instead, it emphasizes the need for students to question, analyse, and evaluate information critically. Problem-solving is inherently tied to critical thinking, as individuals must assess situations, identify challenges, and formulate effective solutions. NEP 2020, by prioritizing critical thinking, indirectly enhances problem-solving abilities among learners.

Problem-solving ability is widely recognized as one of the most significant higher-order thinking skills, shaping not only academic performance but also personal and professional success. It refers to the cognitive and behavioural processes through which individuals attempt to move from a current situation to a desired goal when the solution is not immediately evident. As Mayer (1990) notes, problem-solving requires learners to actively process information, analyze contexts, and construct strategies, rather than simply recalling memorized facts. This dynamic quality makes it central to both intellectual growth and practical decision-making. Problem-solving ability embodies the practical wisdom and knowledge an individual acquires through life experience, education and a deeper intuitive understanding shaped by one's cultural and spiritual values, enabling them to address both anticipated and unforeseen challenges effectively. It is therefore not merely a technical skill but a holistic capacity that integrates reasoning, creativity, and contextual awareness. Sternberg (1999) describes this as a blend of analytical and practical intelligence, suggesting that effective problem-solvers adapt their knowledge to fit real-life situations rather than relying solely on abstract logic.

Within education, problem-solving is often seen as the bridge between theoretical understanding and real-world application. Students who develop strong problem-solving skills are more likely to engage deeply with subject matter and transfer their knowledge to new contexts. For instance, research in science education highlights that problem-solving promotes conceptual clarity and long-term learning (Adesoji, 2008; Dhir, 2014). Similarly, studies in psychology point out that problem-solving is tied to metacognition, meaning that learners must reflect on their own thinking, evaluate strategies, and make adjustments when necessary (Flavell, 1979). This reflective quality ensures that problem-solving is not a one-time act but an iterative process that evolves with experience.

The development of problem-solving has been explained through multiple theoretical lenses. Constructivist perspectives, drawing on Piaget and Vygotsky, argue that problem-solving emerges when learners interact with their environment and collaborate socially, gradually building more sophisticated strategies. Cognitive models, such as those of Newell and Simon (1972), describe problem-solving as a step-by-step sequence involving identification, strategy selection, and

evaluation. These approaches agree that problem-solving is both structured and flexible, requiring a balance of logic, creativity, and adaptability.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India provides a timely response to these challenges. By emphasizing multidisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and experiential pedagogy, the policy shifts the focus away from rote learning toward inquiry and application. In doing so, it positions problem-solving ability as one of the most important educational outcomes for the twenty-first century, aligning with global frameworks that view it as a core life skill for navigating uncertainty and complexity.

The problem-solving ability of higher secondary school students is crucial for their education and personal development. This study explores the core skills students need to confront the complex challenges of the 21st century and prepares them for a future full of uncertainty. The move from secondary school to higher education or employment is a critical point in every student's journey. Success in this transition depends not just on academic knowledge, but also on the capacity for critical thinking and independent problem-solving. Research in this area helps us understand how well students are equipped to handle future academic and professional challenges. With ongoing technological advances and global shifts, adaptability and innovation are more important than ever. Strong problem-solving abilities nurture adaptability and encourage students to approach novel situations with flexibility. Innovation is closely linked, as it requires creative thinking and solutions for new problems. Studying problem-solving skills among secondary students sheds light on their ability to innovate and adapt in a rapidly changing world.

Review of the Related Literature

Problem-solving ability is a multidimensional skill shaped by several demographic and educational factors, with gender, academic stream, and type of school management emerging as particularly significant. Some studies indicate no gender differences (Adesoji, 2008; Gakhar et al., 2004; Ghorai & Mohakud, 2024), while others suggest variations, with girls often benefiting from metacognitive strategies (Kousar, 2011) or showing higher achievement in science contexts (Zuali & Lalrintluanga, 2024). Academic streams also influence cognitive styles: science students tend to use analytical and structured approaches, whereas arts students employ creative and interpretive methods (Abdullah et al., 2018; Arora, 2023; Mishra, 2018). Evidence from Mizoram reinforces these differences, with science students consistently outperforming arts students (Zuali & Lalrintluanga, 2024). School type further contributes to variation, as private school students generally demonstrate stronger problem-solving skills than government school students due to more supportive

environments (Gupta, 2014; Kumar et al., 2014; Verma & Kaur, 2020). Recent research in Mizoram confirms this pattern, with Lalduhawma et al. (2023) reporting private school advantages shaped by gender and location, while Dawngliani et al. (2020) observed weaker outcomes in government schools. Taken together, these findings suggest that problem-solving ability is influenced by an interplay of gender, stream, and school management, supporting the transformative vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Rationale of the Study

A review of the literature revealed that several studies have been conducted across the nation and abroad, using problem-solving ability as an independent variable and examining various demographic variables, including gender, field of study, and type of school. They found mixed results with regard to gender specifically as a demographic variable. There are very few studies conducted in Mizoram with the same variable. The investigators found that only the students from Aizawl district were covered in terms of problem-solving ability, which is the capital of Mizoram. Lunglei is popular as the second capital of Mizoram. There are no such research studies conducted to explore the level of problem-solving ability of students in Lunglei so far, which is equally essential; therefore, the present study is conducted to examine the level of problem-solving ability with the following objectives.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the level of the problem-solving ability among higher secondary school students in Lunglei district of Mizoram.
2. To compare the problem-solving ability of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, stream of studies and type of school management.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the problem-solving ability of male and female higher secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference between the problem-solving ability of science and social science higher secondary school students.
3. There is no significant difference between the problem-solving ability of government and private higher secondary school students.

Methodology

Research Method

A descriptive survey method was an appropriate method to address the objective of the study; therefore, a quantitative survey method was used to collect the data from higher secondary school students with respect to demographic variables.

Sampling

There are eleven districts in Mizoram. The present study was conducted in Lunglei district. All the higher secondary school students of Lunglei district were considered as the population of the study. A sample of 284 students from four secondary schools was randomly selected. Out of which, 119 students belonged to two government schools and 165 students to two private schools.

Research Instrument

Problem-Solving Ability Test (PSAT) developed by L.N. Dubey (2006) was used to collect the data. There are 20 items in the test. The highest scored is counted as 20 and lowest is zero as score 1 is assigned to each right answer. The reliability coefficient of the test was calculated by Spearman-Brown formula (Split-half method) 0.78 and Kuder-Richardson formula (Rational equivalence method) 0.76. The coefficient of validity was calculated by correlating the scores with Group Intelligence Test (R.K. Tandon) 0.68 and the Test of Reasoning Ability was found to be 0.85.

Statistical Technique Used

In the present study, descriptive statistics specifically means and standard deviations were calculated to summarize students' problem-solving scores. Given the ordinal nature of the PSAT rankings and the absence of normal distribution in score distributions, inferential comparisons across gender, stream, and school management type were conducted using the non-parametric Mann Whitney U-test. All analyses were performed at a significance level of 0.05.

Results

A score system was used to classify, tabulate, and analyse the respondents' responses. To arrive at a relevant result, the data was examined in accordance with the hypotheses of the current study. Objective wise analysis is presented below.

Objective 1: To find out the level of the problem-solving ability of higher secondary school students in Lunglei District.

The criterion to find the level of problem-solving ability among male and female students differs as per PSAT; therefore, to address objective no. 1, the levels for females(N=154) and males(N=130) are shown separately.

1.1 Level of Problem-Solving Ability of Higher Secondary School Students (Female)

The scores of female higher secondary school students on the 'Problem Solving Ability Test' were classified according to established norms into five categories presented in Table 1 along with the score distribution of female higher secondary school students.

Table 1

Level of Problem-Solving Ability Among Higher Secondary School Students (Female)

Classification	Range of Scores	No. of Students	Percentage(%)
Very High Ability	16 & Above	Nil	Nil
High Ability	14 – 15	3	1.95
Average Ability	12 – 13	5	3.25
Low Ability	10 – 11	7	4.55
Very Low Ability	9 & below	139	90.25
Total		154	100

Table 1 shows that among the female higher secondary students, a very few (1.95%) demonstrated high problem-solving ability, and a small percentage of them (3.25%) had average ability. Most of them (90.25%) were categorised as having very low ability, and a small percentage of them (4.55%) fell under the category of low ability. None of them possessed a very high problem-solving ability. These findings suggest that most female students demonstrated a very low problem-solving ability.

1.2 Level of Problem-Solving Ability of Higher Secondary School Students (Male)

Table 2

Level of Problem-Solving Ability of Higher Secondary School Students (Male)

Classification	Range of Scores	No. of Students	Percentage
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Very High Ability	17 & above	Nil	Nil
High Ability	15 – 16	Nil	Nil
Average Ability	13 – 14	3	2.31
Low Ability	11 – 12	9	6.92
Very Low Ability	10 & below	118	90.77
Total		130	100

Table 2 presents the level of problem-solving ability among male students in higher secondary school. It indicates that a very few students (2.31%) demonstrated average ability, and none of them showed high or very high problem-solving ability. Whilst, a small percentage of them (6.92%) possessed a low ability, and the most of them (90.77%), very low ability.

It is concluded that most male and female higher secondary school students possessed a very low level of problem-solving ability, which suggests a need for educational reforms to improve their levels.

Objective-2 To compare problem-solving ability of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, stream and management.

The problem-solving ability of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, stream and school management is presented in Table 3 . The test of significance of difference is calculated through Mann Whitney U-test.

Table 3

Problem-Solving Ability of Higher Secondary School Students with respect to Demographic Variables

Demographic Variable		N	Mean Rank	U	p-value	Level of Significance
Gender	Male	148	139.05	8550.0	0.011	Significant
	Female	154	121.37			

Stream of Study	Science	88	161.42	6789.5	0.005	Significant
	Arts	196	124.89			
School Management Type	Private	110	193.22	3120.0	< 0.001	Significant
	Government	174	108.67			

Table 3 shows the problem-solving ability of higher secondary school students with respect to gender, stream of study, and school management type. It shows that the p-value is less than 0.05 in all three cases; therefore, the null hypotheses are rejected. It means there is a significant difference in problem-solving ability among students based on these demographic variables. The mean rank of male higher secondary school students' problem-solving ability is more than their counterparts, therefore it may be concluded that problem-solving ability in male students in Lunglei is higher than female. Similarly, the mean rank of science stream students' problem-solving ability is more than their counterparts, therefore it may be concluded that problem-solving ability in science stream higher secondary school students in Lunglei is higher than arts stream students. Likewise, the mean rank of private higher secondary school students' problem-solving ability is more than their counterparts, therefore it may be concluded that problem-solving ability in private school students in Lunglei is higher than government school students.

Discussion

The findings revealed that most students, both male (90.77%) and female (90.25%), demonstrated very low levels of problem-solving ability, exposing a critical gap in secondary education in Lunglei. This mirrors Dawngliani et al. (2020), who also reported poor outcomes in Mizoram's government schools, suggesting systemic weaknesses in pedagogy and learning environments.

While a small gender difference favored male students, both groups were overwhelmingly in the very low category, supporting earlier claims that inadequate educational contexts diminish gender effects (cf. Adesoji, 2008; Ghorai & Mohakud, 2024). More pronounced differences were observed across academic streams and school management. Science students outperformed arts students, consistent with Abdullah et al. (2018), Sharma (2016), and Arora (2023), reflecting the structured nature of science curricula. Private school students also showed stronger performance than government school peers, confirming prior research attributing such differences to superior resources and teaching quality (Gupta, 2014; Kumar et al., 2014; Verma & Kaur, 2020).

Overall, the study underscores that problem-solving ability is shaped less by gender than by curricular design and institutional context. To realise the goals of the NEP, 2020, reforms must strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving through interdisciplinary learning, improved infrastructure, and teacher capacity-building, particularly in government schools.

The findings of the study carry important suggestions for curriculum planning and instructional practices in secondary education. The widespread low problem-solving ability among both male and female students suggests a need for more effective teaching methods that actively engage students in critical thinking and real-world problem-solving tasks. The significant difference in performance based on academic streams indicates that science curricula may better promote analytical thinking, highlighting the need to integrate similar skill-building strategies into arts education. Additionally, the performance gap between private and government school students points to disparities in educational resources, teacher quality, and learning environments. Therefore, targeted interventions, such as teacher training, curriculum enhancement, and improved infrastructure, particularly in government schools, are essential to foster equitable cognitive development and enhance problem-solving competence across all student demographics.

Conclusion

The study found that higher secondary students in Lunglei District, regardless of gender, generally possessed very low problem-solving ability. However, significant differences emerged across academic streams and school types: science students outperformed arts students, and private school students demonstrated stronger abilities than their government school counterparts. These results highlight systemic gaps in curriculum and resource distribution. In line with NEP 2020, there is an urgent need to integrate critical thinking and problem-solving across all subjects, strengthen teacher training, and improve learning environments in government schools to ensure equitable cognitive development.

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Patterns of Technology use among Bru Adolescent Students in Mamit District, Mizoram

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Abstract

Adolescence is an important developmental stage during which individuals form habits that influence their future behaviour and academic success. With the increasing availability of digital devices and internet access, technology has become a significant part of adolescents' daily lives. The present study examines the level of technology use among Bru adolescent students of Mamit district, Mizoram, and explores differences based on gender and residential status. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 161 students (90 males and 71 females) selected through multistage stratified random sampling. Data were collected using the Adolescent's Habits Scale (AHS-LVNS) developed by Vijaya Lakshmi and Shruti Narain. The findings reveal that the majority of students demonstrate a poor level of technology use, with only a small proportion showing high usage. The study also indicates a significant difference in technology use between male and female students, with male students showing higher levels of use. A significant difference was also found between hostellers and day scholars, with day scholars showing greater technology use. The study highlights the importance of improving digital access and providing appropriate guidance to promote balanced and productive technology use among adolescents.

Keywords: adolescence, technology use, Bru students, digital habits, Mizoram.

Introduction

Adolescence is the transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, generally defined as the period between the ages of 10 and 19 years (WHO, 2023). It is marked by rapid physical, psychological, emotional, and social changes. Adolescents experience significant cognitive development while adjusting to increasing expectations from peers, family, and society. This stage is usually divided into three phases: early adolescence (10 - 13 years), middle adolescence (14 - 17

years), and late adolescence (18- 19 years). During these stages, individuals go through physical maturation, strengthen their ability to act independently and gradually improve their capability to make decisions and control their impulses.

Habits refer to repeated patterns of behaviour that tend to occur automatically as a result of learning and repetition (Wood & Runger, 2016). Habits play a crucial role in shaping the personality and daily life of an individual. Both positive and negative habits can develop during adolescence, and these habits often influence one's behaviour in the future. The family environment plays a vital role in the formation of habits as it is the primary social setting in which individuals grow and learn behavioural patterns. Research suggests that the habits developed during adolescence significantly affect academic achievement and overall life success (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

Technology plays an important role in the daily lives of adolescents. The development of mobile phones, the internet and various digital applications has greatly influenced their lifestyles and communication patterns. Social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, and others have become an integral part of adolescents' lives. In addition to social media, various mobile applications also attract adolescents' attention and often lead to frequent use or more extremely, dependency.

Technology use has both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, the internet enables adolescents to access information easily, support their learning, maintain relationships and express themselves. Meanwhile, excessive dependence on technology may result in problems such as poor academic performance, reduced attention span, delays in social and emotional development, sleep disturbances and exposure to violence or inappropriate content (Fitton et al., 2013)

Rationale of the Study

Adolescence is a critical stage of development during which individuals require proper care, guidance and understanding. Rapid social and technological changes have significantly influenced the lifestyles and behaviours of adolescents today. The widespread availability of mobile phones, computers and internet services has increased adolescents' exposure to technology, making technology use an important aspect of their daily lives.

While technology offers several benefits, such as easy access to information, communication, and opportunities for learning, excessive or unsupervised use may lead to negative consequences, including reduced academic performance, poor concentration and unhealthy lifestyle habits. Therefore, it is essential to understand how adolescents use technology and how it influences their behaviour and academic life.

Conducting studies on adolescents' habits, particularly technology use, is important for identifying patterns of behaviour and understanding the factors that influence them. Such studies can provide valuable insights for parents, teachers and policymakers to guide adolescents toward responsible and balanced use of technology.

In Mizoram, particularly among Bru adolescent students of Mamit district, very limited research has been conducted regarding adolescents' habits and technology use. Hence, there is a need for systematic investigation in this area. Understanding the technology use habits of these students will help educators and parents provide better guidance, promote healthy digital practices, and support adolescents in achieving improved academic performance and overall development.

Review of Related Studies

Shashaani and Khalili (2001) conducted a study among 375 Iranian undergraduate students (155 males and 220 females) and examined gender differences in attitudes toward computers. The findings revealed significant gender differences in terms of confidence in using computers and stereotypical perceptions of computer users. Female students strongly supported the idea that both genders possess equal ability and competence in using computers; however, they reported lower confidence in their own computer skills compared to male students. The study found no significant gender differences in students' interest in computers or in their perceptions of the usefulness of computers. Both male and female participants held similar views regarding the positive impact of computers on individuals and society. The results were also interpreted in relation to factors such as parents' perceived attitudes and behaviours, as well as their socioeconomic status (SES).

Warschauer, Knobel and Stone (2004) in their study which was titled "Technology and equity in schooling: Deconstructing the digital divide" highlighted that unequal access to computers at home significantly influences how technology is used for learning in schools. In high-SES schools, almost all students had computers and internet access at home, allowing teachers to assign technology-based homework and focus class time on more advanced academic tasks. In contrast, lower-SES schools had fewer students with home computer and internet access. As a result, teachers often avoided assigning computer-based homework to prevent disadvantaging students without access and instead used class time for basic computer-related tasks. This difference in home access shaped how technology was integrated into teaching and learning.

Selwyn (2008) conducted a study which was titled "An investigation of differences in undergraduates' academic use of the Internet" to examine differences in undergraduate students' academic use of the internet and the factors influencing their engagement with digital technologies for learning. The study highlighted that students' patterns of technology use are shaped not only by

individual interest and skills but also by the availability and accessibility of institutional technological resources. Selwyn emphasized that access to computers, internet facilities, and other digital infrastructure within educational institutions plays a significant role in determining the frequency and nature of students' technology use. Students who have greater access to such resources are more likely to use the internet for academic purposes, including searching for information, completing assignments, and supporting their learning activities. The study further suggested that institutional environments, such as residential campuses or hostels where technological facilities are readily available, can encourage more frequent engagement with digital tools for educational purposes. These findings highlight the importance of providing adequate technological infrastructure within educational institutions to promote effective and meaningful use of technology in students' academic work.

Yau, H., & Cheng, A. (2012) examine gender difference regarding confidence toward using technology (e.g., AutoCAD, SPSS, Compiere, Arena and programming language, such as C, Java, Visual Basic, etc.) for learning in higher educational institutions in Hong Kong. The study employed a survey methodology collecting 211 questionnaires from one specific university in Hong Kong. The findings confirmed that male students have more confidence in using technology for learning than do female students because gender imbalances in computing are socially constructed and not related to a learner's innate ability. It is recommended that the universities should set up training courses for female students so these students can build confidence in using technology for learning.

Objectives

1. To study the technology use level of Bru adolescent students of Mamit district, Mizoram.
2. To study the differences on technology use of Bru adolescent students with reference to gender.
3. To study the differences on technology use of Bru adolescent students with reference to their residential status.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the use of technology between male and female Bru adolescent students.
2. There is no significant difference in the use of technology between hosteller and day scholar Bru adolescent students

Methodology

Research design

For the present study a descriptive type of research has been used.

Sample

A sample of 161 students (90 male and 71 female) were selected. For the present study, multistage stratified random sampling technique was employed. In the first stage, schools in Mamit district with Bru adolescent students were selected randomly. In the second stage, students were stratified based on gender and residential status. Finally, respondents were selected randomly from each stratum to obtain the required sample.

Tool

Adolescent's Habits Scale (AHS – LVNS) developed by Dr. (Mrs.) Vijaya Lakshmi and Dr. Shruti Narain was used.

Analysis and interpretation of data

The data were analysed based on the objectives and are presented as follows:

1. To study the technology use level of Bru adolescent students of Mamit district, Mizoram.

Table 1

Level of Bru Adolescent Students' Technology Use

Sl. no	Level	No. of students	Percentage
1	High	6	3.73
2	Average	47	29.19
3	Poor	108	67.1

From the table, it can be seen that 67.1% of the Bru adolescent students of Mamit district have poor level of technology use, 29.19% have average level, and only 3.73% of the students have high level of technology use.

2. To study the differences on technology use of Bru adolescent students with reference to gender.

Table 2

Comparison of Bru Adolescents' Technology Use with Regards to their Gender.

Gender	N	DF	Mean	SD	SED	t. value	Sig. Level
Male	90	159	13.49	5.69	0.79	2.23	Significant
Female	71		11.73	4.31			0.01

The data presented in Table 2 indicate a difference in the use of technology between male and female Bru adolescent students. The mean score of male students is 13.49 with a standard deviation of 5.69, while the mean score of female students is 11.73 with a standard deviation of 4.31. This suggests that male students tend to use technology slightly more than female students.

To determine whether this difference is statistically significant, a t-test was conducted. The calculated t-value is 2.23, which is higher than the critical value at the required level of significance. This indicates that the difference between the two groups is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the use of technology between male and female Bru adolescent students is rejected.

3. To study the differences on technology use of Bru adolescent students with reference to their residential status.

Table 3

Comparison of Bru Adolescent Students' Technology Use with Regards to their Residential Status

Residential Status	N	Degree of Freedom	Mean	SD	SED	t. value	Sig. Level
Hosteller	53	159	7.53	1.49	0.47	16.45	Significant
Day scholar	108		15.26	4.39			

The data presented in Table 3 show a clear difference in the use of technology between hosteller and day scholar Bru adolescent students. The mean score of hostellers is 7.53 with a standard deviation of 1.49, whereas the mean score of day scholars is higher at 15.26 with a standard deviation of 4.39. This indicates that day scholars tend to use technology more frequently than hostellers. To test the significance of this difference, a t-test was applied. The calculated t-value is 16.45, which is higher than the critical value at the required level of significance. This shows that the difference between the two groups is statistically significant.

Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between hostellers and day scholars in their use of technology is rejected. The findings suggest that residential status influences the level of technology use among Bru adolescent students, with day scholars showing greater engagement with technology.

Major findings

- a) The study reveals that 67.1% of the Bru adolescent students use technology at a low level, while 29.19% demonstrate a moderate level of technology use, and only a small proportion (3.73%) actively use technology at a high level. These findings indicate that although Bru adolescent students show some variation in their engagement with technology, the majority still demonstrate limited use of technological resources. This suggests that the Bru adolescent population remains relatively disadvantaged in terms of effective access to and utilization of technology.
- b) The findings of the study indicate that male and female Bru adolescent students differ significantly in their habits of using technology. The analysis shows that male students tend to use technology more frequently and actively than female students. Thus, the observed difference in technology use is in favour of male students, suggesting the presence of gender-based disparities in access to or engagement with technological tools.
- c) The study also reveals a significant difference between hosteller and day scholar Bru adolescent students in their use of technology. The results show that day scholar students demonstrate higher levels of technology use compared to hosteller students. Therefore, the difference is in favour of day scholars, which may be attributed to greater access to technological resources, internet connectivity or digital devices in their home environments.

Discussion

- a) The investigation reveals that the Bru adolescent students of Mamit district have a very poor level of technology use habit. Majority falls under the level of poor, and a very tiny fragment of the whole sample population uses technology regularly. The rural setting of the study area may explain the limited access to technological devices, internet connectivity and digital infrastructure. Neil Selwyn (2011) also observed that students in rural and marginalized communities often face restricted access to digital technologies, which lowers their engagement compared to urban peers. Still, some research shows that limited technology use does not always harm academic achievement. Conrad (1997), for example, found that while internet use increased students' enjoyment of learning, it did not lead to significant gains in academic performance.
- b) Regarding technology use, there is a significant difference between the male and female students. Although the overall level technology use is poor, the comparative view reveals that the difference is highly in favour of the male students. When looking for a rationale behind this result, the research of Yau, H., & Cheng, A. (2012) can be cited. Their findings confirmed that male students have more confidence in using technology for learning than do female students because gender imbalances in computing are socially constructed and not related to a learner's innate ability. It is recommended that the universities should set up training courses for female students so these students can build confidence in using technology for learning. Also, Shashaani and Khalili (2001), in their study of 375 Iranian undergraduate students, reported significant gender differences in confidence in using computers. Their findings showed that female students tended to express lower confidence in their computer abilities compared to male students, even though they believed that both genders possess equal capability in using computers. Such findings suggest that the gap may be related more to perceptions and social influences than to actual ability.
- c) The study highlights a significant difference in technology usage between hostellers and day scholars among Bru adolescent students. Day scholars exhibit significantly higher engagement with digital devices compared to their hostel-residing peers, suggesting that residential context strongly shapes access to and interaction with technology. One likely reason for this gap lies in institutional rules governing hostel life. Many residential schools impose restrictions, or sometimes even completely ban the use of mobile phones and digital devices to maintain discipline and minimize distractions from academics. Hence, hostellers often have fewer opportunities to use smartphones which results in inability to access the internet or engage with other digital platforms. Day scholars, on the other hand, live at home where personal devices, internet connectivity and family-owned technological resources are more readily available. This environment enables them to use technology more frequently for communication, entertainment and learning. The absence of strict institutional restrictions further supports their higher levels of technology use.

Conclusion

The present study examined the level of technology use among Bru adolescent students of Mamit district, Mizoram and explored differences based on gender and residential status. The findings revealed that the overall level of technology use among the students is relatively low, with the majority falling under the poor level of technology usage. While no significant difference was found between male and female students in the statistical analysis, descriptive results indicated slightly higher technology use among male students. A significant difference was found between hostellers and day scholars, with day scholars demonstrating higher levels of technology use, possibly due to greater access to technological devices compared to hostellers. These findings highlight the influence of access and environment on adolescents' technology habits. The study emphasizes the need for appropriate guidance, awareness and balanced opportunities for technology use so that adolescents can benefit from its educational potential while avoiding negative consequences.

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Psychological Counselling Needs of Secondary and Higher Secondary School Students in Aizawl West-III Area

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Abstract

Psychological well-being of adolescents has become a growing concern in education. The study examined the psychological counselling needs of secondary and higher secondary school students in Aizawl West-III area to understand their mental health requirements and influencing factors. Using a descriptive research design, data were collected from 217 students through the Psychological Counselling Needs Scale (PCNS) developed by Chouhan and Arora (2009). Statistical tools such as percentage, t-test, ANOVA, and Spearman's rank correlation were applied for analysis. Findings revealed that 31.34% of students exhibited very low levels of psychological counselling needs, while 12.90% showed very high needs. No significant differences were found based on place of origin or type of school management, and correlations with parental education ($p = 0.02$), birth order ($p = 0.08$), and family income ($p = 0.06$) were weak and negligible. The relatively low counselling needs may be attributed to strong community ties, self-reliant values, and limited mental health awareness in Mizo society. However, the presence of students with higher needs indicates growing psychological challenges among adolescents. The study emphasizes the importance of culturally sensitive institutionalised psychological counselling services to foster students' mental and social well-being.

Keywords: Psychological Counselling, Mental Health, Adolescents, Secondary School Students, Higher Secondary School Students.

Introduction

Psychological counselling is a vital process that supports individuals in understanding and overcoming emotional, cognitive, and behavioural challenges. It facilitates mental well-being by providing guidance, emotional support, and strategies for problem-solving, conflict resolution, and stress management (American Psychological Association, 2023). Over the decades, counselling has evolved from a clinical intervention into a preventive and developmental tool that enhances mental health, personal growth, and interpersonal relationships (Gomez, 2024). Its focus on fostering resilience, self-awareness, and adaptive coping mechanisms makes it essential not only for individuals facing acute distress but also for those seeking overall psychological balance and personal fulfilment.

In the educational context, psychological counselling assumes an even more significant role. The modern education system places immense academic, social, and emotional demands on students and educators alike. Adolescents, in particular, face developmental transitions that make them vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and identity-related struggles (Le et al., 2024). Counselling helps students build emotional intelligence, strengthen self-esteem, and develop coping skills to handle academic pressures, peer relationships, and family challenges. Furthermore, it assists educators in managing occupational stress, enhancing their well-being, and fostering a supportive and empathetic school environment. Thus, psychological counselling serves as a preventive and remedial measure, promoting mental health, academic success, and holistic development within the school ecosystem (Simbolon, 2022).

The historical evolution of psychological counselling reflects humanity's growing understanding of the human mind — from spiritual and religious explanations of mental distress to scientific and humanistic approaches. Globally, it has developed through diverse philosophical, psychoanalytic, behavioural, and cognitive paradigms, each contributing to a richer understanding of human functioning. In India, this evolution is deeply rooted in ancient traditions such as Ayurveda, Buddhism, and Vedantic philosophy, which emphasized balance, mindfulness, and the unity of mind, body, and spirit. Over time, the introduction of Western psychological practices during the colonial period and subsequent integration with indigenous wisdom led to a uniquely pluralistic model of counselling. Today, psychological counselling in India continues to evolve — embracing cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and technological innovations — to meet the complex mental health needs of contemporary society, particularly within the educational domain (Nizamie and Goyal, 2010).

Rationale

In today's rapidly changing socio-economic and technological environment, students face increasing pressures that affect their emotional stability and mental well-being. Adolescents, particularly those in secondary and higher secondary levels (typically between ages 13 and 19), encounter a wide range of developmental, academic, and social challenges. As adolescence is a

sensitive stage involving rapid cognitive and emotional development, students often struggle with issues related to identity, self-esteem, peer pressure, and family relationships. These challenges make psychological counselling essential to help students manage stress, develop coping strategies, and adjust to the demands of adolescence (World Health Organization, 2025).

In recent years, adolescents have faced increasing issues such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and social conflicts, all of which can hinder academic and personal growth (Han, 2025). Despite the importance of psychological support, limited studies have been conducted in the Aizawl West-III area to understand students' psychological counselling needs. Therefore, this study aims to examine the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students in the region and to compare them based on place of origin and type of school management. Furthermore, it investigates the relationship between parental education and the level of counselling needs, as well as the influence of family income and birth order.

Review of related literature

Literature related to psychological counselling needs among adolescents highlights variations in students' emotional and guidance requirements based on demographic and socio-educational factors such as place of origin, type of school management, parental education, birth order and family income. Several studies have emphasized that the level of psychological counselling needs differs across contexts, suggesting that counselling interventions must be tailored to students' backgrounds and lived experiences. These studies provide a foundation for examining not only the level of psychological counselling needs but also how these needs vary among students of different socio-familial conditions.

Pushpalatha and Sasikala (2015) examined the counselling need among adolescent students and revealed that more than half of the students exhibited high psychological counselling needs despite self-reporting otherwise, indicating a lack of awareness or denial of need. Malik and Shaffi (2017), in their study on psychological counselling needs among Kashmiri adolescents, found similar results, showing that students had a high need for counselling, with girls reporting higher needs than boys. Tirkey and Kerketta (2021) studied higher secondary students and affirmed that psychological counselling needs were high, particularly among female students.

Lalhriatpuia (2022) investigated the psychological counselling needs of higher secondary school students in Aizawl and reported that 44.5% had very low level of psychological counselling needs. Similarly, Sailo (2019) analysed the psychological counselling needs of secondary and higher secondary school students in Aizawl and found that majority of the students had very low level of psychological counselling needs. These findings consistently highlight that while many adolescents appear psychologically stable, a significant proportion experience emotional distress warranting

counselling intervention. Differences in psychological counselling needs may also reflect variations in cultural context, social environment, and students' awareness of mental health support.

Dhami and Sharma (2020) conducted a comparative study of rural and urban adolescents in Ludhiana and reported that rural adolescents exhibited higher psychological counselling needs than their urban counterparts. However, Lalhriatpuia (2022) found no significant difference between students from rural and urban origins in Aizawl, suggesting that local cultural and contextual factors may influence these variations. Uniyal and Khanduri (2019) explored the guidance needs of senior secondary students in Dehradun and observed that students had higher psychological, physical, social, educational and vocational guidance needs; those students studying in government schools need more guidance in physical area as compared to students from private schools. In contrast, Lalhriatpuia (2022) found no significant difference in the level of psychological counselling needs between government and private school students, suggesting that institutional factors might influence students' emotional well-being differently across regions.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area.
2. To compare the levels of psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on place of origin.
3. To compare the difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management.
4. To find out the relationship between parental education in accordance with the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.
5. To examine the relation of birth order to psychological counselling needs of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.
6. To investigate the relation of family income of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area to their psychological counselling needs.

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on place of origin.
2. There is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive research design, depending upon the nature of the research and the type of data available - standardized tool. Descriptive research is intended to gather pertinent and precise information about the current state of phenomena and to derive accurate general conclusions from the findings.

Population

The population of the study includes all secondary and higher secondary students (N= 2683) of Aizawl West-III area who are enrolled in the academic session of 2021-22.

Sampling

The sample of the study comprised of four private schools (62 students), four government schools (81 students), and two deficit schools (74 students) from Aizawl West-III area which were randomly selected. From selected schools, a total number of 217 students were further randomly chosen as sample of the study. So, the present study employed stratified random sampling for quantitative data.

Tool

For the study, Psychological Counselling Needs Scale (PCNS) developed by Dr. Vijaya Laxmi Chouhan and Mrs. Gunjan Ganotra Arora (2009) was employed to collect quantitative data. The tool consists of 25 statements — 21 positive statements and 4 negative statements.

- **Reliability:** The reliability of the test was calculated for the entire length of the scale on a sample of 100 adolescent boys and girls, aged 13-18 years. The split half method was used and the split half reliability coefficient was found to be 0.90.
- **Validity:** The statements on the scale are all related to the area of study and each one independently focuses on what it claims to measure, this confirms the face validity of the scale. The critical appraisal by experts, their feedback, rating and the approval ensure the content validity. Validity of the research tool was calculated by the product moment method and was found to be 0.82.

Data analysis techniques

The investigator used appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, t-test, ANOVA and Spearman's rank correlation for the study.

Analysis and interpretation of data, and discussion

The data collected were analysed and then interpreted and discussed in a meaningful manner and presented in accordance with the objectives as follows:

Objective 1: To study the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area.

To study the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area, descriptive statistical analysis using percentage was employed. The scores obtained from the Psychological Counselling Needs Scale (PCNS) were categorized according to the norms provided in the manual. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary school students of Aizawl West-III area

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	No. of students	Percentage
Very Low	68	31.34
Low	58	26.73
Average	33	15.21
High	30	13.82
Very High	28	12.90
Total	217	100

The above table illustrates that 31.34% of secondary and higher secondary students had very low level of psychological counselling needs, followed by 26.73% with a low level, and 15.21% with an average level of counselling needs. Additionally, 13.82% of students showed a high level, while 12.90% exhibited a very high level of counselling needs. This distribution suggests that while a majority of students report lower levels of psychological counselling needs, a noteworthy proportion still experience significant emotional and psychological challenges that might require intervention. The results indicate a general trend of satisfactory psychological well-being among students in the Aizawl West-III area, yet highlight the presence of students who could benefit from professional counselling services.

The study revealed that the majority of students (31.34%) had very low levels of psychological counselling needs. Similarly, Sailo (2019) and Lalhriatpuia (2022) also found that majority of the students had very low level of psychological counselling needs. In contrary to the present finding, Pushpalatha and Sasikala (2015) and Malik and Shaffi (2017) findings indicated that adolescents are in high need of psychological counselling.

The relatively low psychological counselling needs among students might be influenced by Mizo society's strong communal values, moral guidance, and emphasis on self-reliance, which encourage adolescents to manage challenges independently. Cultural stigma and limited awareness

about mental health might also lead to underreporting of counselling needs. Therefore, promoting mental health awareness, reducing stigma, and implementing culturally sensitive counselling programmes in schools are essential to ensure that students can access support when needed.

Objective 2: To compare the levels of psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on place of origin.

Table 2
Comparison based on place of origin

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Urban	Percentage	Rural	Percentage
Very Low	50	31.85	18	30
Low	49	31.21	9	15
Average	24	15.29	9	15
High	18	11.46	12	20
Very High	16	10.19	12	20

Table 2 exhibits the comparison of psychological counselling needs of students based on place of origin. Among 157 urban students, 31.85% had very low counselling needs, 31.21% had low, 15.29% had average, 11.46% had high, and 10.19% had very high counselling needs. Among 60 rural students, 30% had very low counselling needs, 15% had low, 15% had average, 20% had high, and 20% had very high counselling needs.

Table 3
Analysis of the significance of difference between urban and rural students

Place of Origin	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Level of Significance
Urban	157	74.23	7.62	215	1.38	Not Significant at 0.01
Rural	60	76.57	8.92			

Table 3 indicates that the mean and standard deviation of urban students were 74.23 and 7.62, while those of rural students were 76.57 and 8.92, indicating the difference is in favour of urban students (slightly higher counselling needs among rural students). The calculated t-value 1.38 was less than the critical value 2.59 at 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in psychological counselling needs based on place of origin is accepted at 0.01 significant level.

The finding is consistent with Lalhriatpuia (2022), who reported no significant difference between rural and urban students' psychological counselling needs. However, it contradicts Dharmi & Sharma (2020), who found rural adolescents had higher psychological counselling needs.

The similarity in counselling needs might be due to shared developmental challenges, growing internet exposure, uniform education systems, and improved access to mental health awareness across both areas. Although rural students showed slightly higher mean scores, limited access to counselling resources and greater socio-economic pressures might contribute to their elevated needs.

Objective 3: To compare the difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management.

Table 4
Comparison based on type of management

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Private	Percentage	Government	Percentage	Deficit	Percentage
Very Low	20	32.26	28	34.57	20	27.03
Low	17	27.42	20	24.69	21	28.38
Average	12	19.35	8	9.88	13	17.57
High	8	12.90	12	14.81	10	13.51
Very High	5	8.07	13	16.05	10	13.51

Table 4 illustrates the comparison of psychological counselling needs among students based on type of school management. Among 62 private school students, 32.26% had very low psychological counselling needs, 27.42% low, 19.35% average, 12.90% high, and 8.07% very high needs. Among 81 government school students, 34.57% had very low, 24.69% low, 9.88% average, 14.81% high, and 16.05% very high needs. From 74 deficit school students, 27.03% had very low, 28.38% low, 17.57% average, 13.51% high, and 13.51% very high needs.

Table 5.1
Analysis of variance between students of private, government and deficit secondary and higher secondary school

Management	Number of Students	Sum of Scores	Average	Variance
Private	62	4614	74.42	56.15
Government	81	6050	74.69	78.57

Deficit	74	5584	75.46	58.22
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Table 5.2

Analysis of variance between students of private, government and deficit secondary and higher secondary school

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom (df)	Mean Sum of Squares	Computed F-value	P-value	Critical Value of F
Between Groups	40.88	2	20.44	0.31	0.73	3.03
Within Groups	13960.76	214	65.24			

Table 5.1 and 5.2 shows that the mean scores were 74.42 (private), 74.69 (government), and 75.46 (deficit), with an F-value of 0.31, which is less than the critical value of 4.68 at 0.01 significant level. Hence, there is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs of students of Aizawl West-III area based on type of school management. The hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in the psychological counselling needs based on type of school management is therefore accepted at 0.01 level of significance.

The present finding supports Lalhriatpuia (2022), who found no significant difference in psychological counselling needs between government and private school students. However, it contrasts with Uniyal and Khanduri (2019) who reported significant differences across school types.

The result suggests that students, regardless of school management, share similar developmental, academic, and social challenges due to standardized curricula, equal exposure to media, and common societal influences shaping their psychological needs.

Objective 4: To find out the relationship between parental education in accordance with the level of psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

Table 6
Comparison based on parental education

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Non - Matriculate	Percentage	Matriculate	Percentage	Graduate	Percentage	Post Graduate and above	Percentage
Very Low	17	29.31	30	39.47	15	27.27	6	21.43

Low	13	22.41	24	31.58	15	27.27	6	21.43
Average	5	8.62	10	13.16	11	20	7	25
High	11	18.97	8	10.53	5	9.09	6	21.43
Very High	12	20.69	4	5.26	9	16.37	3	10.71

The analysis of Table 6 reveals that among 217 students, most had parents educated up to the matriculate level (76), followed by non-matriculate (58), graduate (55), and post-graduate and above (28). Students whose parents were matriculate showed the highest proportion (39.47%) with a very low level of psychological counselling needs. In contrast, those whose parents were non-matriculate and post-graduate and above showed relatively higher percentages with high and very high levels of counselling needs. Overall, students from matriculate and graduate parental backgrounds tended to report lower levels of psychological counselling needs compared to those from non-matriculate and post-graduate families.

Table 7

Analysis of the correlation coefficient between parental education and psychological counselling needs

Variables	N	df	(ρ)	Correlation
Parental Education	217	215	0.02	Weak Positive
Psychological Counselling Needs				Correlation

Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was computed to assess the relationship between parental education and level of psychological counselling needs. As shown in table 7, there was a weak positive correlation between the two variables, $r(215) = .02$. Therefore, parental education of the students had a very weak relationship with their psychological counselling needs. Hence, parental education might have negligible or no influence on the psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

The negligible correlation might be that psychological counselling needs are relatively independent of parental education level. Emotional distress among adolescents appears to arise from complex psychosocial factors rather than purely educational or intellectual environments at home.

Objective 5: To examine the relation of birth order to psychological counselling needs of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

Table 8

Comparison based on birth order

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	Eldest	Percentage	Middle	Percentage	Youngest	Percentage	Single	Percentage
Very Low	27	34.17	25	31.25	13	27.66	3	27.27
Low	24	30.38	18	22.5	12	25.53	4	36.37
Average	8	10.13	16	20	8	17.02	1	9.09
High	12	15.19	11	13.75	6	12.77	1	9.09
Very High	8	10.13	10	12.50	8	17.02	2	18.18

Table 8 reveals that among 217 students, most were either eldest (79) or middle children (80), followed by youngest (47), and single children (11). The majority across all groups reported low to very low psychological counselling needs. A higher percentage of eldest (34.17%) and middle children (31.25%) exhibited very low levels of psychological counselling needs, whereas youngest and single children showed slightly higher proportions with high and very high counselling needs. Overall, eldest and middle children tended to have lower counselling needs, while youngest and single children showed relatively higher levels of need.

Table 9

Analysis of the correlation coefficient between birth order and psychological counselling needs

Variables	N	df	(p)	Correlation
Birth Order	217	215	0.08	Weak Positive
Psychological Counselling Needs				Correlation

Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was computed to examine the relation of birth order to psychological counselling needs. Table 9 indicated a weak positive correlation between the two variables, $r(215) = .08$. Therefore, birth order of the students had a weak relationship with their psychological counselling needs. Hence, birth order might have negligible or no influence on the psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

The result shows that birth order has negligible or no correlation to psychological counselling needs, aligning with studies emphasizing the stronger impact of environmental and individual factors. It contradicts traditional theories like Adler's that highlight birth order's major role in personality and adjustment.

This finding might be due to stronger influences from factors such as parenting style, peer interaction, academic pressure, and individual coping skills, which tend to overshadow the effects of

birth order. Additionally, differences in family environment and cultural expectations might dilute any consistent pattern related to birth order.

Objective 6: To investigate the relation of family income of the secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area to their psychological counselling needs.

Table 10
Comparison based on family income

Level of Psychological Counselling Needs	≤100000 N	Percentage	≤300000 N	Percentage	≤500000 N	Percentage	Above 500000 N	Percentage
Very Low	29	35.80	22	37.29	7	20	10	23.81
Low	17	20.99	16	27.12	13	37.14	12	28.57
Average	11	13.58	7	11.86	6	17.14	9	21.43
High	14	17.28	8	13.56	4	11.43	4	9.52
Very High	10	12.35	6	10.17	5	14.29	7	16.67

Table 10 shows that out of 217 students, most (81) belonged to families earning ₹1,00,000 or less annually. Students from families earning up to ₹3,00,000 showed the highest proportion (37.29%) with very low psychological counselling needs, followed closely by those from the lowest income group (35.80%). In contrast, students from higher-income families (above ₹5,00,000) displayed relatively higher percentages of average to very high counselling needs. Overall, lower and middle-income groups tended to have lower psychological counselling needs, while higher-income groups showed a slightly greater tendency toward higher counselling needs.

Table 11
Analysis of the correlation coefficient between family income and psychological counselling needs

Variables	N	df	(p)	Correlation
Family Income	217	215	0.06	Weak Positive
Psychological Counselling Needs				Correlation

To investigate the relation of family income of the students to their psychological counselling needs, Spearman's rank correlation (ρ) was employed. As shown in table 11, there was a weak positive correlation between the two variables, $r(215) = .06$. This implies that family income of the students had a very weak relationship with their psychological counselling needs. Hence, family

income might have negligible or no influence on the psychological counselling needs among secondary and higher secondary students of Aizawl West-III area.

While family income often correlates with access to resources like healthcare and education, it might not directly correlate with psychological counselling needs. This could be because factors such as emotional support from family, peer relationships, and personal resilience play a more significant role in shaping students' mental well-being. Additionally, cultural attitudes toward counselling and stigma surrounding mental health may influence students' willingness to seek support regardless of their economic background.

Conclusion

The study revealed that most students in Aizawl West-III area had low levels of psychological counselling needs, though a considerable number showed high to very high needs, indicating emerging mental health concerns among adolescents. No significant differences were found based on place of origin or school type, and correlations with parental education, birth order, and family income were negligible, suggesting that emotional and social factors might play a greater role than demographic or socio-economic variables.

The findings highlight the need to strengthen school-based counselling and mental health awareness. Introducing culturally sensitive counselling services, training teachers to provide emotional support and reducing stigma might help address students' psychological needs and promote their mental and social well-being.

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The Dilemma of Referencing Ropuiliani as a Role Model for Woman Empowerment: A Special Consideration for Young Girls

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Abstract

Role models for young girls are extremely important in their journey to becoming empowered and valuable members of society. The choice of the role model thus becomes highly imperative for educators in determining curricula. This paper observes that a scrutiny of role models and their achievements, such as the case of Ropuiliani, shows important nuances of empowerment; and claims that such nuances would be lost on the minds of young minds especially girls – simply because they are yet to garner sufficient life experiences; and because their knowledge and meaning-making mechanisms are highly attuned with idealistic conventional moral codes taught through primary and even secondary socialisation.

Herein, this paper would like to achieve two goals. The first is to throw light on why Ropuiliani can indeed be considered a role model and paragon of woman empowerment by going deeper into colloquially used semantics such as “bravery”, “strength” etc. Secondly, I would like to highlight a dilemma of dissemination of such a deeper and accurate understanding of empowerment to young girls. Furthermore, certain suggestions are recommended regarding the same.

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Keywords: Ropuiliani, Woman Empowerment, Young Girls, Pedagogy

I. Introduction

The concept of woman empowerment has been in the motion for some time now. Tracing its roots to the mid-nineteenth century (Moon, 2025), the empowerment movement has undergone a number of waves, with each focusing on different but interconnected aspects of women's rights and freedoms within society. These waves have addressed issues across public domains, workplaces, educational institutions, and household settings, with the fight against gender-based oppression and the quest for

equality as its crux (Malinowska, 2020; Mohajan, 2022). Over the decades, women's rights have become a major topic of discussion in both academia and popular culture as a result of the continuous efforts of activists, reformers, and researchers.

Colloquially, the idea of an empowered woman is often portrayed as woman having access to opportunities and finding success in life; this often translates to being financially independent, having agency, and having the ability and resources to stand on her own two feet. Consequently, the public's perception of what it means for a woman to be empowered in the modern era has been shaped by these narratives. The younger generation, having been exposed to such narratives especially through wider media platforms fraught with consumer politics, often aspire to achieve these ideals as indicators of success and progress.

This process has led to a blurring of understanding the true essence of empowerment i.e. the end holds much more significance than (and even overshadowing) the means. While popular discourse promotes factors such as independence, financial success, and public visibility as markers of an empowered woman, we no longer pursue questions such as: what does empowerment really entail? What is the personification that empowerment takes on? What are the channels through which such empowerment is achieved? What actions and reactions indicate empowerment? Furthermore, does the community benefit from such empowerment? Does it aid or hinder the structural flow and harmony of the community? True empowerment cannot, therefore, be fully understood through labels alone; rather, a deeper examination of the code is necessary to understand its depth and meaning.

The choice for Ropuiliani as the subject of this paper is not a political one but rather a symbolic one – representative of all potential female role models. This paper will show that her independence (financial or otherwise), status, authority, or any other qualities, were not a result of chance alone. Rather than praising her as “brave” and “wise”, the paper will highlight the externalisations (Durkheim, 1982; Mead, 1934; Berger & Luckman, 1966) that did make her “brave” and “wise”, focusing on the contexts and ultimately tackling the issue of resonance with young girls today.

II. Ropuiliani: A Brief Introduction

Ropuiliani, daughter of the northern chief Lalsavunga and widow of another southern Lushai chief, Vandula (Lalthangliana, 2001; Lalbiakzami, 2005; Zorema, 2007), has become a national level sensation in recent years for her unwavering and undying dedication in the fight against the colonial empire, and was recognised so when her portrait was prominently displayed at Red Fort on 15th August, 2022 during the 75th Independence Day Celebrations (Independence, 2022). The Government of India honoured her as one of the “Unsung Heroes” of India's anti-colonial struggle, commemorating her ultimate sacrifice in defending her homeland against the colonial forces.

Following the accidental and premature death of her husband, she took upon the mantle of chiefess. In an era when women were largely given subservient roles, Ropuiliani challenged societal expectations and emerged as both a respected ally among contemporary chiefs of her time and a formidable opponent of the British administration. She openly defied the proposed colonial taxation system and was eventually captured in 1893, and spent her last days in imprisonment in 1895 where her resilience remained steadfast. Her legacy as that of a historical figure epitomising woman empowerment transfers well even in modern discourses, and is an apt role model for educators to reference (and they do) when it comes to young minds especially young girls.

The curriculum of the Mizoram education system seeks to incorporate local heroes, traditionally referred to as *pasaltha* (warriors), who embody core Mizo values of *tlawngaihna* which includes characteristics such as - bravery, humility, kindness, trustworthiness, and a strong sense of social responsibility. Prominent examples include figures like Khuangchera, Chawngbawla, and Taitesena, who are predominantly male role models identified as *pasaltha* formally introduced to students through the school textbook titled “Kumtluang” at different levels. These examples demonstrate how the education system systematically familiarises students with *pasaltha* figures from an early age, reinforcing culturally valued traits through curricular content. In this context, the significance of Ropuiliani becomes particularly noteworthy, as she stands out as one of the few female role models who holds an important place in Mizo society and is widely respected and admired.

III. Relevant Dimensions of Ropuiliani's Empowerment

The following discussions are drawn from Ropuiliani's life, illustrating her exceptional and “ideal” qualities as an empowered woman, while also revealing complexities that may be difficult to fully comprehend, particularly for younger generations.

i) Chiefs as Administrators and the Freedom to “*pem san*”

Even if Ropuiliani's rise to becoming a matriarch is attributable to an unfortunate chance, her ability as a leader cannot. Her administrative capabilities became evident during the turbulent period of British invasion when chiefs from neighbouring villages frequently sought her advice and leadership. In fact, when she was captured in early 1893, she along with Lalthuama and chief Dokhuma of Chawngtleng, were planning a strategic attack on the Lungleh Fort (Lalzarliana et al., 2025). Despite living in a patriarchal society where men traditionally managed both familial and political affairs, the elders and advisors of her village expressed no hesitation in following her command, reflecting their respect for her capability and judgment (Lalbiakzami, 2005).

Moreover, although chiefs of that period exercised near-absolute control over their respective villages and were regarded as supreme heads, the villagers themselves possessed a subtle yet powerful

form of resistance known as "*pem san*", an act of migrating to another village often, to join another chief, in search of better leadership or better living conditions. This act of defiance towards a tyrant chief could significantly ruin their reputation as it reflects dissatisfaction towards their governance. In Ropuiliani's case, there exist no records indicating villagers migrating away from her territory during her reign. She preserved stability during peaceful time and remains a stronghold in times of tumultuous period, suggesting that her administration was both effective and well-received (J.V. Hluna, personal communication, February 19, 2024; Dothuama, personal communication, April 2, 2024).

A minor inconvenience for educators to use this example is that, today the concept of "*pem san*" or migration doesn't quite elicit the power dynamics between administrator and subjects that existed in earlier epochs. Modern societies, even in rural areas see the coexistence of traditional form of patrilocal and modern form of neolocal (Gruijters & Ermisch, 2018). Young minds, especially the ones brought up in a nuclear and neolocal household see it as a norm, and will find it easy to comprehend the conflictual nature of an entire village moving away from under a particular patriarch/matriarch. Similarly, a globalised society is witness to the ease and even necessity of migration as a norm. One can even say that pull factors rather than push factors determine the intensity of migrations today. For instance in Mizoram, people relocate for a variety of practical reasons like employment opportunities, education, better living conditions, or the availability of resources (Hlawndo, et al. 2015) rather than an expression of grievances against authority.

A bigger obstacle to comprehension is however, the incongruence with modern lessons of political awareness and activism. Moreover, the curricula of democratic systems train and even encourage young minds to understand the power that lies in their disapproval. Such disapproval are not to result in social withdrawal but rather, in making use of systems such as police, courts and the electoral process to address and alleviate grievances. Thus, understanding Ropuiliani's capabilities as a good administrator through the lens of migration, is difficult to resonate with when evaluated through a modern way of thinking.

ii) Charisma, Diplomacy, and Armed Conflict

From a modern perspective, Ropuiliani's resistance against the British may appear, at a glance, almost foolhardy, given the overwhelming imbalance of power she faced in the form of the British Empire. In fact, a criticism that does come up in critical discussions on Ropuiliani is that she lacked diplomacy as some of the other chiefs in the region, and that by taking on the British, she endangered the lives of her subjects. Regarding the latter, we have already established in the earlier section that her people had no such grievances with her in this regard. Let us take a deeper look at the former criticism.

One of the most striking aspects of Ropuiliani's leadership was her ability to win the respect and loyalty of both allies and adversaries. Historical records, including those by Kyndiah (1994) and Laltharlana et al. (2025), reveal that prominent chiefs such as Lalbora and Chawngtlenga joined forces with her in the fight against the British, a remarkable action considering the male-dominated power structures of the time. Her ability to forge diplomatic ties between chiefs reveals the qualities she possessed as a true diplomat. In an era where political and military leadership was mostly reserved for men, Ropuiliani had proven herself worthy of being recognised as a competent and capable leader.

Her growing influence and the alliances she forged also made her a matter of concern for the British administration, who believed that subjugating the southern region was impossible without capturing Ropuiliani and her son (Sailo, 1999). This demonstrates that her leadership extended beyond administrative competence and it was rooted in personal charisma, strategic foresight, and the ability to inspire loyalty and fear in equal measure. Ropuiliani thus can be considered brave and diplomatic as per historical events.

The problem for young minds here is that the externalisation of bravery, when expressed in legends, often takes the form of armed conflict. There cannot but be a subtext that says that if you face injustice, you must fight back. Two issues occur as a result of this. Firstly, diplomatic techniques and efforts that precede the conflict take a backseat in epic storytelling. Secondly, the definition of injustice is in itself quite grey, and has been made even more complicated by the fact that public opinions today are susceptible to false news, misinformation, and personal charisma of an online content creator who may simply be exercising his/her bias. Thus, it is quite a challenge for educators to encourage young girls to be "brave" while simultaneously teaching virtues of non-violence; to explain that not all difficulties in life equate to injustice; to explain the nuances of diplomacy while establishing that such is not "lying" or "being fake". An unfortunate outcome of a selective narration on the other hand may lead to an unbalanced or partial understanding of historical context, thereby rendering empowerment as something to attain through force, and not through calculation, negotiation, or strategy.

iii) Pride of Lineage

As a descendant of the powerful Sailo clan and being the wife of one, Ropuiliani carried within her the consciousness of heritage, status, and the responsibilities that came with it. Oral histories reveal that Sailo chiefs were believed to be "above everything, even the moon and sun," and this sense of supremacy deeply shaped her character (B. Lalthangliana, personal communication, February 16, 2024). At times, this consciousness led to a certain social exclusivity. Accounts mention that she refused to mingle with the *hnamchawm* (the common people), a reflection of the deep social hierarchies of her time (Lalbiakzami, 2005; Kiangte, 2014). Her lifestyle further underscored this divide: she insisted to eat fresh meal for every sitting—freshly cooked rice, vegetables, and meat—while leftovers were given

to the *vanlung* or servants who lived in the chief's household (Zofa, 2020). She was vocally and publicly against her sister marrying a commoner, and even at the time of her capture and her incarceration, she expected and received special treatment worthy of royalty (Khiangte, 2014). This may also be one of the underlying reasons for her absolute refusal to yield under the British rule. Although popular narratives often portrayed her hostility towards the invaders as stemming from the love she had for the people and homeland (personal communications – Prof JV Hluna, February 19, 2024; Prof Khiangte, February 19, 2024; Lalthuama, March 13, 2024; Dothuama, April 2, 2024), it is likely that her lineage marked by pride and an unyielding sense of honour is what drove her to resoluteness even at her deathbed.

Today, egalitarianism is disseminated as one of the core values that everyone must conform to particularly in issues related to ascribed achievements (Parsons, 1951) of caste, class, race, ethnicity, gender, etc. - if not intrinsically, then at least at face value. Added to this is the fact that a common lesson taught to the youth today, in formal and informal forms, is that one should maintain one's self-esteem but also to be humble. As difficult as this concoction of values is difficult to execute in itself, now the personalities of role models have to be carefully sewn in as well. In this light Ropuiliani and her motivations and achievements suddenly seem a lot shallower. How would one encourage a young girl to reach her full potential if she were not from a "proper" lineage?

Educators thus need to understand two important philosophical musings. Firstly, the signifier "pride" and all it signifies needs context to determine its acceptability as a value. For instance, aristocratic pride comes with its own strict rules of discipline, abstinence and separation which commoners are significantly free from. Secondly, a knowledge of the theory of structural functionalism would explain that given a particular society like that of Ropuiliani's era, stratification such as that of chieftainship (and hence Sailo superiority) was necessary to maintain order (Davis & Moore, 1945). The reward for adhering to the aforementioned strict rules consequently is the very pride and status that has come to have dubious value today.

We of course, live in a different time today, but that doesn't mean that one has to attach today's sensibilities and political correctness to a bygone era. However, this suggestion could arguably be a moot point as educators of young children seldom tend to be trained in philosophies of the social sciences. Even if they were trained so, it becomes a tricky affair to impart such knowledge to young girls in a sensible manner.

iv) The Institution of Concubinage

Another noteworthy aspect of Ropuiliani's life was that she remained the sole wife of her husband Vandula, which was rare in an era when polygamy was widely accepted (personal

communication - Dothuama, April 2, 2024; Siblings of Lalsangzuali Sailo, March 27, 2024). The practice of keeping a *hmei* (concubine) was open to anyone in the community, though it was particularly prevalent among chiefs, wealthy families, and men of high social standing. While even common men could keep a concubine, as it often brought domestic discord, with quarrels frequently breaking out between wives and concubines, it was primarily the chiefs who maintained multiple *hmei*, as they had the resources and influence to do so (Perry, 1976). In fact, concubines occupied a position of privilege in society. Favoured by the chief, they enjoyed elevated social status, and it was not unusual for ambitious fathers to offer their daughters as concubines to chiefs in hopes of improving their family's standing (Dokhuma, 2008).

Keeping this cultural context in mind, Vandula's devotion to Ropuiliani alone sets him apart from his contemporaries. Now, there is a small possibility that he simply was not interested in other partners, but given the norms of the times as well as the pride in the testimonies of the descendants, it does seem that it was Ropuiliani's exceptional qualities that led her to commanding respect and stature as a sole partner. From an anthropologist's point of view this is an enlightening piece of information that establishes the empowerment of Ropuiliani.

Even with all these historical inputs at play, young girls raised in a monogamous family/society will likely find it difficult to fully grasp that being a sole wife is an achievement. In fact, for them Vandula having Ropuiliani as his only wife would be seen as the "normal" or "right" way to be. For them, this whole line of discussion would ostensibly conclude with the analysis that "all" the other chiefs were immoral, and rather than see it as the empowerment of Ropuiliani, they would see it as a lesson on Vandula's unshakeable moral core. Moreover, even if an educator were to overcome this barrier, it would be quite indelicate, perhaps illegal, to explain the intricacies of the support system Ropuiliani might have provided her husband that left him no further desire for other partners.

v) Ropuiliani's Conservative Views

Unfortunately, role models come in a package deal so to speak; and their views and actions cannot be selective handpicked for admiration.

Beyond her political and administrative achievements, Ropuiliani's life also reflected the traditional roles of women in Mizo society. She was a conservative woman, deeply family-oriented, placing the welfare of her clan above all else. Her response to her daughter-in-law's remarriage after the death of her second son illustrates her strong convictions regarding familial responsibilities (Lalbiakzami, 2005). Viewing the remarriage as a betrayal of her late son's memory, Ropuiliani assumed full responsibility for her grandchildren, bringing them under her care and even granting them a separate village to govern despite their exclusion from their grandfather's legacy (ibid p.51).

While Ropuiliani's views and actions may have stemmed from responsibilities inherited as a matriarch, and that her eventual goal was that of generosity and caregiving, it must be considered here that in contemporary societies, the idea of remarriage is set in the foundation that a woman should be free from social constraints if her marriage were to end in divorce or death. India has witnessed multiple issues of social reforms for remarriage in her history, from Lord Dalhousie's Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act of 1856, to Brahmo Samaj's propagation of social reforms including widow remarriage, to the present Special Marriage Act of 1954 which permits every citizen of India, regardless of religion or faith, or their marital history, to enter into marriage. Thus, the younger generation who have been taught that a woman's remarriage is an act of liberation and empowerment may develop an overall disdain for Ropuiliani due to her views and actions on the matter.

IV. Conclusion

The paper has hopefully sufficiently demonstrated that when it comes to the issue of empowerment there is a difference between semantics and actualisation; where the latter must be put in a wider historical, social, and cultural context to find its acceptability in not just modern value systems but also norms entailed in prevalent familial upbringings. Female role models and their selection as icons of empowerment thus becomes more than the simple process of choosing the "popular" ones. In the case of Ropuiliani, contextualisation and the unearthing of knowledge that follows brings about a dilemma for educators as they now have to find a balance between the accurate and the appropriate. In order to gain accurate and wholesome knowledge, the means to the empowerment must be given as much (if not more) importance as the end. Moreover, what is entailed in the appropriate is complex in its own right as lack of life experience is a very prerequisite of young minds.

Due to the nature of the content of this paper, the only possible suggestion to solve the dilemma is, quite admittedly, a challenging one and certainly not a quick one. Firstly, educators would need to take on the responsibility of educating themselves in a manner prescribed in this paper. Secondly, a subjective pedagogic tactic, arrived at through the best of their abilities, must be taken in the classroom. Following this, formal documentations of experiences, of success and failure, and student feedback must be maintained, and formally discussed from time to time as required. Only through this trial and error method of creative expressions would one derive at the balance mentioned earlier.

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