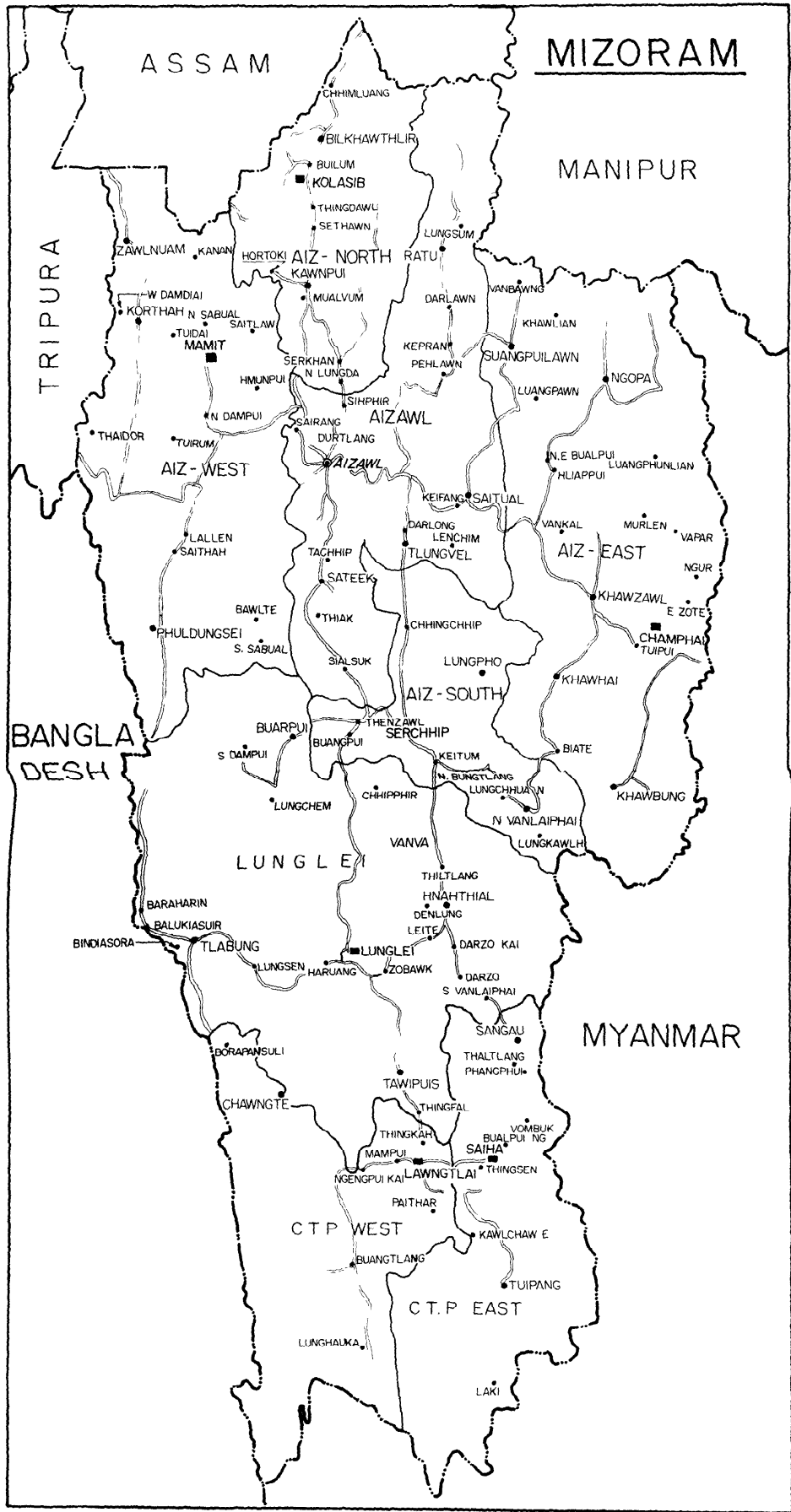




# Flora of Mizoram

Volume - I

**BOTANICAL SURVEY OF INDIA**  
Ministry of Environment and Forest



# FLORA OF MIZORAM

## VOLUME I

Ranunculaceae-Asteraceae

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CHIEF MINISTER  
MIZORAM

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MESSAGE

The forests have been playing an important role in the socio-economic development of the people of the North-eastern region in general and Mizoram in particular. In fact, in Mizoram our lives are inseparable from the forests, as the people still depend largely on the forest resources for their various daily needs. The lush evergreen forests in Mizoram are bestowed with enormous plant wealth which is important not only for the economic well being of the people in the state, but also for the environmental security in the region. However, a sound scientific knowledge about proper identity of the plants, their habitat, distribution and utility for the local communities is essential in order to ensure the availability of these resources on long term basis to meet the needs and aspirations of present as well as future generations. I am glad to know that Botanical Survey of India, the premier research organisation mandated for survey and documentation of plant diversity of the country, through its Eastern Circle at Shillong, has done a commendable job in carrying out this onerous task in a professional manner.

The Flora of Mizoram, Vol. I, is first of the series, documenting various facets of the floristic diversity in the state. I am sure, the information contained in the book will be of immense use for various stakeholders of biodiversity in the state the people, the scientists and the managers alike.

The editors and contributors deserve all praise for bringing out this exhaustive volume at a time when the environmental issues have become a major concern for the people and the Governments across the world.

(ZORAMTHANGA)

Dated Aizawl,  
14<sup>th</sup> June, 2001

## PREFACE

The last decade has witnessed the emergence of great awareness about the desirability of sustainable use of biodiversity and its conservation. But this is possible only through the availability of proper information on the identity of the elements of biodiversity, places of occurrence, distribution, habitat, ecology and utility for the local communities. In this context the importance of floristic studies need not be overemphasised. The Botanical Survey of India, whose one of the primary objectives is to document the plant resources of the country in the form of National, Regional, State and District floras, is actively engaged in this task since its reorganisation in 1954. The *Flora of Mizoram* is another important milestone in this direction at a time when the entire world is celebrating "International Mountain Year"

Mizoram, one of the seven sister states of the North-eastern India, lies in the southern most part of the region. The varied physiographic and eco-climatic conditions, met within the state, have adequately expressed itself by supporting a rich vegetation both in luxuriance and diversity. Located between Cachar district of Assam, Kuki hills of Manipur, Chin and Arakan hills of Myanmar and Chittagong hills of Bangladesh, the state displays a close floristic affinity with not only these regions but with other neighbouring and distant part of the world as well. Though the state has been botanically explored since 1899, no comprehensive floristic account on its plant resources is available till date. Besides, the changing concepts in the taxonomy of various families and genera over the last century have made most of the informations available in the Check-lists published by C.E.C. Fischer (1938) and Deb and Dutta (1987) obsolete.

To bridge the gap in our knowledge about its floristic diversity in the light of recent taxonomic studies, to update the existing information in conformity with the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature currently in vogue and as one of the basic mandate of the department, the present study was taken up in late nineteen hundred and eighties. It is largely based on the intensive and extensive collections made by two of the contributors (KPS & DKS) between 1988-1995, as well as those made by other scientists of the department and Dr. M. Sawmljana of the State Forest Department, Mizoram, and housed in the herbarium of Eastern Circle, BSI, Shillong (ASSAM). The

historical collections made by A.T. Gage, J.E. Lesilie, Father Godfrey, Mrs. N. Parry, Rev. W.G.L. Wenger, Rev. R.A. Lorrain, Lorrain Foxall, etc., housed in the Central National Herbarium, BSI, Howrah (CAL), and all relevant literature dealing with the plant resources of the state, were also consulted.

The *Flora of Mizoram* is proposed to be published in three volumes. The present volume, dealing with general chapters, like introduction, physiography, climate, geology and soil, forests and forest types, botanical studies, forestry, economic plants, floristic diversity, references, key to the families, etc. includes taxonomic account of 884 taxa belonging to 403 genera and 90 families from Ranunculaceae to Asteraceae. Of these 172 species and one variety have been recorded for the first time from the state. As southern and South-western part of the state still remain to be thoroughly explored, many more species are expected to be added in future.

It is hoped that the Flora will be useful to the forest managers, botanists, researchers and all those concerned with the study, conservation and sustainable utilisation of the plant resources in the state of Mizoram.

The contributors express their grateful thanks to the Principle Chief Conservator of Forests, Government of Mizoram and his staff for the facilities rendered during the exploration work. We also express our deep sense of gratitude and thanks to Dr. M. Sanjappa, Director and Dr. N.P. Singh, Dr. P.K. Hajra, Dr. B.D. Sharma and Dr. M.P. Nayar, ex-Directors, Botanical Survey of India for their constant encouragement during the course of the present work. Thanks are also due to Shri B.M. Wadhwa, ex-Deputy Director and Dr. V.J. Nair, formerly Scientist-in-charge, Eastern Circle, BSI, Shillong for the facilities and keen interest evinced by them. We also sincerely thank Dr.U.K. Mishra, Senior Geologist, Geological Survey of India, Shillong for providing useful information on the geology of the state, and Dr. T.M. Hynniewta, Deputy Director, Dr. G.P. Sinha, Scientist, Eastern Circle, BSI, Shillong, Shri B.P. Uniyal, Botanist, Northern Circle, BSI, Dehradun and Dr. J.H. Lalramnghinglova, Forest Department, Mizoram for their help in various ways.

The contributors express their thanks to all their present and retired colleagues and staff members of the Eastern Circle, Botanical

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We also express our sincere thanks to the staff of the Publication Unit, Botanical Survey of India, Kolkata, for their help and assistance in arranging the publication of this volume, and to M/s Shiva Offset Press, Dehradun for its quick printing in the present form.

**K.P. Singh**  
**D.K. Singh**



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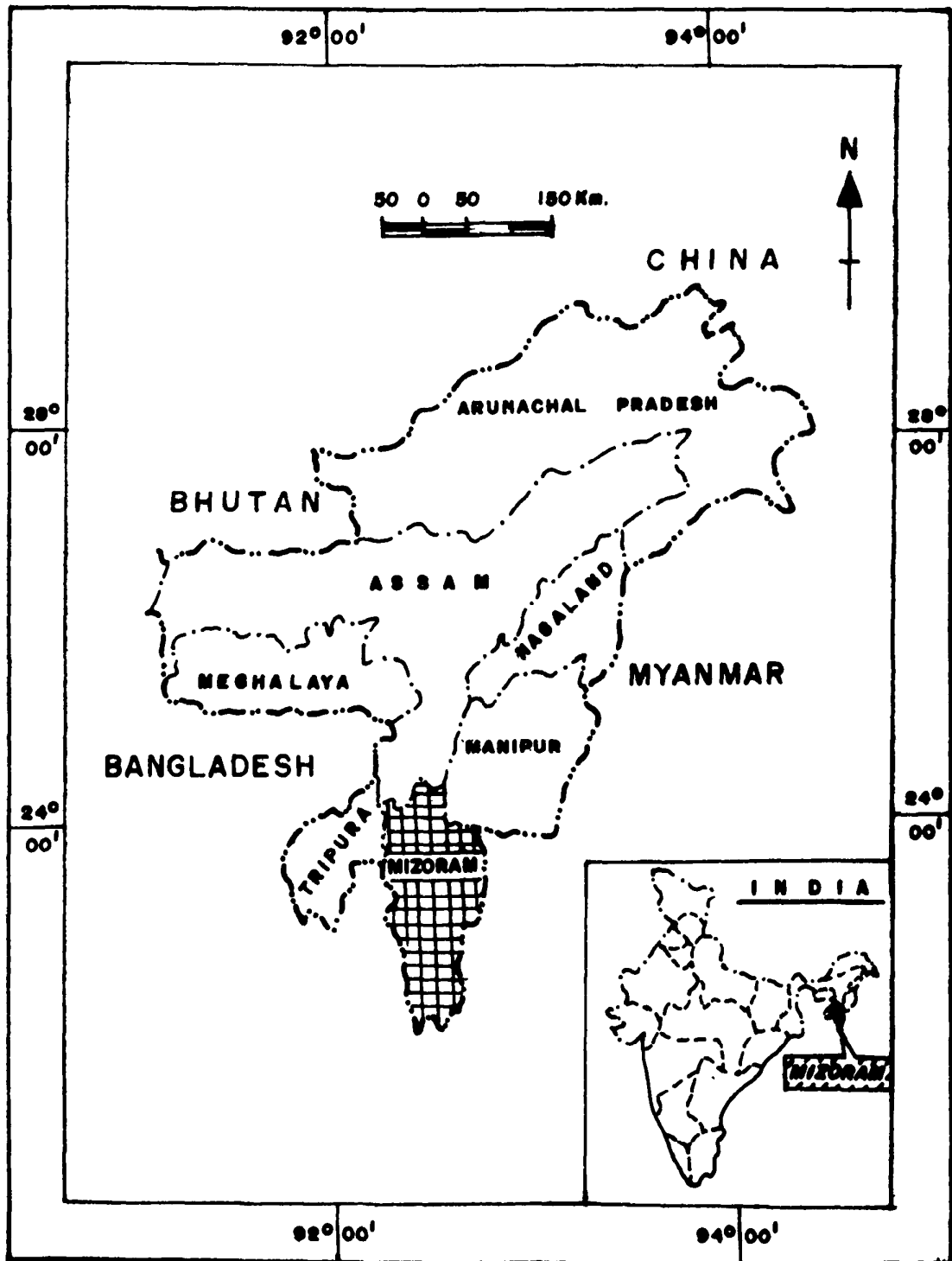
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## INTRODUCTION

The present state of Mizoram or Lushai hills, as it was known formerly, forms tongue shaped rugged mountainous region in the extreme southern fringe of North east India. It was called Lushai hills district during the British period and formed part of undivided Assam. It was renamed as Mizo hills district by the act of Indian Parliament in 1954, and continued to remain the part of undivided Assam till 1971. In 1972 (Anon., 1971), the Mizo district was accorded the status of Union Territory named Mizoram and finally attained full fledged statehood on February 20th, 1987 (Anon. 1986).

Geographically, the state is located between  $21^{\circ}57' - 24^{\circ}30'$  N latitude and  $92^{\circ}15' - 93^{\circ}29'$  E longitude, covering 21,081 sq. km of land area. The length of the state from North to South is about 277 km, while East - West width extends over 121 km. It has a long inter- state boundary with Assam (123 km), Tripura (66 km), and Manipur (95 km). Besides, Mizoram shares international borders on three sides, with Myanmar in the East and South (*ca* 404 km) and Bangladesh in the West (*ca* 306 km). It is surrounded in the North by the Cachar district of Assam, in the East by the state of Manipur, in the East-south and South-west by the Chin and Arakan hills of Myanmar and the western side by the state of Tripura and Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh.

The tropic of Cancer passes through the middle of the state (just South of the Aizawl town). Initially there were three districts in Mizoram. Aizawl in the North has an area of 12,588 sq. km, while central district Lunglei occupies 4,536 sq. km and southern most district of Chintuipui extends over an area of 3,957 sq. km. Recently for administrative convenience, the Aizawl district has been divided into five districts, viz. Aizawl (with district headquarter at Aizawl), Aizawl North (with district headquarter at Kolasib), Aizawl East (with district headquarter at Champhai), Aizawl West (with district headquarter at Mamit) and Aizawl South (with district headquarter at Sherchip). Lunglei remained undivided, while Chintuipui has again been divided into two districts Chintuipui East (with district headquarter Saiha) and Chintuipui West (with district headquarter Lawngtalai). Thus, today there are total 8 districts in the state. The state has about 681 villages and three autonomous district councils, viz. Lai, Mara and Chakma in Chintuipui district.



Map of North East India showing Mizoram



A view of tropical evergreen forest in West Mizoram



A view of Dampa Wildlife Sanctuary





A degraded landscape



A view of tropical evergreen forest in Dampa Wildlife Sanctuary



Patches of sub tropical forests alternating with Jhum fallows



A view of tropical vegetation near Variengte



A view of bamboo forest near Tamdil



A view of Tung [***Vernicia fordii*** (Hemsl.) Airy Shaw] plantation near Tamdil



A view of Tamdil Lake



Coffee (*Coffea arabica* L.) plantation near Kolasib



***Michelia champaca* L.**



***Cleome speciosa* Raf.**



***Mahonia pycnophylla* (Fedde) Takeda.**



***Mesua ferrea* L.**



**Saurauia nepaulensis DC.**



**Abelmoschus manihot (L.) Medikus var. *pungens* (Roxb.) Hochr.**



**Bombax ceiba L.**



**Semecarpus anacardium L. f.**





***Cordia dichotoma*** Forst.- a common medicinal plant



***Crotalaria anagyroides* Kunth**



***Derris robusta* (Roxb. ex DC.) Benth.**



***Aganope thyrsoflora* (Benth.) Polhill**



***Butea monosperma* (Lam.) Taub.**



***Erythrina arborescens* Roxb.**



***Bauhinia glauca*** (Wallich ex Benth.) Benth.



***Saraca asoca* (Roxb.) de Wilde**



***Acacia pennata* (L.) Willd.**



**Acacia eburnea (L.f.) Willd.**



**Mimosa pudica L.**





**Rubus rosifolius** Smith



**Rubus alceifolius** Poir.



**Combretum flagrocarpum** C.B. Clarke



**Passiflora foetida L.**



**Coffea arabica L.**



***Alangium chinense* (Lour.) Harms**



***Mussaenda roxburghii* Hook.f.**



***Spilanthes calva* DC.**



***Tithonia rotundifolia* (Miller) S.F. Blake**



***Vernonia volkameriaefolia* DC.**

## Physiography

### *Geomorphology*

The geographical milieu of Mizoram has been discussed earlier in detail by S. Singh (1994). The state is a mountainous region and consists of seven, long, North-South traversing parallel ranges with intervening valleys. Infact, these are broken into innumerable small hills, locally called "Tlang" with sharp and pointed hill tops. These look like hundreds of pyramids grouped together. The slopes are steep on all sides but much steeper in the West than the East and the average height is about 900 m above the mean sea level.

The terrain is immature and young and subject to continuous denudation in response to recent tectonism and other various exogenic processes. The landform in the state is the result of erosion in which the running water had played a major role from the very beginning (Anon., 1979). The major geomorphic elements observed in the area are both structural and topographic 'high' and 'depressions' 'flats' and 'slopes' sculptured on the topographic surface of Mizoram in a linear fashion. In Mizoram the 'depressions' are in all cases in accordance with the normal first order structural elements, but the topographic 'highs' are recorded both in the structural 'high' and 'depressions'. The physiographic expression of the state is imparted by approximately N-S trending steep, mostly anticlinal, longitudinal (linear fashion), parallel to sub-parallel hill ranges and synclinal narrow valleys with series of parallel hummocks or topographic highs (in an aerial fashion). The ridges are highly dissected with the formation of deep gorges, spurs, keels and cols, which developed due to intensive erosion during the isostatic adjustment (Anon., 1974). In general, the western limbs of the anticlines are steeper than the eastern limbs. Faulting in many cases, produced steep faults scarps, especially along the steep dipping fault planes. The difference of elevation between valleys, floors and hill tops greatly varies from West to East, the range being 200 m to 600 m. The steep hill ranges are more towards East to West.

The major drainage pattern having different bifurcation ratios follow the N-S trending depressions and gorges in the low level topography, separated by high land topography in between them. The depressions and gorges, in most cases, are the physiographic expressions of the faults or other structural patterns. The tributaries and streamlets form 'angular'



'sub-parallel' to 'parallel' and 'dendritic' drainage pattern and run both parallel and across the topographic depressions and highs. The slope of the streams are moderate. In some cases the main rivers are restricted within the comparatively soft shale horizons. The main drainage system in the area falls within the piedmont and straight reaches. The water holding capacity of the soil is low because of its clayey nature.

### *Geology*

The general geology of the Mizoram state shows repetitive succession of Neogene (40-20 million years), arenaceous (sandy) and argillaceous (clayey) sediments, subsequently folded into a series of North-South trending, longitudinal plunging, anticlines and synclines. The Mizo hills are part of the folded belt of Tripura -Cachar-Mizoram and adjoining areas which inturn constitute a part of major Assam-Arakan basin. The generalized succession (from older to younger) of lithostratigraphic units in the state is as follows:

*Barail Group* : Mainly argillaceous, the Barail Group has monotonous sequence of shales within interband of siltstone and localised Micaceous sandstone. Oligocene in age, the rocks have low ( $3^{\circ}$  -  $15^{\circ}$ ) rolling dipsand, which have been folded into a broad anticline with the axis trending approximately East - West.

*Surma Group* : This group, Mio Pliocene in age, is represented by the Bhuban and the Boka Bill Formations. The Bhuban formations, which are predominantly arenaceous, have been further sub-divided, based on lithology and order of superposition, into three units, viz. the lower, middle and the upper Bhubans. The Boka bill Formation remained undivided.

*Lower Bhuban* : It is predominantly arenaceous and includes fine to very fine grained, compact, bluish ash, greyish coloured massive to well bedded lethic greywacke sandstones, full of turbidite features. Besides, well laminated siltstone, silty shale/shale (olive green) interlaminations are found to occur within this. The Bhuban is found to occur in the anticlinal cores of the high ranges and in most cases crop out along the faulted contacts.

*Middle Bhuban* : It shows dominance of shales and mud stone with interbands of sandstone.

*Upper Bhuban* : This unit overlies the Middle Bhuban conformably and their contact is gradational to transitional to the underlying rocks. It is predominantly arenaceous and comprises mostly hard, compact, massive to well-laminated, bluish grey to grey coloured sandy greywacke with siltstone/shale interlamination. The shales are olive green in colour. At places, silty shales are dominant. Sometimes snadstone bands have calcareous matrix and often contain narrow bands of calcareous pebbly conglomeratic sandstones with lamellibranch fossils. Besides, snadstone bands contain large calcareous boulders of various shapes and sizes. They exhibit typical turbidite structures with much ridge structures and ripple-drift-cross laminations.

*Bokabil Formation* : The rocks belonging to this formation occur conformably over the Upper Bhuban and their contact with the lower units are transitional. It is represented by soft, grey coloured, friable loosely packed medium to fine grained feldspathic sandy greywacke sandy shale with interlaminated silt/shale alternations. Occasionally, brownish yellow ferruginous sandstones are also present. The rocks of this formation exhibit typical turbidite features, with multiple grading, and ripple-drift-cross laminations etc. At places, rough cross-beddings and large current bedding are also present.

### ***Structure***

The major structural trend in the area coincides with the regional tectonic lineaments. The general strike of the bed is N-S to N5° E/ N5° W-S5° W/ S5° E, with dips varying from 40° to 50° either towards West or East. Structurally, the rocks of the state lie on highly compressed asymmetrical anticlinal ridges and narrow valleys, with parallel to sub-parallel sub-vertical axial planes. The axes of the folds show convergence pattern in the directions of plunge, except in few cases where they run parallel. The limbs of the major folds are folded into small anticlines and synclines mostly in chevron style. Mesoscopic folds are observed mainly in the incompetent Middle Bhubans which are bounded by the competent Lower and Upper Bhubans. The overall geometry maintains similarity throughout the state. The intensity of fold movements is greater in the East than in the West.

Primary sedimentary structures recorded in the area are of deep sea flysch type structures, viz. graded bedding, the flute casts, load casts,

ridge structures, chevron marks, parting lineations, groove marks, ripple-drift-cross laminations of several types, flame structures, ripple-trough convolutions and the complete sequence of Bouma's (1962) turbidite structures, etc. The palaeocurrent directions shown by all primary features, reveal a mean southerly transport direction indicating a southerly basinal plunge.

### *Economic geology*

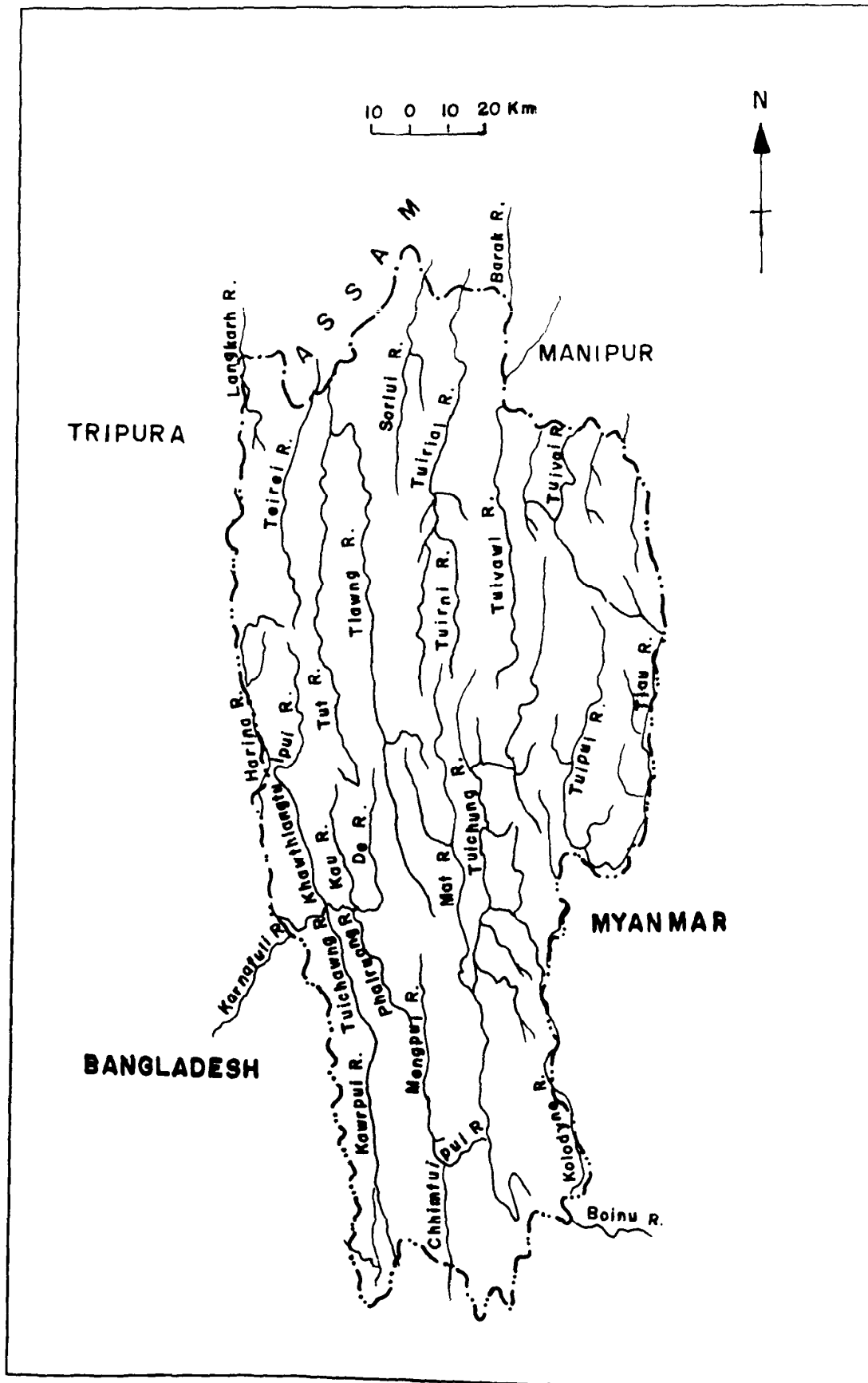
The state lacks in mineral deposits of economic importance. The Bhuban sandstone is being used as road metal and same can be used as building material also. Many surface and subsurface manifestations of natural gas have been recorded in the state during the explorations. This indicate the possibility of storage of petroleum on the anticlines of Variengte ridge and in the vicinity of Chhattachura range.

### **Drainage**

The humid conditions created by the drainage system are important as far as growth of vegetation of an area is concerned. It is observed that most of the vegetation in the Mizoram occurs along the river courses and adjoining areas. The drainage pattern of Mizoram is virtually shaped by its physiography and the geological structures. The drainage follows the synclinal valleys between the parallel ranges. The rivers, tributaries and streamlets run through the depressions and gorges, forming angular dendritic drainage pattern across the topographic depressions and heights. The slopes of the streams are moderate. In some cases the main rivers are restricted in their comparatively soft shale horizons. Most of the rivers either flow northwards or southwards and a watershed is formed in the middle of the state. The water holding capacity of the soil is low because of its clayey nature. The rainfall which is the only source of water supply to the rivers of Mizoram, is well spread throughout the year except November, December and January. However, all the rivers are not perennial.

There are number of rivers in Mizoram. The largest river is Tlawng (Dhaleshwari) which is 185.15 km in length. It is followed by Tiak (159.39 km in length), Chimtuipui or Kolodyne (130.46 km), Khawthlangtuipui or Karnaphuli (128.08 km), Tuichang (120.75 km), Tuirial or Sonai (117.53 km), Tuichawng (107.87 km), Mat (90. 16 km), Tuipui or Khawchhak (86.94 km), Tuivawl (72.45 km), Teirei (70.84 km), Tuirini (59. 57 km),

FLORA OF MIZORAM



Drainage Map of Mizoram

Serlui (56.35 km) etc. The important rivers in the northern parts of the state are Tlawng (Dhaleswari), the Tuirial (Sonai) and the Tuivawl. The river Tlawng (Dhaleswari) passes from South to North in the western parts of Mizoram and then it enters into Cachar plain and ultimately joins Barak river. Originating from Zowbawk village (8 km East of Lunglei town) and engulfing the tributaries, viz. Guttur (Tut) and Pakwa (Teirei) in the western flank, and medium Lui and Bhairabi Cherra from the eastern side it flows majestically in North. Tut and Teirie run parallel to Tlawng for about 60 km and then join the Tlawng. Similarly, other North flowing rivers, like Sailut Lui and Langkaih (Longai) and Thingtlang (Singla) are important. The river Longai forms the border between Tripura and Mizoram in the West.

The Tuirial (Sonai) river flowing northward passes through Chaiffil range in the East and Mualkhangtlang, Ungarchhungtlang and Person Chhiptlang in the West.

The river Tuivawl and its tributary Tuival forms an important drainage system in the North-east part of Mizoram. These rivers form the borderline between Mizoram and Manipur and finally join Barak river of Tipaimukh.

In the southern part of Mizoram, the Chimtuipui drainage system is important where river Chimtuipui (Kolodyne) has four tributaries - the Mat, the Tuichang, the Tyao and the Tuipui. It forms boundary line between India and Myanmar in the South eastern part of Mizoram. It originates from the mountains in Myanmar, flows first westward and then southwards in Mizoram and then reenters the Myanmar.

The Khawtlangtuipui (Karnafuli), with its tributaries - the Tuichawng, the Phaireng, the Kuo, the Deh and the Tuiliangpui (Sazailui) form the western drainage system. This river originates from central hills of Mizoram and flows Westwards into Bangladesh at Demagiri and finally joins Bay of Bengal. The drainage system is of rectangular or parallel pattern. The river Tuichang and its tributaries Muthului, Jamilalui and Tlangpuilui joins from the South - west and Damtelui, Rangtalui, Roilui from the East. Similarly, the Tuivawl, the Tuichang and Tuilianpui have parallel courses for quite a length, but run in opposite directions. The Tuichawng and the Phaireng flow Northward and join the Deh. After this the Deh turns to the West and meets the Karnaphuli which flows South-west.

## Climate

Mizoram enjoys moderate climate. In the lower altitude at foot hills and the valleys, typical tropical climate is obtained while in the mid region with large expanse, the subtropical moist climate is experienced. A special feature of the climate here is the occurrence of North-westerly thunderstorms, sweeping over the hills in entire state with heavy down-pour during April and May being very common.

Temperature varies from about 11° C in winter to 30° C in summer or spring. Winter or cold season starts from November to February with temperature ranging between 8° C and 20° C. The season is pleasant, dry and refreshing during morning and evening hours usually with no rain or very little rain. Winter is followed by warm or spring season, starting from March and continuing upto May with temperatures ranging between 19° C and 30° C. Occasional rainfall occurs and sky is not clear. The rainy or summer season lasts for a longer period and heavy rainfall comes during June to August which covers 89 per cent of the total annual rainfall. September and October are the autumn months when rains cease and temperature is usually between 19° C and 25° C.

During winter, the remote, high altitude places of Champhai region, like Zote and Ngur in the East, and Bualpui and Phowngpui or Phawngpuitlang (Blue mountain) in the South, experience low temperature, while maximum temperature during summer season is experienced at Kanhmun, Lakicherra and Bhairabi in the North-western part of Mizoram, Demagiri and Chawngte in the western side and Tuipang area in the southern region.

The state receives annual rainfall between 2000 - 3600 mm from both North-east and South-west monsoons. The North-western part of the state (Longai, Tut and Dhaleshwari region) gets maximum rainfall of over 3500 mm annually. The southern part of Mizoram, including Lunglei area also gets higher rainfall of over 2500 mm. The high rainfall with moist climate is conducive for the vigorous growth of varied types of vegetation,

## Soil

The soils of Mizoram have developed from shale, sandstones and mudstone. The lateritic soil with high percentage of acidity is the common

characteristic of the soil of Mizoram. The pH value varies from 4.1 to 5.8. Due to heavy rainfall the soil is weathered and leached and as a result is poor in potash, phosphorus and organic carbon contents. Being low in humus contents its colour is yellow, reddish and extremely porous and is unsuited for agricultural purposes.

## **Plains**

The plains or low lying areas in the state are rare except in small patches here and there and in between the mountain ranges. These plains are believed to be possibly the silted beds of lakes which existed at the hill tops. The plains have thick layers of rich alluvial soil. The largest of these plains, the Champhai plain, is situated near Myanmar border about 150 km East of Aizawl town. It covers an area of about 11 sq. km and is suitable for wet rice cultivation.

Another such plain area is at North Vanlaiphai which is situated 90 km South-east of Aizawl. The plain is 10 km long and about half to one kilometer wide. It is also suitable for wet rice cultivation. In the Mat river basin near Thenzawl (*ca* 40 km from Sherchip) is another such area which is situated 90 km away from the Aizawl. In the North-west Mizoram, between the rivers Longkhaih and Tlawng, there is a small area below 600 m, near Lokicherra and Bhairabi. Similarly, near Demagiri, the river Karnaphuli and its tributaries form a small low lying area.

## **Peaks**

Mountain peaks in Mizoram usually occur in the eastern and southern side. The ranges in the West are steep and precipitous, whereas those on eastern sides are somewhat gentler. The sides of the hills are covered with forests. The highest peak in Mizoram is Phawngpuitlang (Blue Mountain) which has a height of *ca* 2,157 m and is situated in East Chintuipui district in South-east Mizoram. Some other peaks in Mizoram are Lengtengtlang (2,141 m), Surtlang (1,967 m), Lurthlang (1,935 m), Tantlang (1,929 m), Vapartlang (1,860 m), Chalfithlang (1,866 m), Hrantuzzotlang (1,854 m), Zopuitlang (1850 m), Tawitlang (1837 m), Mawmrangtlang (1812 m), etc.

## Lakes

There are a number of beautiful lakes in the state that provide habitat for growth of aquatic vegetation and tropical and subtropical vegetation surrounding them. Some important lakes are as follows:

**Palak lake** : This oval shaped lake, 200 m long and 150 m wide with an area of 30 ha, is situated about 130 km South-west of Saiha and 5 km from Pahu village, in the East Chintuipui district. The local people, the Lakhers generally shun the lake area as they believe that the lake is the abode of demons and evil spirits, who are displeased when people enter this area and make them fall sick. The lake is surrounded by tropical evergreen and moist deciduous forests comprising species, like *Dipterocarpus retusus*, *Michelia champaca*, *Schima wallichii*, *Mesua ferrea*, *Chukrasia tabularis*, *Toona ciliata*, *Bischofia javanica*, *Artocarpus chama*, bamboos and canes, etc. The lake is abode of aquatic birds with different species of wild duck.

**Tamdil** : This lake is situated *ca* 110 km South-east of Aizawl town and 7 km from Siatul village in Aizawl district. 'Tam' is a shortened form of the Mizo word 'antam' which means mustard plant and 'dil' means lake. Tamdil means lake of mustard plant. People believe that there was a big mustard plant in place where the lake is situated. Whenever this plant was cut, water came out incessantly thereby creating a lake. This is also surrounded by the tropical evergreen and moist deciduous forests.

**Rungdil** : The lake, having an area of *ca* 2.5 ha, is situated *ca* 14 km from Suangpuilawn village in Aizawl district. Rungdil means lake of partridge and was one time the habitat of a large number of a partridges. It is also surrounded by tropical evergreen and deciduous forests.

## People and Population

The inhabitants of Mizoram are now known by the generic name of Mizo which means people (Mi) of the hills (Zo). The original stock of the state population was Mongoloid or of Tibeto-Burman origin (Chatterjee, 1951), who migrated to the present location from the southern and western parts of China through upper Myanmar. Over 80 per cent population of the state belongs to Christians. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, etc. are also found, but in minority.



One of the well known tribes of the Kuki-Chin group invaded this territory in early 19th century. Historically there has been considerable admixture of different tribes in this area, ultimately leading to three main sub groups Lushais, Pawis and Lakhers. These apart, there is a substantial representation of non Mizo tribes, such as the Chakma and Riangs in the southern and South-western part of the state.

*Mizos or Lusei (wrongly spelt Lushai)*

The Mizos included the following tribes Ralte, Paite, Dulien, Poi, Sukte, Pankhup, Jahao, Fanai (Molienpui), Molbem, Taute, Lakher, Dalang, Mar, Khuangli, Falam (Tashous) Leillul and Tangur. The Lusei sub group consists of ten commoners (Pachau, Chhangte, Chawngte, Hauhmar, Chuaunga, Chuahang, Hrahse, Tochwawng, Vanchlawng and Chhakhchhuak) and six chief clans (Zadeng, Pallian, Thangluah, Rivung, Rokhum and Sailo).

Although several languages are spoken in the Mizoram today, but the main language is Lusei. Other languages of the Kuki-Chin groups spoken by different tribes are Zahoo, Lakher, Hmar, Paite, Lai and Ralte. Some of the clans were not yet absorbed by the Luseis. These tribes were the Fanai, the Ralte, the Paite and the Rangte.

Fanai came from Myanmar to Mizoram and established a village near Champhai. They moved further South-west and occupied successively various sites to the West and North-west of Lunglei along the western bank of the Tyao and Kolodyne river between the Baite in the North and the Sangau in the South.

Ralte were found scattered in the Lushai villages to the North of Aizawl, including some close to Aizawl. They had distinct social customs and had noticeable differences in dialects. Among the Duliens or Lushais, the Ralte language is understood and the Sailo chiefs habitually use Ralte language.

Paite belonged to old Kuki group (Paite means goers). In Mizoram, they are confined to an area between two rivers Tiau and Run, in the North - eastern Mizoram. Most of them live in Manipur (Churachandpur) and have preserved their traditional traits. Like Paites, the Rangtes were living mostly in South - western Manipur, adjoining Mizoram.

### *Pawis and Lakhers*

In south Lushai hills one found the Fanais (earlier known as Moliempuis) inhabiting the land between the rivers Tuichawng and the Kolodyne on the West and Tao and the Kolodyne on the East.

Further south the Pawi tribes inhabited the territory on both the Indian and the Myanmar sides. The term Pawi was not strictly speaking the name of a clan but it was the term used by the Lushais for all the people living near Kolodyne. Further South were the people belonging to the Lakher tribe. The Lakhers inhabited South-eastern corner in Chimtuipui district of the state and South of Haka sub division of Chin district of Myanmar. Geographically the tribe was located West of Kolodyne river and South of Blue Mountain. Lakhers belong to the branch of 'Lai' tribes. These tribes along with sub-tribes were known as Shendus. The Lushais used the name Pawi for the Lai tribes. Pawis are settled in Lunglei subdivision. The Lakhers lived in the villages immediately in the South of the Pawi villages. Pawis as well as Lakhers collectively were called Shendus by the tribes in the western hills and the plains. The Lakhers call themselves Mara, but the Lushai call them Lakhers. Lakhers are mostly concentrated in Tuipang block and few villages near Sangau block. The Pawi district council has its headquarter at Lawngtalai, while that of Lakher district councils at Saiha.

### *Chakmas*

Chakmas are a distinct tribe localised in the South-western part of Mizoram, predominantly in Chawgate Block. This tribe belong to eastern group of the Indo-Aryan family whose dialect is Chakma. It is a corrupt form of Bengali language written in corrupt Burmese script.

Among other tribes whose reference has been made earlier are Hmar, Paite, and Riang. Riang are mostly in the North-west part of Mizoram along the Tripura border, while Hmar and the Paite are in the North-east corner of Mizoram.

Thus, different tribes and subtribes came down to the present Mizoram, in successive waves and settled down in different parts of Mizoram. However, the settled life was disturbed by perpetual fear of raid and inter-tribe feuds. The advent of British rule and the missionaries activities implanted a sense of love, value, sacrifice in their minds.