

### CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

This research employs mixed-method using Netnography and surveys to understand new media use in general as well as specifically with regards to social media activism by the netizens of Mizoram. The rationale for using mixed-method for the study stems from the idea that an objective analysis of social media users and their interactions and methods of use was insufficient, therefore, a survey that provides the users' perspectives and attitudes towards their usage and the efficacy of said use hopefully provides a wider understanding of the topic under scrutiny.

Netnographic study was conducted by means of archival data that was pulled from Twitter and processed using NVivo which is a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). NVivo is a qualitative research software that is developed by QSR International and is specifically used to analyse unstructured text, audio, video, and picture data from sources such as (but not restricted to) interviews, focus groups, surveys, social media, and journal articles (Dhakal, 2022; Phillips & Lu, 2018; Maher, et al., 2018). A qualitative analysis of the tweets was done using a Coding Sheet on the software. The research employs customized coding wherein general codes for social media activism were used as well as codes that are more specific to the events under study. The analytical coding utilized will help in abstracting, refining, generalizing, and finally theorizing the findings. Inductive method will be employed, whereby the research will begin with observations, followed by recognition of patterns, and finally generalization. This means that findings will be supported by the data and existing literature as well as theories. This method is in contradiction to deductive methods that start with existing theories to formulate hypothesis, which, depending on the data collected and analysed, gets rejected or accepted (Streefkerk, 2019). An analysis of the photos that were shared during social media activism will also be presented in the findings section to study the mechanism of activism in online spaces.

Surveys were conducted using questionnaires for the specific purpose of identifying the relationships between online participation and offline participation, and to study whether the users of new media technologies in Mizoram consider the technology as mass distraction.

With regards to sampling methods, netnography employed snow-ball sampling while survey questionnaires were distributed online and made openly accessible to anyone willing to

participate with a condition that they are from Mizoram. Details of the samples and sampling methods will be discussed on the later sections of the chapter.

### **3.1 Netnography as a methodology**

In its most basic form, netnography is ethnography that is done on online spaces. It involves studies of online communities, and/or online content that is put there by an internet user or users. According to Kozinets, Netnography –

“...uses social science methods to present a new approach to conducting ethical and thorough ethnographic research that combines archival and online communications work, participation and observation, with new forms of digital and network data collection, analysis and research representation.” (Kozinets, 2015, p 1).

The method offers procedures to carry out participant-observation regarding online communities and cultures that exist through computer-mediated communications (Kozinets, 2010).

Although, the method gained popular use in Market Research, it is evident from the existing literature that use netnography are expanding across various subjects. Such areas include Sociology, Geography, Tourism, Gender and Sexuality, Media Studies, Addiction Research, and Education, to name a few. Burford and Park, scholars in the field of library and information studies, utilised netnography to explore how mobile tablet devices and associated software and applications impact access to information for the youth (Burford & Park, 2014). In the subject of Sociology, Cronin and his colleagues examined talks about excessive dietary and alcoholic intake using netnography in order to demonstrate and build a hypothesis of their "carnavalesque" characteristics (Cronin, et al., 2014). In order to explore the linguistic, social, and cultural practises of young Bangladeshi and Mongolian adults, researchers utilised the method to study the groups' interactions on Facebook (Sultana, et al., 2014). Grabher and Ibert used netnographic analysis of online hybrid professional-hobbyist communities to draw the conclusion that the physical distance in these communities should not be considered a deficiency but rather an asset that helped them to collaboratively learn different means of collaboration besides face-to-face learning (Grabher & Ibert, 2014). Societies have gradually

adapted to the change that social media presents, instigating new forms of intimacy and collaboration.

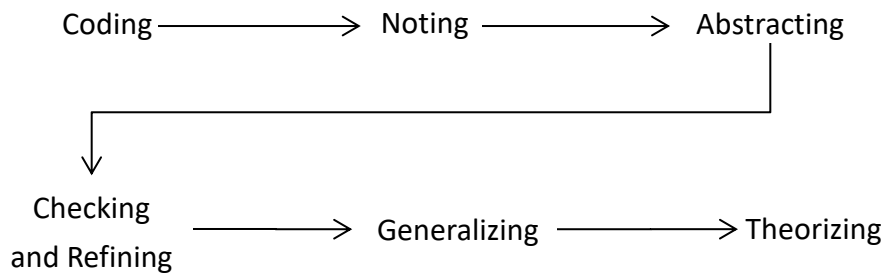
### **3.1.1 Planning**

Netnographic method demands a researcher to – 1) define the research focus; 2) identify the site/community for study; 3) immersion and data collection; 4) analysis and interpretations; and 5) presentation of the findings (Kozinets, 2010).

In terms of research focus, the qualitative analysis of Twitter content attempted to study how and why netizens of Mizoram undergo social media activism. For this reason, four incidents that occurred in Mizoram (sometimes with neighbouring states), was studied. Tweets from these four events were identified as the data that will be analysed. The community, in this case, therefore, in the broadest sense, comprise of the *twitterati* of Mizoram.

Kozinets suggested the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) to assist in cataloguing and organizing data (Kozinets 2010, p. 127). For this purpose, the software NVivo (Version 11 for Windows 10) was used (Maher, et al., 2018). The collection of data as mentioned earlier was done for NVivo using a browser extension called NCapture which is developed by QSR International for NVivo. It works as a Google Chrome extension exclusively and can be used to extract Twitter data that are made publicly accessible i.e. no restrictions to access. The browser extension can collect participant information such as tweets, information such as number of followers and follows, number of retweets for a particular tweet, information of retweets, number of tweets, and the coordinates for the location from where the tweet was made. However, the extension has a flaw whereby it can only collect Twitter archives stretching to 3200 maximum tweets counting back from the most recent ones. This number is not definitive and is still up for inquiry and may even be a temporary problem in the application.

The analysis and interpretations are presented in chapters in upcoming sections. This provides the planning for netnographic research and is dependent on inductive methods to reason for, and generalize, or theorize the arguments for the findings and interpretations (Kozinets, 2010, p. 119).



*Figure 3. Analytical Coding*

Figure 3 gives a general idea of the processes that netnographers follow. However, these can be adapted to the needs of the netnographers according to qualitative research scholars Matthew Miles and Michael Huberman (1994).

### **3.1.2 Sampling for Netnography**

The first task presented for sample collection was identifying Twitter users who are from Mizoram. However, this was not a difficult task since Mizos have a unique structure to their names and/or pseudonyms that set them apart from other ethnicities around the region. Not only that, the language spoken by the people (*Duhlian*) also made it easy for the researcher to identify them among the crowd. However, this situation requires the researcher to have a certain amount of control over the sampling method. Hence, the researcher employs a Snowball Sampling technique known as Targeted Sampling (Watters & Biernacki, 1989; Dusek, et al., 2015). Snowball sampling usually involves subjects that are contacted by the researcher resulting in the development of social relationships and networks. Once the subject of interest is identified, a referral is sought for another, and the process is continued. Targeted sampling, on the other hand involves samples that are selected for specific attributes that preliminary research has defined as targets for study. The specific attributes require for the samples to be – 1) individuals are from Mizoram; 2) Twitter users that were active during the timeline of events selected for study (refer to Section 3.1.3); and 3) Twitter profiles that offer no restrictions to access. A minor issue that was faced during collection of archival data was that the software NCapture as mentioned earlier had a limit (which seem to be approximately 3200) to the number of tweets it could archive. Therefore, some users that are extremely active on twitter could not be considered for the study since their most recent 3200 tweets did not cover the

timeline that was selected for the study and would not have been representative of the subject in question.

After selecting 100 users, a total of 50 Twitter profiles consisting of a total 5034 we studied. This was due to – 1) the findings exhibiting patterns that became more and more repetitive; and 2) some samples did not meet the requirements that were mentioned previously and had to be removed from consideration. Since social media platforms undergo constant changes, it is important to note that the data collection for Twitter archives were done during January 2022.

Data saturation in this instance could be prevalent as a subsequent fault of the methodological design itself since online activism for a particular issue required targeting particular events and its perceived influential period. This tend to result in interactions catered towards those particular events which have a tendency to be repetitive in nature. However, despite the problem of data saturation, the selection of samples resulted in a comprehensive picture of how Mizo netizens use Twitter.

### **3.1.3 Timeline of events selected for study**

As was previously mentioned, the idea behind restricting tweet archives from a specific timeline of events is due to the focus of the research on social media activism. The researcher identified four events between 2018 and 2021 that exhibited large scale demand for online participation. These events concerned three events that were relating to border conflict between Mizoram and Assam, while the other issue was regarding the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

The events are labelled as E1 for Event 1 and so on. Some events cover a span of two months while others saw activity rise and dwindle within a month's time. The tweets studied are those that fall inside these months, meaning no other tweets were considered for the study that were not published within these months (except for the study of hashtags in Section 4.6). The following are the events presented in chronological order –

Event 1 (E1), March 2018: An incident that took place on March 8, 2018 along the Assam-Mizoram border where Assam Police forces lathi-charged demonstrators as well as members of the press that were present at the location to report the event. The demonstration

was directed by the student body Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), and leading up to the violent clash, were attempting to rebuild a resting shed on a disputed area along the Hailakandi/Zophai region (Khojol, 2018). The violent actions of the Assam Police immediately stirred condemnation from journalist associations like the Mizoram Journalist Association (MJA), and Mizo NGOs like MHIP<sup>11</sup> and YMA.

Event 2 (E2), November 2018: Disagreements with the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), S.B. Shashank, led to thousands of people gathering in Aizawl for a protest rally on November 6, 2018 that was referenced as “Hnam Hnatlang” where the people demanded the removal of the CEO from his post (Hmar, 2018; Karmakar, 2018; Kalita, 2018) (for details see Section 1.4.1).

Event 3 (E3), December 2019 to January 2020: Issues related to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill that subsequently became the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 resulted in protest gatherings, discussions, and/or demonstrations. Introduction of the bill was a contentious subject that sparked interest all over India. Although protests happened in Northeast Indian states and all across the country, in Assam, demonstrations demanding the dismissal of the bill was underway as early as December, 2019 when it was enacted by the government (Singh, 2019).

Event 4 (E4), July to August 2021: Rising tensions in the Assam-Mizoram state boundaries resulted in an exchange of gunfire between Assam and Mizoram police forces in the Vairengte-Lailapur. As a result of this clash, 6 Assam Police personnel lost their lives (Nath, 2021; Bhardwaj, 2021), which only exacerbated the already immense strains around the area. Netizens quickly took to social media to voice their opinions on the matter with the intention of being heard. This event was by far the most talked about and largest in scope since it included big players such as Chief Ministers (CM) of both states as well as prominent political activist from all over the country.

While not the only issue-driven events worth taking into account, the ones highlighted above attracted attention at the time due to the social media trends they sparked (Kalita, 2018).

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<sup>11</sup> Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl is the largest women’s organisation in Mizoram with the aim of empowering women

They requested widespread engagement from the public, both in terms of attending rallies and online presence.

### **3.1.4 Grounded Theory for preparation of Coding Sheet**

Customised coding scheme was chosen with the intention of learning the different approaches to social media activism while trying to identify other noticeable unique characteristics that may stretch beyond activist events. This was done as to generalize how, and for what purpose Mizo Twitter users utilize the platform. Since Twitter offers mechanism such as, posting photos, publishing textual materials, sharing of others' text or photo materials, and interactions between users on these materials, the coding will be customised as to reflect the most general aspect that the tweet may represent. Therefore, the aim was to create codes in the CAQDAS (called "Nodes" in NVivo) for every tweet that came under the timeline from the data collected in the archive. This approach is somewhat similar to Grounded Theory which was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. However, Charmaz's approach (2006) best fits a design approach to research examination that incorporates practicality, symbolic interactionism, and an interpretivist perception on research. Maher and colleagues (2018) stated that the nature of interaction with the information and the creativity with which this interaction is carried out are the two elements of analysis that may deliver the utmost valuable perceptions.

The primary analytical step in grounded theory is coding. In order to fulfil this, analytical questions must be posed to the data, data segments must be given a brief name (a code, or node in case of NVivo), and then the data must be sorted and the resulting knowledge of the social condition under study must be developed utilising these codes (Charmaz, 2006). In contrast to positivist forms of scientific research, wherein the investigator maintains some distance from the subject under study, this interpretive model views the researcher as an active participant in the research process with a creative aspect (Suddaby, 2006). According to Corbin and Strauss (1990) –

“Creativity depends on the researcher's analytic ability, theoretical sensitivity and sensitivity to the subtleties of the action/interaction [of the participants].” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 19).

For this research coding is done on the CAQDAS software NVivo, and readings and interpretations from the data collected will provide the source of analysis. Following this, the variables that were used to analyse Twitter activity is listed in the table below –

*Table 1. Coding Sheet*

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
1)	Condolences	This node is in reference to condolences expressed towards a person's demise.
2)	Congratulatory Message	Post where users congratulate a person or a group for something that they achieved or received.
3)	COVID19 Pandemic	This node is in relation to tweets that reference the pandemic, lockdowns that were caused by the pandemic, vaccinations, notices regarding the pandemic, etc.
4)	Entertainment	
a)	Movies and TV Shows	Includes posts referencing famous actors and actresses, TV shows and movies.
b)	Music and Musicians	Post related to music, artists, or musicians. This may be in reference to a single person, a group, a band, or an album.
c)	Print	Includes references to other print mediums like comic books, novels, etc.
d)	Video Games	Related to references made to video games (interactive media)
5)	Gratitude	Expressions of gratitude towards another person, group, or entity.
6)	Inquiry	Any inquiry directed at another user, person or group that is not rhetorical in nature.



7)	<p>Media Content Sharing</p> <p>a) Link to other websites</p> <p>b) News content or news content link</p> <p>c) Photo or photo link (including GIFs)</p> <p>d) Quote Tweets</p> <p>e) Twitter Links (Profile or Event Links)</p> <p>f) Video or Video link</p>	<p>Link to other websites may include links that direct you to other social media platforms, petitions, blogs, etc. that are exclusive to the media content sharing nodes presented.</p> <p>This node is in reference to news content or links to news websites, either posted directly on Twitter or provides a link to the news sites. However, this excludes notices by institutions like DIPR, Mizoram Police, Health Ministry, etc.</p> <p>This node is in reference to photos or links to photographs share on Twitter. These might be attached to other content like News or tweets regarding sports, etc.</p> <p>Quote Tweets are tweets that are similar to retweets, but differ in it that the tweets are shared as content, with 'quotes' being added by the user that shares it.</p> <p>Links that provide profile or events of Twitter.</p> <p>This node is in reference to tweets that have videos on them, or links to videos on other websites, videos posted by others on quote tweets, etc.</p>
8)	<p>Mocking</p> <p>a) Aggressive</p>	<p>Tweets or replies to tweets that mock other users, person, or groups in an aggressive or playful manner.</p> <p>Tweets that are aggressive and may even contain expletives that are shared out of hatred or to insult users, person, or groups in order to shame or harm them.</p>

b)	Playful	Tweets that are playful in nature. These may include harmless insults of opposing sports teams, supporters of the opposing teams, etc.
9)	Other issue-related tweets	Tweets that deal with other issues besides the ones that are listed separately below. These issues may include common issues such as Climate Change as well as location specific issues such as the situation in Afghanistan, etc.
a)	Common Issues	These issues include common issues such as women's rights, climate change, domestic violence, poverty, etc.
b)	India	Issues that pertain to those inside India. These include the Farmer's Protest, caste issues, etc that are specific to India.
c)	Mizoram	This node is in reference to tweets that deal with issues that are specific to Mizoram or the people. These may include concerns regarding leadership, call for justice that is specific to Mizoram, self-sustainability, etc.
d)	Outside India	This node is in reference to issues that pertain to locations outside India. This may include situations in Myanmar Rohingya issues, Afghanistan Taliban situations, USA gun violence, etc.
10)	Personal Tweets	Tweets Reflecting on the person's character, likes, or preferences. Post that are general in nature and are not related to the other nodes that are specifically listed.
11)	Post related to Border Shooting	This node is in reference to Event 4 (E4)
12)	Post related to CAA	This node is in reference to Event 3 (E3)
13)	Post related to CEO	This node is in reference to Event 2 (E2)

14)	Post related to Zophai	This node is in reference to Event 1 (E1)
15)	Quotes	This node is in reference to direct tweets, quote tweets, or retweets about famous quotes, motivational tweets, life lessons, poetry, etc.
16)	Related to religion or religious quotes	This node is used in reference to tweets that are religious in nature. This may include text, photos, or music, etc.
17)	Replies	Replies to users on Twitter. Users selected for sampling were users that did not put restrictions on their accounts, therefore, there was a difficulty separating followers or following since Twitter does not filter posts based on those that users followed or those that follow them.
18)	Replies to verified accounts	This node is in reference to replies made to verified accounts (accounts with a blue tick). Even though not all well-known individuals have the verification tag, only those that did were considered for this node. However, this excludes users that represent companies, brands, or organisations since they don't embody individual ideas but are more characteristic of collective thoughts of the agencies they represent.
19)	Retweets	Retweets from users on Twitter.
20)	Retweets from verified accounts	This node is in reference to retweets from verified accounts (accounts with a blue tick).
21)	Sports	This node is in reference to tweets that relate to sports, sports persons, sports events, fan discussions regarding sports, etc.
22)	Well wishes	This node includes well wishes of all varieties such as birthdays, anniversaries, new year wishes, etc.

23)	Wholesome	Post such as cat pics, people helping others, cute babies, etc.
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The study will involve analysis of coding data of the 50 Twitter profiles and provide a broad picture of how Mizos use Twitter for political participation as well as other modes of use. We will be looking into the Codes as well as References to those Codes, and how much coverage these codes have for each source (or users).

### 3.1.5 Ethical concerns

The exceptionally unobtrusive nature of the methodology is the source of attractiveness as well as its disadvantage. For the purpose of full transparency, netnography requires for a researcher to declare their intentions when entering a site, community, or group to study. This means that a researcher will identify themselves, ask for permission, and state the purpose of their presence. In some instances, the researcher may also be required to be directly contributing to the community. These are ethical requirements for situations that usually involve closed-groups. For example – a florist community, biker gang, or book club etc. where communications would transpire in with a sensible prospect of privacy. The researcher may even be required to enrol as a member themselves and participate as such. Ethnography usually involves human subjects research, which encompasses interventions or interactions with individuals for the purpose of collecting data by an investigator in such a way that the individuals can be identified through the research directly or indirectly. Netnography, therefore, seems to fall under the human subjects research model. However, there are exceptions to this.

This research is an observation of Twitter users for a specific purpose of political participation. The study also tries to identify how Twitter users of Mizoram use the platform in general while keeping its focus on particular events that demand social media activism. Therefore, the data collection only demands for publicly available tweets for Twitter users that have their profiles publicly accessible. The data collected for this purpose is textual in nature, hence, Twitter is considered as a publisher of these texts. The use of spontaneous conversations, when gathered in a publicly open platform, is not human subjects research according to the

Code of Federal Regulations’ definition<sup>12</sup>. If the research involves collecting and analysing existing documents or records that are publicly available, the research qualifies for a human subject’s exemption. The observational research done through the collection of publicly available archival data using NCapture for this research would, therefore, be of this type. Kozinets wrote –

“Analysing online community or culture communications or their archives is not human subjects research if the researcher does not record the identity of the communicators and if the researcher can legally and easily gain access to these communications or archives.” (Kozinets, 2010, p 142).

Internet research pioneer Joseph Walther noted that, anyone who uses social media must be aware that the platforms are, by their nature, for storage, transmission, and retrieval of communication. Therefore, it is extremely misplaced to expect privacy in these spaces (Walther, 2002). According to Kozinets –

“Real names should only be used with the explicit written permission of the individual, unless that person is undisputedly a public figure.” (Kozinets, 2010, p 154).

Following these concerns, this research does not collect personal information besides the usernames (or pseudonyms) that the users display publicly on their profiles. However, since online pseudonyms serve as real names, they will be treated as such. According to Amy Bruckman, users may even use their pseudonyms in other social media platforms and care deeply for the reputation it carries (Bruckman, 2002). Real names, even if publicly displayed, were not used, except for instances where the users are public figures such as politicians, etc.

Kozinets proposed four different degrees of concealment for the identities of participants when a necessity occurs. These are – 1) uncloaked; 2) minimum cloaked; 3) medium cloaked; and 4) maximum cloaked. As the terms would suggest, these degrees vary according to the level of concealment the group or individuals under scrutiny enjoys. Firstly, uncloaked participant means the pseudonyms are used as they are while real names are avoided

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<sup>12</sup> According to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45, Part 46, Protection of Human Subjects (2009), which governs Institutional Review Boards in the United States.

and used only when users are public figures or when explicit permission is granted. Kozinets suggested that when using real names, researchers should avoid material that may cause harm to the participants' reputation. Secondly, minimum cloaked would require use of the actual name of communities while hiding or altering the pseudonyms of users. Thirdly, medium cloaked is a mix of both minimum cloaked and maximum. Lastly, maximum cloaked situation provides maximum concealment for participants. All identifications are altered and no direct verbatim quotes are presented (Kozinets, 2010, p 154). This means that, this research provides *uncloaked* participants using real pseudonyms while attempting to avoid content that would potentially harm participants if such contents exist.

Bruckman (2002) also suggest that information on the Internet may be treated as *semi-published* work, and noted that in the Internet Age, publishing is now a continuous process. Ethical concerns can, therefore, arise out of the necessity for these works to be cited. It would be unfair for a social media user to tirelessly for a creative and intellectual material without getting cited for their work. This may be true for sites such as blogs, and Facebook post. For this particular study, the published content in question are tweets, which allows a maximum 280-character (as of 2023). The study will denote users and their pseudonyms in the process of analysis, and therefore, will not isolate them from their semi-published works.

## **3.2 Conducting a Survey**

Studies regarding social media use in Mizoram is relatively a new field. Even though existing literature may exist, statistics related to internet use are limited. Therefore, in order to answer our research questions with respect to distractions, and the relations between online and offline participation, two survey questionnaires were distributed online (and some offline).

### **3.2.1 Survey 1**

The first questionnaire was modelled with reference to the work of Manli Wu and colleagues (2018) of the effects of social media as a tool of distraction or connection in the workplace. The reason for this selection was due to the idea that distraction is best studied when juxtaposed with an existing work/job performance. Social media use in itself is not necessarily problematic when one has free time, or there is no pending work, studies, or tasks to be performed (even though the idea of mass distraction doesn't require for an immediate task to exist). The study

examines how external distractions are usually triggered by sight and sound (Wu, et al., 2018). This is facilitated by social media that remind users of new messages and other notifications. These prompts delivered to users' devices, or the presence of the devices themselves may become disruptions by presenting multiple tasks and diverting their attention to non-work-related information.

A survey was conducted through online circulation of the questionnaire using Google Forms as well as print outs of the same questionnaire were distributed during March and April, 2022. A total 1480 participants were considered for the study out of which 1370 responses were from Google Forms while 110 were from printout questionnaires that were distributed offline.

Participants were notified of the intention and details of the researcher along with the contact information. The questionnaire was developed in English and was later translated to *Duhlian*. This was to provide clearer understanding of the questions for those that struggle with English.

In order to identify the demography of participants, they were asked to give a basic detail of their location, occupation, income, sex, and age. The section for providing names of participants was made optional. However, participants were required to sign-in to their Gmail accounts to avoid having more than one response per person.

Participants were asked to rate internet-based platforms according to the frequency of their use. They were asked to rate each platform, i.e. WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Google, using a 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Never (1), Rarely (2), Neutral (3), Sometimes, and Always (5) for questions that involve frequency or use. Using this scale, participants were enquired about their rate of internet use with regards to obtaining information, education, entertainment, maintaining social relations, and the frequency of social media use in the workplace/school/college/university. The objective of this section was to understand new media usage habits among Mizo netizens.

The subsequent sections consist of questions that enquired about participants' opinion on their social media use in the presence of work (workplace). Work here also refers to academic work in terms of student participants. The section tries to highlight how social media,

and new media devices may or may not cause distraction for a participant (Carr, 2010; Rosen, 2012). Respondents were asked to rate their answers ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). All subsequent sections from this point on were ranked within these range.

Participants were then asked how they use social media for maintaining social relations. The purpose was to study participants' response to whether social media provides a platform to promote a sense of connection with others. The participants were also asked if they have frequent disagreements on social media with people that they usually get along with outside of the new media platforms. This section tries to study phatic communication (Miller, 2017), and whether social media promotes negative/antagonistic behaviours (Lanier, 2018).

Furthermore, participants were asked the level of cognitive effort their work demands. This is done to study how their devices may affect work performance for instances that require high levels of concentration (Ward, et al., 2017).

The next section consisted of participants' self-analysis of their performance and the level of satisfaction they have on their work. Finally, respondents were asked whether they finish work/assignments within deadlines, how they perform their work in the presence of other interest, and whether they can concentrate on their work or studies.

### **3.2.2 Survey 2**

The second questionnaire was designed to study whether there is a positive correlation between social media activism and offline activism. Furthermore, since Mizoram is a less studied location especially when it comes to social media use, the survey also aims to provide useful statistics that will be valuable not just for this research but for upcoming researchers in the field.

A survey was conducted through online circulation of the questionnaire using Google Forms on June, 2022. A total of 917 participants were considered for the study. The participants were notified of the intensions and purpose of the study. All instructions and questions were translated to *Duhlian* for clarity. It aimed at finding the link between social media use regarding socio-political problems, their recognition of those problems, and any subsequent involvement in offline participation regarding those issues. The Google Form hyperlink for the survey



questionnaire was shared through various online platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and emails. The survey findings are presented and a hypothesis test was conducted. For the purpose of this study, the survey questionnaire used the same four events, that were identified for the Netnographic study as a point of reference (see Section 3.1.3). These were events that necessitated collective action, were generally recognized, and occupied public discourse in Mizoram. Participation that were active in demonstrations, gatherings, rallies or protests related to the events listed are seen as involved in offline activism. If participants are active in interactions and conversations on problems related to the events, they are regarded to be social media activists.

Respondents were asked if they were aware of any or all of the events listed. They were then questioned on the medium of communication they used to initially learn about the occurrences. Following that, participants were questioned about whether they had discussed the events and, if so, how frequently they did so in offline and online settings. The frequency of engagement was collected using 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Never (1), Rarely (2), Neutral (3), Often (4), and Always (5). The next question was regarding whether participants had engaged in any offline activism both related to, and unrelated to the events. The opinions of the participants were then sought about the relative importance of offline activism and social media activism. This was done using 5-point Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Somewhat Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Somewhat Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Finally, participants were prompted to disclose whether they had used all, some, or none of a list of hashtags linked to the events. This data would help in analysing the levels of engagements (Hashtag Activism) for each event in comparison to one another.

### **3.2.2.1 Hypotheses**

In order to find whether there is a positive relationship between participant's social media activism with respect to their offline activism a hypothesis test was prepared. This survey (2) analysis proposes the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>1</sub>** – There is a positive relationship between an individuals' Social Media Activism and Offline Activism

**H<sub>2</sub>** – There is a positive relationship between an individuals' Approach Recognition and Offline Activism

With the purpose of finding the relationship between offline activism and social media activism, participants were grouped into two categories – 1) those that joined demonstrations, participated in civil disobedience, rallies and/or protests; and 2) those that did not engage in offline activism. Furthermore, a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the levels of social media activism as the dependent variable and the same was used to measure approach recognition. Using Shapiro-Wilk test for normality, it was found that the sample characteristic did not exhibit a normal distribution, therefore, Mann-Whitney *U* test was performed to compare the two groups. The data analysis was done using SPSS software.

### 3.3 References

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