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Submission title:	ZEITGEIST OF THE INTERNET DEPENDENCY AND CONVERGE...
File name:	TERNET_DEPENDENCY_AND_CONVERGENCE_CULTURE_A_STU...
File size:	2.33M
Page count:	166
Word count:	58,670
Character count:	303,494
Submission date:	14-Aug-2024 12:12PM (UTC+0530)
Submission ID:	2431866240

ABSTRACT

Internet studies in Northeast India is in its nascent stage even though the internet marked its existence in the region during the 1990s. The National Informatics Centre (NIC), a Government of India enterprise under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology played a very crucial role in setting up the internet in all the eight northeastern states. NIC Mizoram Centre, set up in 1989 brought internet to the state by the year 1991 which was earlier limited to only a few government offices. This study traces the origin and development of internet in the state of Mizoram while observing the changes it brought to the life of the people in both positive and negative ways. Study on internet nowadays cannot be confined only to the number of connections and the average speed per se but its pervasive nature has called for a more comprehensive study. Studying the growth of internet also encompass a lot of other aspects which may not be possible for a single person to cover at once. Due to geographical disadvantages, Mizoram has its own share of limitations when it comes to internet growth. The hilly terrain being the major obstacle and the construction of roads as well as the unplanned diggings sometimes add problems to the smooth functioning of internet in Mizoram besides unpreventable natural disasters. The government sector cannot merely compete and progress with the pace of the private companies as their development procedure is much more complicated and longer due to the standardized bureaucratic system. There is a great need to document to the commencement and development of the internet in the state and this study tries to do that.

Being in a close knit society, Mizos are quick to adapt new trends and practices. This collectivist nature of Mizo society aids in the escalating spread of new norm from time to time. On the other hand, it also instil a sense of antipathy towards "being different" or "standing out" as their tradition inclined to taking the path that has more footprints, i.e, following the majority. Since the coming of the internet has brought along certain craze and infatuation among its users, Mizo internet users pass on certain trends to one another in no time. The availability of commercial internet has boosted the growth of internet in Mizoram. Easy access, convenience and affordability bring the internet to wider users. In Mizoram, one of the smallest states in India, there are more mobile internet connections than inhabitants. What has been adopted by the majority in certain areas often becomes a part and parcel of peoples' life in the long run, therefore, this study also examines the change that the internet brought in Mizo society as it is widely used by the people with a decade or two of its existence.

i

ZEITGEIST OF THE INTERNET DEPENDENCY AND CONVERGENCE CULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM

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