Chapter 5

Zeitgeist of the Internet and Contemporary Mizo Society

This chapter contains the findings from the qualitative approach. The information shared by the participants are carefully documented and presented. The opinions disclosed by the respondents at the open ended section of the survey questionnaire are quite similar with the views of the focus groups and interview participants. The participants expressed their views on how the internet changes their worldviews or perspectives, their reliance on the internet in their daily lives, their stages of internet adoption, the changes that the internet brought in their communication behaviour as well as their society and culture, along with the degree of satisfaction on their internet usage and so on.

5.1 Internet and Mizo society

The opinions shared by the participants depicted that Mizo culture is very flexible, that it is easily swayed by the dominating practices including internet practice. As Thanzauva (1993, ii) assumed that cultural transformation and protection of people from alienation are essential for society to go through genuine transformation, this protection of people will become more important in the context of internet use. When asked to complete a sentence "If the internet is suddenly (or completely) wiped out after decades of its existence…" most of the participants responded that their world will become very chaotic and problematic. They find it difficult to comprehend how the world would become, without the internet. The digital immigrants of Mizoram also noted that internet has significantly brought changes to Mizo culture and society which they believe will be more discernible in the future with continual use. Christianity which becomes a part of Mizo identity for about a century has undergone changes as the dominant worldview has become more ambiguous due to excessive debate and numerous arguments available on social media.

The concept of *tlawmngaihna*, a highly esteemed attribute in the Mizo society which according to Vansanglura & Deori (2022) is *"an altruistic and chivalrous quality of a person that always put others' welfare before oneself where the self-interest is subdued by the interest of the community",* seems to lose its place due to the emergence of internet according to the participants. Zama (n.a) also defines it as *"a heavy loaded term which indicates selflessness, helpfulness and sense of duty without any expectation of return or good name".* It can also be considered as a sacrificial commitment that fulfils the need of others at the cost of compromising one's own need. The top valourized qualities in Mizo society were chivalry

and bravery (Chhangte & Lalthlamuani, 2022). Shobha (2018) mentioned that one of the optimum virtues among the Mizos is Stoic endurance, which could also be considered as an attribute of being *tlawmngai*. Children are trained to be sociable, participative and to give their time and energy in order to be tlawmngai (Zama, n.a). The original term (*tlawmngai[adjective]* or *tlawmngaihna[noun])* is used in this study since there is no better or equivalent single English word to replace it. Pachuau (2014, 122) also mentioned K.Bawla who opined that *tlawmngaihna* had been dying as it lose its importance in the church. With the availability of anonymity, the participants showed a great concern towards the declining *tlawmngaihna* as online community lacks hierarchy. The participants also repeatedly mentioned that the excessive use of internet has escalated laziness and time wastage, making Mizo people unproductive in their daily lives. The internet is believed to hamper the daily performances of the people which also results in their diminishing contribution towards family as well as society.

The Young Mizo Association (YMA), a non-government organization is playing a very significant role in promoting and maintaining *tlawmngaihna,* as it looks upon the welfare of the society. Anyone and everyone can be a part of this Association regardless of age, gender, religion and profession. There is no denominational barrier nor communal discrimination under this organization and is an important backbone of the Mizo Society. This all inclusive association is a torch bearer for good social conduct as it carries forward *tlawmngaihna,* the traditional ideologies while promoting solidarity and loyalty to ones society and propagates cultural practices and customs (Zama, n.a). According to *Zalen* newspaper November 18, 2023 issue, there are 820 branches under this NGO and 109 of them are in Aizawl district. The Central Young Mizo Association President also said that the easiness brought by the internet in various aspects of life can also be catastrophic without proper guidelines regarding its usage. The concept of 'troll or trolling' is also a by-product of the internet as users adopted the term during the 1980 to denote as it is understood today.

Wedding invitation, Gravestone (inauguration) invitation and Committee notice/handbill were made obsolete by the internet. As Mizo society has many Associations and Organizations on various levels, the secretaries of such groups would distribute a printed copy of notice/circular to each and every house of the committee members. The participants said that the internet has terminated such practices and makes it easier as soft copies can be quickly and widely disseminated through instant messengers replacing the house to house distribution of hard

copies of committee circular/notice to all the members by an Organization/Association's Secretary. The sense of formality and prime concern that comes with receiving hard copies of such cards or letters has also diminished.

5.2 Changes brought by the internet: cultural level
5.2.1 Sub-culture or counter culture

An extremely influential concept in cultural studies history is subculture and its relevance in internet studies render an important intersection point between various disciplines. For the association and manifestation of subcultural identity, internet could be an avant-garde resource (McArthur, 2009). Driscoll & Gregg (2011, 567) wrote that essays on the internet on *Post-Subcultures Reader* by Muggleton and Weinzierl (2003) find production or manifestation of subcultures to be increasing through the internet. As the web has changed the meaning of some real life influences on fan fiction communities, it becomes inevitable to question whether such communities are subcultural or not (ibid). Curran (2012, 38) also argued that different waves of counterculture also influenced the internet use as the internet also influences such cultures since radical sub-cultures expect to change society through the shifting of power to the people. Gudykunst and Kim (2003) suggested that gender also forms distinct subcultures and that there are subcultural differences in the way that men and women communicate. In this way, we can see that men and women socialize into perceptible subcultures with distinctive attitudes in their communication behaviour (Rosen et. al., 2010).

In a very close-knit Mizo society, it has been passed on from generation to generation to take the road that has more footprints (*a hniak tam lam lam zui*) i.e. to follow the majority where the theory of Spiral of Silence would be very relevant and would also contrast with "dare to be different" attitude (or being eccentric) promoted by the individualistic culture. Individualism had always been a foreign concept as cooperation and teamwork are the crucial components of Mizo society (Chhangte, & Lalthlamuani, 2022). Conformity to the norm was a common practice as each member of the society does not want to stay aloof – geographically, psychologically and sociologically. They would always want to blend in with the norms of the society even though there may not be a written law or code to unify the society. The desire to follow the 'path that has more footsteps became inherent and not doing so would be considered as disloyalty to the community. In other words, there would be no room for such thing as subculture. But that has almost become 'the thing of the past' as many of the participants and respondents mentioned that exposure to the internet makes them

believe that it is okay to believe in something that everybody else may not believe in and it is normal to have an opinion that is totally different from others. Some of the participants said that their reluctance to have a different opinion or attitude that is not in line with the majority's standard is growing dim as they embrace the internet more often. Therefore, the fear of not being accepted or being the odd one in the society is slowly diminishing due to prolonged access to various cultures and norms across the globe through the internet.

5.2.2 Internet has influenced the belief system of the Mizo people

Statements from the participants like –

"Internet makes me believe that it's okay to have an opinion that is different from others."

"I believe in aliens because of the internet."

and several other changes have been mentioned to be brought by the internet to its users' belief.

Perspectives about Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer+ (LGBTQ+) has immensely changed due to internet exposure. While older participants are mentioning their firm belief on *"God created man in His own image; male and female He created them"* – "nothing more, nothing less" quoting the Bible (Genesis 1:27), the younger participants are becoming more liberal as they are exposed to different ideas and perspectives about homosexuality and its related issues saying that as long as the person involved are liking each other and are not disturbing people around them, it is quite "okay". The Alphabet community or the Pride movement topic has been trending on social media for a while and it goes on, whether the internet users are interested or not, they are compelled to engage with it somehow. Queer culture is considerably publicized by the advent of internet. The participants also believed that the internet has prompted people from the Alphabet (Queer or LGBTQ) community to become more blatant. Therefore, the younger ones, especially the Millennials more than the Gen Zs are conforming to the popular belief of normalizing same sex attraction which is not something their faith professed.

Talking about faith, since Christianity entered Mizoram in the 1890s, the indigenous Mizos are known to be Christians and it has become a part of their identity from then on. Mizos were animists before Christianity came to the state in 1894 (Lalramnghinglova, 1999, 123) which Lalduhawma (2021) also described as "primal or without religion in the absence of established religion". Christian theology which teaches the offer of salvation that welcomes

everyone became the ideological factor behind the rising Mizo identity (Thanzauva 1993, 212). Varsangzuali (2023, 30) also quoted Joy Pachuau who opined that Mizos complete identification with Christianity is one of the most important aspects of their identity. The dual identity have converged into each other without predominance of one over the other, hence there is a general agreement that 'Mizo and Christian' is not in conflict (Zama, n.a). Since the Mizo ancestors are believed to have migrated from China to Myanmar (formerly Burma) and then to what is now called Mizoram, Lalthangliana (2001, 212) also argued that there is no clear cut mention of their religion during such times probably because they don't have spare time as they were fighting for survival due to westward migration movement. He also wrote that they were associated with Buddhist religion around AD 850. Pachuau (2014, 125) also mentioned that R.Vanlawma's (1965) autobiography *Ka ram leh kei* (My country/land and I), hinted Mizos close identification with Christianity by the mid twentieth century.

The traditional Mizo belief, before embracing Christianity, has two destinations after death – one is *mitthi khua* (the land of the death) which is for common man and the other one *pialral* (paradise or heaven) is exclusively for those who have achieved or completed the requirements (ibid). This include having the bravery or hunting skill to kill the prescribed wild animals such as bear *(savawm)*, gaur *(sele)*, samber *(sazuk)*, wild boar *(sanghal),* viper *(rulngan),* serpent eagle *(muvanlai),* elephant *(sai)* and flying squirrel *(vahluk)* and another option is the killing of domestic animals like mithun *(tumpang)*, two piglets *(vawk note)*, bull gayal *(sial),* boar *(vawk pa or sanghal pa)*, other baby pigs *(vawk note)* and a sow *(vawkpui),* along with the provision of sufficient amount of local liquor (zu) upto 80 posts and 15 small posts for three to five consecutive days during seven successive ceremonies (Lalramnghinglova 1999, 123 – 124). *Pialral* entry could be a mere fantasy for the common man as the passport to this paradise requires distinguishing oneself by killing a certain number of different animals accompanied by preparation of luxurious feasts (Dawngliana 2021, 55). This is just one example of Mizo traditional or religious belief amongst many. The term *pialral* is still used by some Christian songwriters to depict heaven or the afterlife where there is no more pain nor death. Such traditional beliefs including superstitions were replaced by the Christian teachings which in one way liberates them as there is no division or discrimination to enter heaven but only to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour under the Christian teaching. The Whiteman's religion and lifestyle liberated them from the fear of evil, death and uncertainty (Chakraborty & Chakraborty 2007, 783). Therefore, the Christian worldview becomes the dominating worldview since then. Just as people's perception and

understanding about themselves is continually changing, the process of Mizo tribe conversion into Christian faith was also gradual which took about 60 years and was not like an abrupt change brought by the British administrators (Thanzauva 1993, 163). Maisuangdibou (n.a) also wrote that according to tribal worldview, the sacred and secular are not separated but everything belongs to God the creator and they live a responsible life in every aspect. Such cosmovision is neither a philosophical nor an abstract model but a day-to-day lived experience where loving one another, doing good to others and respecting elders are not inscribed anywhere but in the hearts of the people. These are part of their culture so they practice such without any speculative attachment.

The Christian missionaries pioneered education in Mizoram which is believed to change their outlook, and profoundly, the worldview of the people is changed by education. The supernaturalistic worldview was substituted by scientific worldview in terms of medical belief through education (Rohmingmawii, 2013). Yet in the 1900s, the people still have strong faith in traditional healers. The participants of this study also mentioned their concern about the compromising nature of Christianity in the state due to existence of the internet. Superabundant teachings and opinions available on the internet regarding Christianity mainly from the western countries have muddled the belief system of the people. The denominational barriers, doctrinal differences as well as the diverse interpretations of the Scripture exceedingly available on the internet can greatly confusticate the passive users. On the other hand, there are more than enough arguments and ideologies about the non-existence of God accessible on the internet as well, persuading people to ignore the existence of God that eventually lead them to call themselves atheists. The rise of atheism in Mizoram for the most part is due to excessive internet access. The idea of atheism which did not exist earlier is hugely propagated by the internet. Luna (2006,4) also wrote that as the developing and transmitting a culture of virtuous use of internet and other mode communication becomes a crucial part of the moral and Christian formation, it is regrettable that institutions like family, school, church etc. are not duly prepared to provide an insightful and accurate education regarding its use since the internet is a relatively new tool.

The halt of church services during the 2019 pandemic has brought a great change in Mizo church online presence. Interestingly, the traditional or mainstream churches did not employ much of the new media platforms but used television to broadcast live telecast of church services or organised live television programmes in studios. It was a great opportunity for

various groups or ministries who are not bound by denominational barriers to organize online gatherings or fellowships through online meeting platforms such as zoom, google meet etc. The Covid-19 outbreak was a blessing in disguise for those who prefer online church services to offline ones. It also resulted in the birth of many official YouTube channels along with social media pages of various churches. The physical church attendance also seem to decline post Covid-19 as the people get acquainted to staying home daily for more than a year.

5.2.3 Internet users perception on western hegemony

Internet has instilled inquisitiveness among the users as they want to know more about what they have been exposed to, making it more useful for researchers and students. The participants are greatly concerned about the dominance of the Western culture, initially popularized by conventional media and has been intensified by the new media. Mizo internet users are worried about the surging disdain towards their own culture while internalizing various norms of the western society. A Lunglei digital native said that the internet makes him understand and appreciate the perspective of others and the need to protect and preserve his own culture in the midst of the western supremacy not only in political and military affairs but also in lifestyle as well; some other participants assert how different "reality" could be for those in the developed and developing countries. An Aizawl digital immigrant added, "I learn to value people's opinion above mine. I gain confidence and learn to appreciate others. The internet makes me believe that there is always something more than the eyes can see and encourages me to have opinion of my own and not depend on others heavily; giving consideration to other people's feelings without neglecting my own." Internet seems to wake users up towards *woke culture, cancel culture* and social media activism as they become more cavilling and intolerant towards any burning issue and not only about social injustices. "Internet has enabled me to realize how backward my world is in comparison to the west. I am really disappointed on how people in the third world countries are unaware of how much they missed out on," added a Lunglei digital native.

5.2.4 Cessation of children's outdoor folk games – *Pawnto*

The word *pawnto* (also a noun and a verb) is used as an umbrella term for all the items (games and activities) that children used to play and practice in traditional Mizo society. Some of the participants of this study mentioned that Mizo children of this generation are no longer familiar with the traditional Mizo children's pastime '*pawnto*' due to the presence of computers and smartphones, which take the place of physical activities for children as well as

adults. *Pawnto* is a remarkable moment for children, a time of fun games and activity yet this cultural space shared exclusively by the kids gave birth to plenty of games and songs which became essential components of the Mizo children's folklore. Chhangte & Lalthlamuani (2022) also opined that some of the oldest Mizo traditional songs could be traced back to lullabies and singing games (*pawnto* songs) as well as Swing Songs (*Pipu Uai Hla* – songs which were belted out by children while playing on a swing). They also mentioned Lurie (1990) who wrote that children rhymes, jokes and games can be a reverberation of history, popular culture, anthropology, literature and art and cannot be isolated from one another. Some of these folk songs and lullabies may be simple or sound nonsensical, they at times convey deep meaning often related to their culture, social customs and practices, folktales, legends, myths and worldviews (ibid). *Pawnto* usually happened around twilight or at night, Lalremruati (2012, 133) cited Lorrain (n.a) who defines *pawnto* as, "being outdoor at night or in the evening." Folk tales, play songs, games and jokes in Mizo culture spring from an oral tradition, hence, they are more of performative and practice-based rather than written or read and *pawnto also* includes boys and girls without discrimination in terms of gender (Zama, n.a.). Even though preservation of traditional games is profoundly important, where children unsupervised play *(pawnto)* plays a significant role, it is no longer encouraged in contemporary Mizo society because of lack of space as well as safety reasons (Chhangte & Lalthlamuani, 2022). As Mizo society moves away from traditional practices such as *pawnto*, the setting up schools and churches played a significant role in the learning process of Mizo children. With the coming of Christianity, a child is gaining new identity which is not created through a communal responsibility and is becoming less of a cultural construct, but a child of God (Zama, n.a). The availability of internet results in declining social interaction among the Mizo children as well. The participants mentioned that children nowadays are lacking social skills and also the desire to socialize, but are becoming more narcissistic and self-serving day by day as many parents use smartphones and other digital devices for babysitting as well as child care. Activities and folksongs related to *pawnto* have fallen into disuse as they lost their relevance among the children as well as the society unlike the past. The time for children's social learning is usually occupied by internet consumption. Even if traditional practice like *pawnto* is reinstituted, Mizo children may not actively participate as they now have too many other options for social learning and for leisure pastime.

5.3 Changes brought by the internet: individual level

5.3.1 Internet broadens peoples' perspectives but also leads to social awkwardness and covetousness.

Majority of the participants' said that their outlook have been changed by the internet as it helped them view things from a wider perspective. A male digital native noted, "It introduced me to different ways of thinking, and when I stumble upon the ones that I like, I follow and try to inculcate into my own lifestyle." Mobile phones took over their time for reading books. Internet makes them socially awkward as they have difficulty in interacting with people face to face, especially strangers. Some became more shy and introvert due to excessive engagement with social media as the depth of their physical relationship with others get diminished. They become more sensitive and vulnerable to words and feelings. They tend to develop insecurity and can become easily exhausted even when attending offline social gatherings. Many of the participants admitted that the tenth of the *Ten Commandments - "Do not covet"* becomes more difficult to obey after having easy access to the internet; artificial needs are generated. Aizawl digital natives also said, "We copy and adopt what we see the developed countries are doing – especially in fashion, but looking at our economy, we are yet too far and have a long way to go to be able to internalize the practices of the developed nations. Still, many youngsters are trying to copy and apply what they see on the internet making us 'spendthrifts without income'." This has led to the rise of duplicate or "first copy" market business as people do not always afford expensive branded apparels, footwear and other accessories. "Before I was familiar with the internet, I assume everyone on the internet to be happy but as I came to know that many users are struggling with depression and anxiety. That changes the way I think and it greatly impact my life," said a male student while another female digital native mentioned that she was once a toxic feminist – believing that women should be better than men. But after seeing and hearing more about different perspectives and arguments from the internet, she has understood better what it means to fight for equality among men and women.

5.3.2 Social media portrayal of people can bring distrust as well as identity perplexity

A student from Aizawl said, "I find it harder to trust people and the things I see and hear but on the other hand, internet makes me dream bigger" while another one added, "I sometimes compare myself with others on social media and at the same time people from social media often inspire me to work hard." They believe that the real and virtual world is very different and are often led to stop trusting people after seeing how they behave on social media. While some participants said that their admiration for some celebrities has grown after seeing more

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about their lifestyle and behaviour on social media, it is the other way around for some others – they stop cherishing. Many of the participants are of the opinion "things are not always what they seem" when it comes to portrayal on social media that people, in reality, are not always the same as how they portray themselves online, hence, reality seems to get distorted.

As per Baudrillard's Hyperreality, reality has become an entity without an original referent because it has become difficult to differentiate which one represents the true nature of a person – his/her online portrayal or offline demeanour. Majority of the participants opined that people's online and offline presence can be very different and that really change the way they see people and things around them. Many participants disclosed that they become more insecure as they doubt their self-worth after seeing attractive people (who they think are more beautiful then they are) on social media. Their strive to identify themselves or blend-in with the spurious beauty standard of social media can have negative effect on their self esteem leading to an identity crisis as Erikson (134) said they could

"resolve it for themselves only by offering to their contemporaries a new model of resolution such as that expressed in works of art or in original deeds, and who furthermore are eager to tell us all about it in diaries, letters, and self-representations"

internet becomes their main platform for this expression and self representation. Many Mizo internet users turn to social media seeking for validation in order to reconstruct their sense of self just as Adhi and Yunus (115) also wrote that the important factor in determining the identity of each individual is the self-concept.

5.3.3 Mizo internet users believe that the internet makes them communicate differently

As people can behave very differently at virtual platform, users tend to develop a counterfeit style of communication in the process of imitating celebrities or their source of influence which can eventually result in change of bahaviour. Since behaviour is communication according to Dobrikova (595), Mizo internet users, especially, the younger ones acquire different ways to communicate verbally and non-verbally as they spend more time on the internet. The male participants in FGDs remarked their aversion towards Korean Pop (K-Pop) culture as it has greatly influenced their fellow men in the society; they become more expressive and melodramatic, also more feminine in their body language and fashion while the female participants defended Korean men and claimed that they are more manly than Mizo guys have assumed. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory posited that through

direct experience or by observing the behaviour of others, new patterns of behaviour can be learned (Bandura and Walters, 1977), correspondingly, the participants of this study acquire new communication behaviours as a result of their engagement with the internet.

5.3.4 Difference in communication behaviour among the digital immigrants

Mizo digital immigrants believed that there is little difference in their communication behaviour before and after the internet exists, but it brings more changes among the digital natives as social learning theory argued that behaviour can be learned through observation. New behaviour is not believed to be acquired consciously from the internet by the immigrants, but they also admit that they might do so subconsciously. Further, they believed that the internet has broaden their outlook, making them become more open, affectionate and considerate after having better exposure to how people are communicating on the other part of the globe. Some apparent change could be seen in verbal communication such as adopting new vocabularies. For instance, 'Hi/Hello' is becoming the norm of greeting, making the Mizo term *chibai* sound more formal than ever. Digital immigrants have a grave concern about the deteriorating Mizo language. As Dobrikova (2019) opined that communication is behaviour, and Bandura (1977) argued that behaviour is not only a single factor but the outcome of interaction of individuals and situations, digital immigrants assumed the difference in communication behaviour to be more evident amongst the digital natives since they (the immigrants) have a sort of established behaviour after attaining certain age, even though behaviour is not static in nature.

5.4 Changes brought by the internet: technological aspect
5.4.1 Evolution of *tlangau:* a *c*ommunity information system

Tlangau meaning herald or town crier has been an intrinsic part of Mizo culture when it comes to dissemination of information to the public. Prasad (1983) also translated this term as "village courier" who is considered to play a significant role in the village administration and receives remuneration from the villagers. *Tlangau* assisted the village chief as a public agent by making emergency or any other social announcement to the residents. Even though the village crier was a member of the village council appointed to spread the messages and orders of the chief-in-council to the public (Ralte 2013, 55), the occupation was not considered to be a respectable position as the village chief generally chose someone from a lower economic background and gave him the right to annually levy from every household a small basket of

paddy (also called *Fathang*) (Rokhum 2013, 36). The village or town criers would make announcements orally in the olden days. He used to go around every night to inform the community about the necessary information including announcements from the village administrative head – the chief (Parry 1928, 6). A high-pitched voice would proclaim the chief's orders at the end of a day, when householders are expected to be at home (Shakespear 2008, 43). Before the coming of microphones in Mizoram, the role of *tlangau* was generally considered as the task of men – addressing him *Tlangaupa* (herald man or town crier man), but at the present scenario, women announcers are also entrusted with such task. He is also exempted from cooly labour (Parry, 1928). Portable microphones were introduced and at present, public address system is used as this Mizo custom keeps the society informed and intact (Ratnamala & Malsawmzela, 2021). The Young Mizo Association (YMA) the most influential NGO in Mizoram is taking the charge of *tlangau* related responsibilities. Information such as death in the community, fair price shop announcements, voluntary social service related, notice from the government and non-government authorities and any subject matter that the residents need to hear are announced using public address (PA) system.

The launch of *Tlangau* mobile application (also mentioned in the first chapter) developed by Lailen Pvt. Ltd marked a significant turning point for digitization of this community information system. Tlangau app is available at Google Playstore and Apple App Store. There are options for users to subscribe news from their preferred sources such as X (formerly Twitter) feed of various agencies – DD News Mizoram, Mizoram Police, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, All India Radio (AIR) news including community-wise information as registered by their local NGO leaders along with obituaries that have google map direction for those who would like to go to *khawhar in* (house of mourning or death in the community).

5.4.2 Changing pattern of *zualko* (public announcement of death)

Two of the major events of a human life, wedding and death hold a significant place in Mizo society. While wedding is a planned event and the concerned persons are usually invited, death is unpredictable and everyone in Mizo community feels responsible to be a part of someone's death in order to console the bereaved family. The practice of disseminating information about death in the community in Mizo society is called *zualko*. Laldintluangi (2018) wrote that it is certainly an act of *tlawmngaihna* to sacrifice valuable time and energy for the sake of others in order to *zualko*. Before the coming of various communication tools,

the volunteers would even go to far away villages to inform friends and relatives about the news of someone's death. The trem *zualko* is also been used to connote the conveyance of grievances in certain situation (Lûtmâng, 2021). The participants of this study frequently mentioned about the ceasing practice of *zualko* (notifying death event) with the availability of internet. *Zualko* is the practice of bringing news (usually unpleasant ones) to kith and kin as well as neighbouring villages and the person who brings such news is also called *zualko*, therefore, it can be both noun and verb. The availability of the internet, specifically the instant messengers has totally changed the pattern of *zualko* as information can now be given to anyone and anywhere across the globe in no time. Most of the participants, especially the digital immigrants mentioned that instant communication enabled by the internet has negated the practice of *zualko*. Hence, the understanding of *zualko* can also be changed by the internet among the younger generation as they no longer witness the sacrificial act of *zualko* where volunteers would not mind the time and situation but quickly move to spread the information to the concerned persons or village(s). *Zualko* is also a part of the content of *tlangau* where *tlangau* includes all information given by the town crier (or herald) while *zualko* only includes information about death or obituaries. The pattern of *zualko* has been altered by the internet making it easier to disseminate information to the residents of certain locality including the neighbouring cities and villages.

5.4.3 Technological determinism vs. Social determinism

Many of the participants believe that technology is dominating human as people are wooed by its power while there are some who also believe that technology is not above human and is controlled by human society. Majority opinion revolved around the opinion that technology is invented by human but misuse of it can lead to lack of control towards its use and its control towards us. The participants give examples like alcohol and drugs which are not something dangerous without human consumption but it is human consumption, not only consumption but out of hand or unrestrained consumption that make them malignant. Likewise internet, if use in a moderate and judicious manner, can be a very useful tool but it is the users lack of control (or ignorance) that makes it a destructive entity.

Lailen Pvt. Ltd CEO opines that it is neither technology nor the people that determines the entire form of society but both are equally determining the course of life and rather take turns in doing so. During the days of armchair scientists, they formulated theories and made decisions based on their social structure, culture, religion etc., the result of which could be the

birth of numerous fictional (sci-fi) books, for e.g. Star Wars. These ideologies could bring a lot of technological changes which could make us believe that the social structure and way of thinking (the human) have the upper hand. But on the other hand, the resulting technological innovations in turn have a huge impact on humans as well. Society, by its way of thinking defines technology and this technology enables the society to come up with new ideas which they do not have before the invention of certain technology resulting in the development of newer technology. Hence, both technology and society drive the entire form of life. Yet, looking at the IT world, it can be said that technology drives humans because right from the moment we wake up, our attention is drawn towards our gadgets, specifically our mobile phones, the information we get keeps lingering on our mind. Earlier, it used to be books which could have such input in us, then came television and several other devices. Mobile phone, a portable device has undoubtedly controlled many users as it makes them unnecessarily check their notifications regularly. Technology brings along its own culture which is adopted by humans and uses it to develop new cultures as well.

Regarding technological and social determinism, *ViaMizo* owner believes that even the inventors (or innovators) will be surprised to see how technology has become an integral part of our lives today which can be a proof that technology determines the entire form of society. As the internet has enabled users to look into the global window, Mizo society has also adopted certain norms and practices which help many users get engaged in some entertainment and they learn to enhance their hobbies and skills. Many Mizo YouTubers have come up and share their skills and talents through their channels where they gain status of micro-celebrity by webcasting.

5.4.4 Bridging the digital divide

As the internet wave crashed in without prior warning to the public, digital divide becomes much more perceptible within two decades of its existence. With regards to digital divide, apart from material divide – issues with accessibility and affordability, the unwillingness of the digital immigrants is the main deterrent. Most of the senior citizens interviewed believed that it is not necessary for them to try learning and adapting the various digital devices. The Mizoram Upa Pawl (Mizoram Senior Citizens' Association) President said, 'The state government had taken initiatives through some institutions to teach and train us, but since most of us are not willing to participate, the plans usually become unsuccessful.' Not only the

senior citizens, but also people in their late 30s and early 40s consider themselves to be out-of-date in order to catch up with the digital natives.

When it comes to Digital Divide, Lailen Pvt. Ltd. company believes that development in general causes divide among the people as there will always exist those who have and those who do not have. As one of their applications, *Tlangau* is meant for all households, some of the community leaders they have contacted agreed to buy at least one mobile phone for every household that does not have; those who do not have smartphones will get the same information given in the app via SMS. The CEO said that 100% inclusion may not be possible as it will require a huge amount of money to fill the gap. But the best way to bridge the gap is to find a way that the "have nots" in some way will be able to catch up with the "haves" which can also include paying attention to the differently abled and incorporating features that will enable them to use technology with no difficulty. It's not just about buying a device for those who do not have it but also giving awareness to those who need as capacity building is one of the biggest chunks when it comes to technology implementation. *ViaMizo* is of the opinion that as long as we have digital immigrants in the population, there is a chance that the divide will remain but perhaps after some decades it might be narrowed once the generation of digital immigrants are gone. When talking about e-commerce and e-governance, a lot of office work has now been digitized and is performed using mobile applications, many of the classics (also digital immigrants) are still lagging behind as they are not comfortable in adopting even some of the simple mobile applications.

5.4.5 Digital detox

The interesting finding of this study which is mentioned exclusively by the FGD participants of the Aizawl Theological College students (digital immigrants) from Aizawl is the concept of digital detox which is defined by Radtke et. al (2022) as a suspension of electronic device use, be it completely or for a particular fragment of smartphone use. They also highlighted Oxford Dictionaries (2019) definition of digital detox as "a duration in which an individual abstains from using electronic devices, considered as an opportunity to focus more on physical interaction and for stress reduction". These theology students are quite aware of the adverse effects of excessive digital device usage and they are the only participants who talked about this practice in order to maintain a proper healthy digital consumption. Their detox period and strategy varies, some of them aim to maintain or control their internet usage while others simply want to take a break for a certain period of time. Syvertsen & Enli (2020) on the other

hand, argued that digital detox sheds light on the transition to a self-regulation society – towards a progressively complex set of everyday pressures along with the pressure to always improve, giving opportunities to detox market business enthusiasts. Mirbabaie, Stieglitz & Marx (2022) also wrote that digital detox is paving way towards popular culture as well as information system scholarship to equilibrize technostress and the negative effects associated with it. They also wrote that detox measures in the digital context is under scrutiny and literature on such studies dates back to 2015 and is also spread to various disciplines by Psychology and Media Studies. Schmuck (2020) also mentioned that social cognitive theory of self-regulations explains the relationship between human behaviour and self-regulative mechanisms and this self regulative mechanism is weaker among the younger adults than the older ones. This self-regulation mechanism can also be linked with digital detox which is a detachment from digital activities for a certain period of time and the duration may depend on individuals' preferences. The digital immigrants from Aizawl are already practicing digital detox which could be a new thing for many of the Mizo internet users. They also mentioned that since the internet is becoming a necessity, it is becoming more and more difficult to be digitally detached as various important activities such as banking, bill payments, navigation etc. require internet connection. Digital detox could be required more and more in the days to come as the internet users in Mizoram are impulsively plunging into the crashing waves of internet without prior knowledge or awareness about its effects.

5.5 Internet and social practices in Mizoram

5.5.1 Funeral and death associated practices (*Khawhar lenpui*)

Another distinguishing feature of Mizo culture *khawhar lenpui,* has been interrupted by the internet in a way that it disturbs the attention of the people, making them engage with their phones instead of paying attention while attending funerals or house of mourning (*khawhar in*). People from the various localities would gather and sing in the *khawhar in* for several days. There are specific songs to be sung on these occasions called *khawhar hla* which could be considered as traditional folk songs or dirge to mourn the death and to console the bereaved family. If a person dies before 10 a.m., the funeral will be held on the same day, otherwise, the funeral will be held the next day. It is the role of the youth to gather on such nights and sing overnight.

The task of the arranging programme for funeral as well as several other needs of the bereaved family along with grave digging, serving tea, lending necessary utensils etc. lie in

the hand of an NGO – the Young Mizo Association (YMA) who voluntarily does this task it for everyone in the community. This most powerful and influential NGO usually takes charge of logistics and overall management in collaboration with the family in times of death and wedding. Since wedding is more of a church related activity, it is the youth members in the church who volunteer in helping their members who are getting married, but most of the church youth members are part of the YMA. Many participants expressed their concern about the great distraction of such social gatherings by mobile engagement. Even though people gather to comfort and console the lamenting family, individuals tend to submerge themselves into virtual world where people become what Sherry Turkle called 'alone together'. According to this study finding, community bond in a typically close knit Mizo society has been weakened by the excessive use of internet.

5.5.2 Church events and weddings

Various church events including weddings, conferences and other activities have become very social media oriented as photo booths are now being set up in such occasions. 'It seems like we are competing with other churches in terms of decoration to have the best photo booth on important church services and conferences which was never a part of church events before the internet exists', said a female digital immigrant. During church services and other various social events, the thought pattern of the people gathered are often governed by a post event plan of 'how to portray such memories on social media platforms'. After every big event in church, most attendees would try to make sure they have an evidence of their attendance – photos to show their social media audiences. Bridal shower or Bachelorette party which was never a part of Mizo culture has been widely adopted by many youngsters. It has been considered by some as a norm in today's world. Wedding cakes and birthday cakes were also endorsed by social media. Wedding or birthday parties they were never incomplete without a celebration cake in Mizo culture in the past two or three decades ago. Typical media such as movies and books did not seem to promote such practice amongst the Mizos but it becomes more popular and prevalent with the coming of social media. Through social media, users get to see more of people's daily life here and there and they are more inclined to adopt certain lifestyles gradually.

5.5.3 Declining practice of respect towards elders (*Aia upa zahna tlahniam*)

An important aspect of Mizo culture which is not new to other cultures too is the practice of respecting elders (*aia upa zahna*). Zama (n.a) wrote that respect for elders had been a natural

rule as Mizo children grew up in the close surveillance, under the vigilant eye of the communal gaze. This practice of respecting elders has also been taken lightly since the emergence of internet as people can easily hide their identity behind the veil of anonymity. The seriousness of this practice could be seen in the past where the younger folks never talk back to their elders in any manner and dare not start taking their food unless the oldest person present in the gathering begins to eat. They would obey what their elders say by hook or by crook. But due to lack of hierarchy in the online community, the attitude and mindset of the people have tremendously changed. People no longer understand the value of showing respect to their elders and rather developed the 'I think I know better' kind of attitude which can be seen when the younger participants expressed that the internet enabled them to communicate certain things which they dare not convey offline. Both the digital natives and immigrants unanimously show their concern towards the declining practice of respecting elders.

5.6 Society leaders' opinion on internet usage

The village and town level leaders of the given region were interviewed regarding ethical use of internet in their community. Most of the interviewed local leaders said that there are no big issues yet within their jurisdiction dealt by the NGOs regarding misuse of internet, but, there might be some cases at family level which are often dealt by the respective family members. There are issues such as a teenager squandering his mother's money online using Unified Payments Interface (UPI) while playing online games. The mother went to the bank staff seeking for help in protecting her bank account as her ₹50,000 went missing without her knowledge. Many parents seem to be a victim of online financial theft but they keep the matter to themselves to protect their family reputation. They have passively admitted that their children have the upper-hand in terms of internet use regulation as they consider their children to have more knowledge about its usage. Champhai informants also mentioned that there had been one suicide case which was considered as a result of *Mobile Legends* online gaming and another murder case which was also believed to be a consequence of PlayerUnknown's BattleGrounds (PUBG) online game. The identity of the concerned person(s) were not revealed. The micro level, or in other word, family level impact of internet which many families struggle with, will have macro level impact in no time. Then, there will be more cases or issues to be dealt with by society leaders. The Central Young Mizo Association (YMA) President said that they usually hand over reports related to misuse of internet to the concerned desk – Cyber Crime Bureau of Mizoram Police.

5.7 Internet and ethical concern: Cyber crime status in Mizoram

The Junior Cyber Forensic Consultant, Mr. Samuel Lalsangzuala said that majority of the cyber crime cases they have dealt with are related to financial issues. Cyber Crime Department at Mizoram Police Headquarters was officially inaugurated on 27th November 2023 by the then DGP SBK Singh. The 2020 cyber crime report by Mizoram Police can be seen in Figure 5.6.
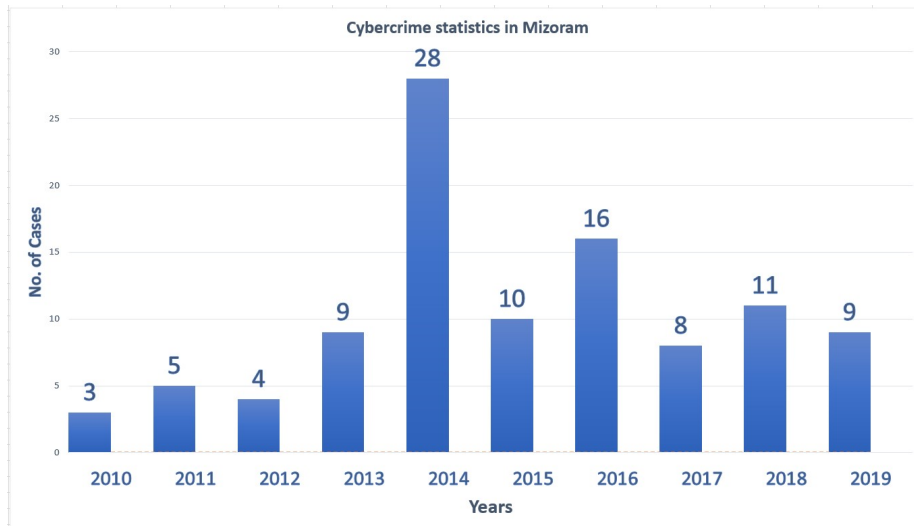

Figure 5.6: Mizoram Police Report on Cyber Crime Cases 2020
(Source: Hussain & Hnamte, 2021)

The number of crime record has been increasing at an alarming rate. By the year 2020, there were 12 cases, 25 cases in 2021, 153 cases by the end of 2022 and 76 by 2023. Out of these 153 cases, 118 were related to financial fraud, 21 identity theft (fake account/impersonation) related cases, 18 of sexual harassment, 11 Social media harassment, 10 cases of child pornography, 6 cases of false rumour and 2 copyright related cases. Most of the crimes committed within their state are easier for them to investigate. At the national level cyber crime meetings, other states' cyber crime bureau also mentioned that they are facing the same problem regarding crimes which are committed at inter-state level. Not only IT professionals, but every citizen needs an awareness to keep vigil so that they will not become victims of cyber crime. If we don't upgrade ourselves, there is a higher chance for everyone to get cyber attack. Mr. Samuel further said that cyber crime may often be considered by the public as something very technical, but around 90% of the cyber crime committed at the state and national level is generally about financial affair and is not always a complex technical matter. He mentioned incident such as in some villages, people use to buy multiple SIM cards from black markets across the nation and use them to make fraudulent calls to steal data from

people. Sometimes when a report is sent to the police, evidences like SIM card, ATM card and other possible attestation would have been destroyed (or burned in some instances) by the time the police reached the spot. Some of the cases can be extremely difficult for the police to investigate. The most common factor for committing cyber crime is the desire for money or easy money. The Cyber Consultant also highlighted that the state needs a meticulous cyber law and a strong workforce to tackle the crimes happening in the state even though we have the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000. From the perspective of cyber crime, judgement is usually made based on the law (or cyber law). Therefore, it is difficult to deal with some ethical practices of internet use as the cyber law may not highlight certain issues specifically.

5.8 Internet based charity group: Zo Inspiration Foundation

Another interesting point brought up by the participants is the setting up of Zo Inspiration Foundation, an online charity group (non-profit organization) during the global lockdown caused by Covid-19 Pandemic. Zo Inspiration Foundation, registered under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India, was started on 7th June 2020 by an Economics graduate Emmanuel Thangrosanga in order to help those who are in need as the pandemic had left many families in need, including those that were starving due to physical or social distancing. This foundation has helped 234 families during Covid-19 outbreak, raised funds on 76 different occasions till 8th June 2024 where the total amount raised so far is ₹26,180,404 (Zalen Weekly, 2024). Through this Foundation, 18 houses have been constructed for families who have never owned a house, 13 convenience stores were open as a start-up for the economically disadvantaged and it also provided education for 25 students (Vanglaini Daily, 2024). A digital immigrant (participant of FGD) from Aizawl mentioned that the founder Emmanuel started his YouTube channel on 16th June 2017 covering trending issues which are mostly of human interest stories initially. During the nationwide lockdown, the founder along with his few close friends venture to help the starving families and this became the starting point for the emergence and growth of Zo Inspiration Foundation. The online charity work was prompted by his coverage of a young boy who was killed by a quarry collapse. The deceased lad belonged to a poverty stricken family and the viewers were touched when seeing the condition of the family through Zo Inspiration YouTube channel. Many of the viewers requested the channel owner to raise fund (collect donation) so that they can give financial support to the family. Zo Inspiration online charity journey started growing since then – they began sharing their online payment details and many viewers/subscribers started donating through their channels. They use other social media platforms like instagram and facebook to

share their work to the society. This unique online based charity group may not be able to function without the internet. Such service may not be something new in other parts of the world but for the state of Mizoram, it is the first and very influential non-profit organization that helps people in need using various online platforms. Zo-inspiration foundation has provided shelter, food, education, medical care, financial aid and many other types of support to the needy. People in need often visit their office at Ramhlun Venglai, Aizawl, Mizoram to ask for help. They also provide an online application form at their website (https://zoinspiration.in) for those who wish to seek help from them. The main keyword for this organization is *Vehbur* (pronounced vaeh-boor), which can be translated as donation or contribution. Whenever the need arises people contribute as Zo Inspiration calls for *vehbur*. Many donors choose to remain anonymous. This online charity organization has brought a lot of change in Mizo society, uplifting the weaker ones – widows, orphans, homeless etc. and give a convenient platform for those who want to bless others through their generous giving.

5.9 The rise of user-generated content and participatory journalism

The participants of this study frequently mentioned about Mizo popular YouTubers who are spreading information faster than the mainstream media. This shows that the internet has increased the chance of participatory journalism as it give platform for every user to raise their voice and opinion. Singer et. al (2011) wrote that common people have captured and published reports which have local or global impact, sometimes in detail, or intimate looks about personal information through various online platforms and activities, thereby taking the role and carrying out certain functions that are customary to journalism, bringing us to "we media" scenario. They also mentioned JD Lasica who defined participatory journalism in 2003 as a slippery creature. Microsoft Network Broadcasting Company executive producer, Joan Connel does not consider independent bloggers (or social media influencers as in today's language) as journalist since there are no editors in between the producer and audiences/readers and believes that the main factor of journalism is editing function (Lasica, 2003). Mizo internet users consume a lot of YouTube content and YouTubers (or vloggers), for the sake of getting subscribers and viewers, are quite keen to update their subscribers with the most recent breaking news including topics of their (the channel owners') own interest. Mizo YouTuber Association was formed on 9th September 2022 with Harry Khiangte as their President. Their main aim is to help those who are in need. Some critics are expressing that setting up such association may be redundant as their voice will not matter when facing real technical or cyber problems by various users. In January 2024, *Unau Mukbang* YouTube

Channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcuOni4vGc0) listed the ten most subscribed Mizo YouTube channels, which are:-1) Zorimawi (Mizo Music Channel) 2) Esther Hnamte Official 3) Zonet (Cable TV Pvt. Ltd) 4)MDM (Music Domain Mizoram) Offical Mizoram 5) Tuesday Nightmare 6) FTH Official 7) Pc Hras – Thu Ngaihnawm Huang 8) In-House Production FTH Official 9) Rca Chhante Run 10) Chcha Varte.

These channels, along with several other YouTube channels are quite influential in shaping the opinion of the public as they are widely watched by Mizo internet users. Some of these channels would boldly bring up certain issues which may be too sensitive or controversial to be highlighted by the conventional media. Thought provoking statements and comments associated with some topic can also shape the perspective of the people. The participants of this study, digital immigrants from Champhai region also said that some of the Mizo YouTubers, especially those who are located outside India, fearlessly address burning issues in Mizoram – be it socio-political, human interest or sensitive issues. Since these YouTubers as well as other social media influencers do not have restrictions (or gatekeepers) like the mainstream media, it is easier for them to instantly share any update at their desired time. An eminent journalist of Mizoram who is widely trusted by the public, Mr. Vanneihthanga Vanchhawng also once informed his followers on social media that in some cases, professional journalists require permission from higher authorities (and also follow ethical principles) in order to cover certain beats, and they cannot simply rush to the spot in desire of taking the first footage before others do. He said this when his followers complained about his late report on a grave natural disaster caused by cyclone *remal* in May 2024. As the social media content creators do not have to abide by rules or house policy, they often become the first ones to share breaking news to the public. Many of their content, including speaking against the government as well as confrontational tones against delinquents, are covertly supported by the people as they courageously raise their voice against injustices and various other issues. The esteemed profession of journalism where the hegemony of gatekeeping can be found, is facing threat these days not only from competitors but also from the audiences and when it becomes 'participatory', the volume of information increases, saturating the traditional approaches (Singer et. al, 2011). Even though Henri Jenkins means inclusivity or democracy when he endorsed participatory culture in Convergence Culture, there is an adverse effect of such participation in terms of journalism, i.e, in participatory journalism, there is lack of professionality; everyone can become a journalist without having the requisite knowledge.

5.10 Mizo women and online shopping

Majority of the female participants often brought up the subject of blooming online businesses as well as the vulnerability of internet users to online shopping when they talk about their internet dependency. A Champhai digital native who studied in Aizawl said that her mother who does not shop often before online shopping existed, becomes a shopaholic in no time. Many other participants also mentioned that the most significant thing the internet brought is the option of online shopping (and payment) which makes purchase of goods or services much easier and convenient. The chief predictor of purchase or repurchase of online products is the customers' satisfaction and another factor in addition to satisfaction is perceived usefulness (Khalifa & Liu, 2007). What triggers online shoppers' emotional states can be the web atmospherics which could have either positive or negative experiences and this shopping environment can be the main influencer that will lead to various other activities (Kawaf & Tagg, 2017). Many of the participants also mentioned that the 'ease of use' feature of the internet prompted them to buy more stuffs than they intended. 'Waste of money' has been mentioned by a lot of them when asked about the problems caused by the internet in their daily life. Dai (2007) also stated that attractive incentives to shop online such as competitive (or reduced) prices, excitement, convenience etc. are the common motivators for internet users to shop online. She also mentioned Rodger and Harris (2003) who wrote that women have the tendency to have higher level of perceived risk in terms of online shopping more than men. Besides the direct attributes of online shopping, certain features such as website user-friendliness, users' emotional perceptions including satisfaction, integrity of sellers and manufacturers etc. persuade internet users to shop online (Retnowati & Mardikaningsih, 2021).

Mizo internet users also talked about the expansion of businesses by the internet through various online platforms. It opens doors not only for promotion of businesses but also provide opportunities for those who want to start a new one. There are many Mizo WhatsApp groups as well as Instagram and Facebook pages through which people earned money by selling goods and services. Mizos are known to have a good taste in fashion and the most popular business line in the state besides Fast-moving consumer goods (FMGC) is clothing. People have come up with online thrift stores, selling their used clothes and goods while buying from others accordingly. Bardhi & Arnould (2005) defined thrift shopping as an economic shopping which is part of an everyday activity that is conducted out of economic need. Looking at thrift from both utilitarian perspective and hedonic experience, their study also considered thrift as a cultural

resource used to justify the non-thriftiness of shoppers' eccentric indulgences where customers are allowed to construct a retail context as a thrifty as well as moral one. But the online presence of thrift stores seems to have deconstructed the understanding of thriftiness as associated only to a retail store experience. There are many internet users who earn money from it such as some YouTubers and those that are running online sales and services, for such users, their level of internet dependency is much higher than the casual passive users. The internet has also paved way for entrepreneurship as it provides wider and better platform for the aspirants.

5.11 Digital culture and food practices

The presence of the internet has also brought drastic change in the Mizo food culture as the participants of this study also admitted that the authentic Mizo food can be savoured when the digital immigrant generation (most probably Baby Boomers and Generation X) are involved in the preparation process. For instance, Ralte (2022) wrote that the Mizos in the earlier days smoked meat for preservation (since they did not have any better option with the available technology back then) but presently, smoked meat is prepared out of preferences, eventually becoming a part of ethnic cuisine. Fermented food and beverages became the essential components of the daily diet which have been traditionally inherited (Lalmuanpuii et. al, 2021). The coming of Christianity in the 1890s brought tremendous improvement in the mode of food preparation in Mizoram (ibid). The availability of various ideas and tips online (not to mention the Do-it-Yourself (DIY) options), has enriched as well as altered the preparation of Mizo food in many ways. What cannot be overstated is the empirical closeness between digital culture and food as the totality of food's lifecycle is profoundly impacted by digital technologies, from its production to consumption, including representation and all the activities involved (Feldman & Goodman, 2021). As vloggers, bloggers and social media influencers share ingredients and recipes while documenting commercial as well as home cooked meals, their subscribers or followers get the chance to incorporate them into their own food rhythm simply from their internet enabled smartphones. Thus, food media nowadays is not only limited to the world of television broadcasting and print publication. The digital immigrants are more acquainted with the raw or simple authentic taste of certain Mizo food items while the digital natives are now acquiring new taste though the multiple options available on the internet. It is not just movies and novels that awakened them to the global food culture nowadays, but also, the instantaneous real time experience through the internet offers them the luxury to explore certain food items at home without having to travel

anywhere. The participants of this study also said that they have practiced and adopted many new ways of cooking from the internet, especially YouTube videos, resulting in fusion of tastes and delicacies. Hence, the new generation, especially Generation Z and after might have to revisit their parents or grandparents cookbook/recipe to strictly savour used to be considered as authentic Mizo delicacies as Lee, Samdanis & Gkiousou (2014) opined 'authenticity' to take on different meanings whether discussed individually or in the context of collective traditions. Collective authenticity is about sustaining the tradition of a region or nation while individual authenticity pints to the originality or distinctiveness requiring the presence of the maker or originator at a given time and place (ibid).

5.12 Internet and lifestyle

Another commonly mentioned change brought by the internet amongst the Mizos is the lifestyle of the people. There is a functional shift in the lifestyle or daily life with the advancement and iteration of technology on the internet (Zhang, 2023). As it can reach large number of people with a very low cost, internet-mediated interventions have a good potential for the effectuation of better lifestyle programmes (Aalbers, Baars & Rikkert, 2011). Afshin et. al. (2016) also found that mobile interventions can be effective for improving physical activity and adiposity and the effectiveness of internet-based device interventions can be enhanced by adding evidence based behavioural change strategies. Strategic use of internet may not be common among the Mizo internet users yet but the mere use of internet is already changing their lifestyles, which may be positive or negative. Their fashion, food, everyday routine and many other things are dominated by the internet whether they admit or not. Lifestyle is considered to be a significant variable which influence consumers' use of the internet for various activities (Yang, 2004). Many participants also believed that the internet has instigated among its users the desperate longing to look sumptuous or luxurious, resulting in lifestyle discrepancy including counterfeit behaviour.

5.13 Remodel of socialization pattern

The socialization process of the people also undergoes changes as most of the participants said that people no longer have time for physical interaction but can be more active at virtual platforms. Socialization is no longer limited to face to face interactions but is becoming a fluid process influenced by the dynamics of the digital world (Prusty & Ahmed, 2023). Excessive use of social networking sites may introduce the risk of sacrificing pleasures related to offline social interactions as online social network provides opportunities for numerous

social connections (Li et.al, 2017) and the online environment can be more intense than the face-to-face world (Rosen et.al, 2010). People are becoming more comfortable with online interactions. Apart from formal video conferences, the participants of this study also use platforms like WhatsApp group for conducting a meeting. Having a committee is not only confined to physical location, but can now be held at Zoom, Google Meet so on and so forth. Moreover, some even use text messaging group as a venue for their meeting. As the attention span of the people is getting shorter and shorter with increasing screen engagement, the Mizo youths prefer instant messaging to phone calls as texting leaves room for other tasks for those who wish to multitask. They become more superficial in dealing with certain issues. Negative experiences in physical as well as online social interactions greatly effect socialization pattern of individuals in the digital era and can even lead to psychological problems in the long run (Prusty & Ahmed, 2023). This calls for a healthy doze of internet engagement.