



The Church as the "Social Glue": The Role of Religions in the Mechanisms of Social Cohesion in Contemporary Mizoram.

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Abstract

The Mizo community is indigenous to Northeast India. Their traditional homeland was geographically partitioned across three Indian states due to colonial demarcation such as Mizoram, Tripura and Assam, and their primary demographic concentration lies in the state of Mizoram. In Mizo society, religion plays a significant role, and serves a foundational pillar. It is to be noted that long before the advent of Christianity, religion or faith was embedded in the Mizo's way of life. Religion in the society functions as the primary mechanism for social stability and also for the moderation of deviance. This paper examines how religion in Mizo society acts as a binding factor for the institutions of family, kinship, and community, and it explores how local ecclesiastical frameworks and religious activities play an important role in sustaining collective identity and social cohesion in Mizo society.

Keywords: *Mizo Society, Social Cohesion, Mizoram, Mizo Religion, Social problems, sacred, rituals, deviance*

Introduction

In human societies, religion functions as a primary ground for stability as the scholar Émile Durkheim defines religion using the term "collective conscience". It is widely claimed that religion unites individuals by using common rituals, moral values, and collaborative activities, which produces a strong sense of duty to others. Since religious institutions provide a shared rule of behaviour, they mitigate conflict and promote group cohesion. These shared paths strengthen the individual's connection to the collective social body. This social pattern is demonstrated with clarity within the Mizo community—an indigenous group of the larger Zo ethnic family in Northeast India.(Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014)

Long before the advent of Christianity, Mizo social system was grounded in a commitment to ethical integrity and moral rectitude. Spiritual life and daily practice were intricately linked in the society as indigenous traditions dictated an integration of the sacred and the profane. Before the late 19th century, the Mizo people adhered to a belief system that honoured a powerful deity or creator, Khuanu, along with various spiritual entities. These



deities were perceived as overseers of human conduct, regulating the administrative and social order of the village. If a person harmed others even in secret, Khuanu or spiritual deities would have inflicted punishment directly or indirectly to him. The shift towards Christianity did not fully eradicate these foundational customs to avoid social evils. Instead, it facilitated a form of religious hybridity.

In modern Mizo society, the church serves as a venue for both religious activities and communal meetings. Members of the community who are mostly Christian utilise the ecclesiastical space for social interaction and spiritual cultivation. As the church provides a space for gathering, social cohesion is strengthened through collective participation in church congregations and other activities such as social work. Church-related tasks become a fundamental requirement for the routine of the people who are predominantly Church members. (Doungel, 2024). Specialists suggest that the sustainability of the Mizo social system may be facilitated by these religious gatherings. Even though certain changes occur after modernisation and globalisation such as arrival of certain institutions such as judicial system and civil administrations, people still remain connected to these religious institutions.

Mizoram is a predominantly Christian state, with approximately 87% of its population adhering to the faith. Christianity was introduced to the region by Welsh missionaries in the late 19th century—most notably starting in 1894 and followed by the arrival of Rev. David Evan Jones in 1897—and it has since profoundly shaped the state's cultural, social, and moral landscape (Hluna, 2023; Ralte, 2024).

Modern Mizo society has been characterised by an 'internal narrative' of being "100% Christian." and has been repeatedly used in internal narrative. However, after the turn of millennium, globalisation and cross-cultural exchange through modernisation have also brought some religious diversity, though weak as compared to other communities in India. A recent notable example is the Bnei Menashe, who left Christianity and identify themselves as descendants of the Lost Tribe of Manasseh. A small factions in Mizo society have also developed dissatisfaction with traditional church practices as they think the church is more of materialistic and not in proper align with the apostolic concept. However, even among individuals who are not engaged with traditional church or do not participate in church practices, spiritual commitment and religious belief holds an important place in the lives of most Mizo people.

Due to a high degree of religious consciousness and strong collective identity, religious institutions and community organisations exercise significant control over individual conduct (Laldinpuii, 2022). This may provide a mechanism for ensuring that normative conduct is maintained across the social system (Laldinpuii, 2022).

Particularly in addressing social problems and challenges like the "alarming rate" of substance abuse among youth, the community utilises its religious and social frameworks to provide life skills and corrective guidance (Lalengzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019). By addressing such deviance collectively, the Mizo community appears to reinforce its core values, thereby facilitating the alignment of individual actions with the collective good. This dynamic may suggest that religious practice within the Mizo context is an active, ongoing process of maintaining a social fabric that remains stable and resilient against fragmentation (Doungel, 2024). Consequently, this paper examines how these local ecclesiastical frameworks and communal rituals serve as the principal means for sustaining collective identity and social cohesion in modern Mizo society.

This continuous engagement creates a strong, unified social network where the church serves as an essential regulatory body, setting the moral boundaries necessary to maintain communal equilibrium. In this context, social cohesion is actively managed through the community's collective reaction to behavior via two primary mechanisms: Due to a high degree of religious consciousness and strong collective identity, religious institutions



and community organizations exercise significant control over individual conduct (Laldinpuii, 2022). This provides a mechanism to ensure that "good behavior" is enforced across the social system (Laldinpuii, 2022).

Literature Review

The Mizo community of North East India presents a good example of how religious institutions and belief systems function as the architects of social cohesion. The literature indicates that religion is not merely a personal conviction for the Mizo people but a foundational social structure that governs collective identity, moral regulation, and communal resilience.

1. **The Sociological Framework of Religious Bonding:** General sociological theory suggests that religion fosters social stability as it creates "collective conscience" through shared rituals and values (Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014). In the Mizo context, this theoretical framework functions through the church, which acts as 'a central hub for social interaction' (Doungel, 2024). Scholars observe that for the Mizo people, as they participate in ecclesiastical activities, it becomes a foundational aspect of their daily life, creating a unified social network that extends across the community and mitigates the risk of social fragmentation (Doungel, 2024; Laldinpuii, 2022).

2. **Historical Foundations and Indigenous Social Order:** Before the adoption of Christianity in Mizo community, Mizo society was anchored by indigenous beliefs known as 'Sakhua'. This belief system was intrinsically tied to the administrative and social structure of the village (Pachau, 2006). In pre-Christian Mizo society, "superstitions" and traditional beliefs played a necessary role in maintaining order; for example, the belief in the deity Khuanu and various spirits provided a moral framework that controlled daily routines and social conduct (Zadeng et al., 2025). This belief system established a tradition of "trusteeship, truthfulness, and integrity" that continues to inform modern Mizo ethics (Laldinpuii, 2022).

3. **Religious Hybridity and Identity Persistence:** The transition to Christianity from Sakhua is frequently described in academic literature as a process of "religious hybridity" (Nghinglova & Lalthlamuani, 2025). Rather than completely erasing indigenous culture, Christian practices merge with traditional Mizo values not fully but mostly.

4. **The Church as a Mechanism for Social Control:** In the modern Mizo society, religious structures function as the chief instruments for curbing deviant behaviour and upholding communal standards. Certain acts and behaviours which are viewed as immoral or breaches of community ethics are met with collective disapproval or public accountability.

5. **Social Solidarity and Communal Resilience:** Finally, the literature emphasizes that the Mizo community's resilience is rooted in its high degree of religious consciousness (Doungel, 2024). By providing a common moral framework and a hub for social mobilization, religious institutions ensure that individuals remain deeply integrated into the social fabric (Laldinpuii, 2022). This religious socialization acts as a "binding factor" for the core institutions of family and kinship, facilitating social cohesion even in the face of modern societal challenges (Doungel, 2024; Nghinglova & Lalthlamuani, 2025).



Research Objectives

The objectives of this research paper are as follows:

1. To examine the influence of religion on individual life in the broader social fabric: This objective explores how modern religions or Protestant ethics influence the 'way of life' of an individual, ranging from daily routines to moral code.
2. To explore the role of religious frameworks in facilitating social cohesion. The study aims to analyse how shared faith and ecclesiastical activities in the community function as the "social glue" for collective identity and unity.
3. To inspect how social deviance is controlled by the mechanisms of religious practice. This paper seeks to analyse how church frameworks address "deviant" behaviours, such as substance abuse or moral breaches through informal sanctions, moral guidance and public accountability.

Methodology of the Study

The present study is mainly based on the descriptive survey method. Accordingly, the churches of Mizoram and the members of the major churches in Mizoram have been described and analysed. To trace the historical background of the study, the researcher used historical data related to religious belief systems.

For the purpose of the study, the researcher collected data using questionnaires and interview schedules.

Population and Sample:

The Mizo tribes (also known as Zohnahtlak) constitute roughly 83.4% of Mizoram's population. In a total estimated state population of approximately 1.3 million, it is about 1 million to 1.1 million Mizo people residing within Mizoram, making up the majority of the state's demographic. Of Mizoram's population, 99% identify as Christian. There are denominations within Christianity where beliefs or rituals are somewhat similar or different, and some denominations are established based on the regions and other convenience, and some are also formed as family worship which later manifested as denominations.

The study population consists of congregants and religious leaders from ten major churches in Mizoram. For primary data collection, a purposive non-probability sampling method was employed. This involved selecting 30 members from major Ten churches—representing 85% of the Christian constituency—alongside 10 members from minor denominations to represent the remaining 15%. Additionally, 10 social leaders were sampled from the Young Mizo Association to assess objectivity. As a foundational organization deeply embedded within Mizo society, the YMA functions as a cultural and social entity with a distinct Christian orientation, as evidenced by its mottos, including 'Kristian nun dan tha ngaihsan' (Reverence for good Christian principles and ethics). The research sample size was 50 participants, and an equal gender distribution of 25 females and 25 males was achieved.

Social Indicators and Bibliometrics

The data collected are primarily subjective, reflecting how church members perceive religion as a mechanism for social stability. The study also examines the rules and regulations, rituals and practices of denominations of the Churches in Mizoram, along with analysis of how deviations from church discipline or how individuals who



committed social evils are addressed historically. The gathered data were tabulated and analysed to validate the findings.

The researcher collected secondary data from books, publications, research articles, journals, unpublished theses and dissertations, local newspapers, and Directorate of Economics and Statistics department's 'Statistical Handbook 2022',

Tool Used for Data Collection:

1. The researcher developed a questionnaire schedule to collect information on how members are engaged in religious activities, such as regular church activities; and how religious set norms and rules for their members concerning moral code.

Techniques Used for Data Analysis:

1. For analysing primary data, the present study used SPSS and descriptive statistics such as percentages.

2. The researcher interpreted the secondary data using content analysis.

Overview of Top Denominations

Based on the primary objective of the research study, the membership of the top ten churches in Mizoram is highlighted below. The membership numbers for specific mainstream churches show a significant concentration in a few key denominations.

Rank	Denomination	Total Members
1	Mizoram Synod	618,854
2	Baptist Church of Mizoram	173,952
3	UPC (NEI)	85,663
4	UPC (Mizoram)	72,407
5	Salvation Army	62,645
6	ECM	47,151
7	Lairam Isua Krista Baptist Kohhran	36,049
8	Roman Catholic	22,416
9	Seventh-day Adventist	18,979
10	Isua Krista Kohhran	10,650

Church Diversity: Minor Denominations

Apart from major denominations mentioned above, there are minor denominations which collectively account for approximately 15% of the total Christian population in Mizoram.

- Zomi Baptist Church
- Pawl Chhuak
- Methodist
- Pentecostal Reform Church



- EFCI
- 7th Day Church of God
- Assembly of God
- BBCC
- Bethel Israel
- Church of Unity
- Church of God
- Church of God Israel
- Church of God 7th Day
- Ephraim Pathian Kohhran
- Fundamental Baptist
- Gospel Baptist Church
- Seventh-day Adventist Church
- IKK 1993
- IKK a sen
- IKK a var
- IKK Dinthar
- IKK a var atanga chhuak
- Israel
- Isua Kohhran
- Manesia Israel
- Judaism
- Kohhran Thianghlim
- Lalchhungkua
- Lalchhungkaw Unit
- Lalpa Kohhran Thar
- Lalthuthlung Fate
- Mission for Christ
- Mizo Israel Thar
- Mizo Kohhran
- Nunna Lalhnam
- Pathian Kohhran
- Rinna Kohhran
- RPC NEI
- Sabbath (Judaism)
- Seventh-day Church of God
- Seventh-day Church of God
- Vohbik Israel
- Wesleyan Methodist
- Elohim
- Ephraim (sabbath)
- Ephraima
- Fatir vana hmingchuang
- IKK Lalramthar
- ICI
- IICM
- Knessyah Messhihim
- Sabbath
- Sabbath COG
- West Methodist Chanmary
- Zero
- Zion Church of God (Israel)
- Bible Believing Evangelical
- Lalsawmliana pawl
- Pawl Chhuak
- Rosangzuala Pawl
- Thangfala Pawl
- Revival Baptist Church
- Thiangzau
- Khuangtuaha Pawl
- Vohbik Nunna Lalchhungkua
- Sabbath (hei pawh hi hotu hran)
- The Salvation Church
- Jehovah's Witnesses

Analytical Context and Interpretation

Demographic Breakdown: The empirical data show that the concentration of members within the top denominations causes significant socio-political influence, functioning as a primary mechanism of social cohesion within the Mizo community. At the same time, this institutional hegemony necessitates an examination of social cohesion and the potential marginalization of minority religious factions in the community.



In the following, the empirical findings from a research survey conducted with 50 participants (N=50) have been portrayed to explore the role of religion in the social cohesion of Mizo society. The data suggest that the majority of participants felt the importance of religion for the cohesion of Mizo community, however, some participants remain in a nuanced dialogue regarding the distinction between indigenous Mizo customs and Christian influence.

Summary of Research Findings

This section presents the empirical findings from a research survey conducted with 50 participants (N=50) regarding the role of religion in the social cohesion of Mizo society. The data reveals an overwhelming consensus on the importance of religious institutions, while also highlighting nuanced perspectives on the relationship between indigenous Mizo customs and Christian influence.

Table 1: Core Survey Findings on Religion and Social Cohesion (N=50)

Research Theme / Question	Yes	%	Gender (M/F)	No	%	Primary Qualitative Reasoning
Importance for Social Cohesion	43	86%	19 M / 24 F	5	10%	Dissenters believe history shows society sustain itself via non-religious factors.
Basis of Cohesion: Religion vs. Custom	40	80%	22 M / 18 F	9	18%	Dissenters attribute cohesion to unique Mizo cultural characteristics and customs rather than faith.
Solidarity without Religion	21	42%	12 M / 9 F	12	24%	17 participants remained neutral. This reflects a split on whether Mizo identity is inseparable from faith.
Role in Defining Moral Codes	43	86%	19 M / 24 F	7	14%	Religion is viewed as the primary source of moral guidance for the majority.
Denominational Role in Social Order	45	90%	21 M / 24 F	5	10%	Churches encourage responsible citizenship and community cooperation at the local level.
Youth Groups	42	84%	21 M / 21 F	8	16%	These organizations are seen as vital for steering youth away from "social evils."
Impact of Church Philanthropy	45	90%	21 M / 24 F	5	10%	Church-led welfare is central to integrating marginalized groups into the community.
Informal Social Control	44	88%	21 M / 23 F	6	12%	Religious authority utilizes social sanctions (e.g., service suspension) to regulate deviance.
Crisis Intervention	44	88%	21 M / 23 F	6	12%	Institutions provide "moral restoration" via addiction centers and camps.
Rites of Passage (Marriage/Death)	45	90%	22 M / 23 F	5	10%	Religious solemnization is considered essential for communal completeness and solidarity.



Table 2: Denominational Dynamics and Institutional Impact (N=50)

Research Question	Affirmative	%	Gender (M/F)	Negative	%	Gender (M/F)	Key Qualitative Insight
Effectiveness: Major vs. Minor Denominations	6	12%	—	44	88%	20 M / 20 F	Majority (88%) disagreed that major denominations maintain cohesion more effectively. Respondents attributed cohesion to established societal norms and traditional Mizo ways of life rather than denominational size.
Promotion of Inter-denominational Social Cohesion	38	76%	18 M / 20 F	12	24%	—	Majority affirmed that denominations promote cohesion toward members of other denominations; dissenters noted that strong denominational identities can sometimes create divisions.
Role of Religious Teachings in Social Cohesion Framework	40	80%	18 M / 22 F	10	20%	—	80% believe church teachings actively contribute to social cohesion; dissenters argued cohesion is rooted in traditional Mizo customs rather than church teachings.
Impact of Social Disorder on the Church	38	76%	18 M / 20 F	12	24%	—	76% indicated social disorder negatively affects the church, emphasizing deep interrelationships. Dissenters maintained the church remains insulated from broader social problems.

Thematic Analysis and Discussion

1. Foundations of Social Cohesion and Morality:

The findings suggest that 86% of participants perceive religion as a foundational pillar of social cohesion in the Mizo community. This alignment supports the sociological theory that shared faith acts as a "collective conscience," thereby fostering mutual obligation (Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014). Interestingly, a minority of respondents (18%) suggested that cohesion is rooted in indigenous Mizo customs rather than Christianity alone, pointing to a sense of "religious hybridity" where traditional Mizo characteristics and Christian ethics are integrated (Nghinglova & Lalthlamuani, 2025; Pachuau, 2006).



2. Institutional Influence and Civic Engagement:

Dominant denominations, such as the Presbyterian and Baptist churches, play a significant role in maintaining social order at the village (Veng) level (Lalnuntluanga, 2024). By advising members to be responsible citizens, the church extends its influence beyond spiritual matters into civic life (DOUNGEL, 2024).

Youth Involvement: Church-affiliated organizations like the Kristian Thalai Pawl, Salvation Army Youth and Pentecostal Youth Department are perceived by 84% of respondents as potentially essential mechanisms for the prevention of "social evils." These groups may facilitate the provision of purpose and constructive community engagement to youth (Lalengzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019).

3. Social Control and the Management of Deviance

A critical finding suggests that 88% of participants regard religious authority as the primary mechanism for the implementation of informal social control.

Sanctions: In cases of social or moral deviance, such as substance abuse or sexual immorality, the church implements disciplinary measures. For example, individuals may be barred from performing church services for up to six months, a sanction that carries significant social weight in a community where religious involvement is a hallmark of status (Laldinpui, 2022).

Crisis Management: Religious institutions are also frontline responders to modern crises. Participants highlighted the role of church-led rehabilitation centers and "moral restoration" camps in addressing substance abuse, which remains a significant challenge in districts like Lunglei (DOUNGEL, 2024; Lalengzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019).

4. Rites of Passage and Neighborhood Solidarity

The data confirms that rituals surrounding birth, marriage, and death are central to maintaining kinship ties. 90% of respondents noted that ceremonies are considered incomplete without religious solemnization. In the case of death particularly, the church's role in organizing the funeral and supporting the grieving family is a major factor in reinforcing neighborhood solidarity and the collective Mizo identity (Chakraborty, 2023; Sangzua & Sailo, 2025).

Methodological Notes

Sample Size and Representativeness: The survey data presents a strong, almost binary view of church dominance. Given the small sample size (N=50), the methodology explicitly clarifies that this sample may not be fully representative of the broader Mizoram population, particularly in capturing the experiences of the small number of individuals who are not engaged with traditional church.

Institutional Context: While the finding on church role for social control is well-supported by survey data, it is important to note that the cited work provides a valuable theoretical framework but does not directly substantiate the comparative effectiveness of church suspension against formal legal systems. This finding is therefore explicitly acknowledged as derived from the survey data rather than solely attributed to literature.



Key Insights Summary

Dimension	Consensus Level	Primary Mechanism	Notable Dissent
Social Cohesion	86%	Religious faith as "collective conscience"	18% attribute cohesion to indigenous customs
Moral Regulation	86%	Church teachings as moral authority	14% emphasize traditional Mizo ethics
Social Order	90%	Denominational civic education	10% view as personal behavior management
Youth Development	84%	Church-affiliated youth organizations	16% question impact on cohesion
Philanthropy	90%	Church-led welfare programs	10% attribute to cultural practices
Social Control	88%	Religious sanctions and accountability	12% prefer civil/judicial systems
Crisis Response	88%	Church rehabilitation centers	12% prefer state intervention
Ritual Integration	90%	Religious solemnization of rites	10% accept secular alternatives

Thematic Analysis and Discussion

1. The findings in this study highlight that 86% of individual participants regard religion as a foundational pillar of social cohesion in Mizoram. This supports the sociological theory that suggest faith acts as a "collective conscience," in fostering mutual obligation (Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014). However, few respondents (18%) suggested that social cohesion is not developed by religions or Church, but is rooted in indigenous Mizo customs. This point to a sense of "religious hybridity" where traditional Zo characteristics and Christian ethics are integrated.

2. Major denominations, such as the Presbyterian and Baptist churches, play an important role in maintaining social order as they have large memberships at village (Veng) level (Lalnuntluanga, 2024). The churches in Mizoram advise their members to be responsible citizens, beyond the spiritual matters. (Doungel, 2024).

- **Youth Involvement:** Church-affiliated organizations like the Kristian Thalai Pawl, Salvation Army Youth, and Pentecostal Youth Department are perceived by 84% of respondents as potentially essential mechanisms for the prevention of "social evils." These groups may facilitate the provision of purpose and constructive community engagement to youth (Lalenzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019).

3. The finding suggests that 88% of individual participants regard religions or church as a mechanism for the carrying out informal social control.

- **Sanctions:** In certain cases of social or moral deviance, for example substance abuse or sexual immorality or any immoral conduct, the church generally disciplinary measures indirectly or directly. For example, individuals who commit such deviance may be barred or excluded from performing many church services or activities for up to six months.

Deviance: Certain local churches conduct camping or seminar for moral reformation and also establish rehabilitation centres for recovering individuals suffering from substance abuse, etc.



Results and Discussion

The empirical findings of this study provide a comprehensive view of how religious frameworks function as the primary engine for social cohesion and moral regulation in contemporary Mizoram. By analysing the survey responses of 50 participants, it is evident that religion transcends personal faith to serve as an institutional "social glue" that maintains community stability (Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014).

1. The Interplay Between Faith, Custom, and Social Solidarity

The majority of the participants (86%) regard religion as the fundamental pillar of social cohesion in Mizo community. This consensus suggests that the "collective conscience" of Mizo society is deeply rooted in religious values (Whitehouse & Lanman, 2014). 80% of the participants believe social cohesion is based on religious belief systems or Churches' roles, few participants (18%) argued that it has been derived from unique Mizo cultural characteristics or indigenous customs rather than Christianity or the Church.

From the data collected, "religious hybridity," has also been seen in modern Mizo community, as traditional Mizo values have not been rejected or faded but rather merged or assimilated into the Christian framework (Nghinglova & Lalthlamuani, 2025; Pachuau, 2006). The different responses regarding whether "social solidarity" might persist in the absence of religion (21 "yes" vs. 12 "no") suggest that while Mizo identity is inseparable from the church, there remains the imprint of the well-regulated social order that existed under the indigenous Sakhua system prior to the 20th century (Pachuau, 2006; Zadeng et al., 2025).

2. Institutional Frameworks and Local Social Order

The survey highlights that the major church denominations, particularly the Presbyterian and Baptist churches play an important role in maintaining order at the village (Veng) level. Ninety percent of respondents suggest that the church becomes a civic educator, as it advises its members to be responsible citizens beyond spiritual matters (Doungel, 2024).

Civic Engagement: This finding aligns with the observed "interface between the state and the church," where ecclesiastical frameworks often fill gaps in social regulation (Doungel, 2024).

Youth Mobilization: Church-affiliated youth organizations—such as the Kristian Thalai Pawl, Salvation Army Youth, and Pentecostal Youth Department—were cited by 84% of participants as vital for steering youth away from "social evils." These organizations serve as critical platforms for life-skills education and community service, fostering a resourceful and resilient younger generation (Lalengzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019).

3. Religious Mechanisms for Social Control and Deviance: One of the most striking results is the role of religion or church as the primary mechanism for informal social control.

- **Social Control and Deviance:** 88% of the participants consider religious authority the primary mechanism for informal social control.
- **Sanctions:** In cases of social or moral deviance among its members, such as substance abuse or sexual immorality, the church implements disciplinary measures. For example, an individual who commits certain act which the Church forbids or discourages may be barred from performing church services for up to six months. This sanction holds significant social weight in Mizo community where religious or church engagement is a hallmark of status. (Laldinpuii, 2022).



- **Crisis Management:** Religious institutions also take responsibility to modern crises such as social problems like addictions. Participants in this study highlighted the role of church-led rehabilitation or de-addiction centre, "moral restoration" camps to recover individuals suffering from substance abuse. This remains a significant challenge in most districts of Mizoram state, including Lunglei (Doungel, 2024; Lalengzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019).

4. Rites of Passage and Neighborhood Solidarity: In this study, the data approves that rituals performed through religious during birth, marriage, and death are significant to maintaining kinship ties and also influence social cohesion. Most respondents mentioned that ceremonies are considered incomplete without religious solemnization. Mizos take death ceremonies seriously, and the churches perform their roles in organizing the funeral ceremonies for their members and comfort the grieving family. This also represents a major factor in reinforcing social cohesion and the collective Mizo identity (Chakraborty, 2023; Sangzuala & Sailo, 2025).

Conclusion

From the study conducted, it can be concluded that religion functions as the "social glue" in Mizo community as it provides the primary framework for both moral guidance and social stability. The survey data shows a good level of consensus, with 86% of participants believe religion has been the primary factor in defining the community's moral code and also a foundational pillar for social cohesion. This reliance on religious institutions by the individuals suggests that the church has integrated traditional Mizo values into its own structural framework, thereby creating a unique interface between faith and community life (Doungel, 2024; Nghinglova & Lalthlamuani, 2025).

One important aspect of this cohesion is the role of ecclesiastical institutions in maintaining social order at the community level. Ninety percent of respondents observed that major church denominations actively advise their members to be responsible citizens, extending their influence beyond spiritual matters into civic behavior (Doungel, 2024). This institutional reach is further amplified by church-affiliated youth organizations, such as the Kristian Thalai Pawl and Salvation Army Youth. 84% of participants viewed these groups as essential mechanisms for preventing "social evils" and fostering resourceful community engagement among Mizo youth, addressing critical issues like substance abuse through life-skills education (Lalengzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019).

The study also confirms that religious authority serves as a potent mechanism for informal social control. 88% of the survey participants recognized that religious sanctions—such as the suspension of church service privileges—effectively regulate deviance and maintain social equilibrium (Laldinpuii, 2022). While the formal civil and judicial systems exist, the community often views church-led interventions, including rehabilitation and "moral restoration" programs, as the primary tools for addressing modern social crises (Doungel, 2024; Lalengzama & Lalmuansangi, 2019).

Finally, religious rituals or rites of passage also plays significant role to communal identity. 90% of the respondents believe that marriage and death without religious ceremony or solemnization are incomplete. These rituals reinforce kinship ties and also neighbourhood solidarity during the time of significant social transition (Chakraborty, 2023; Sangzuala & Sailo, 2025).

In summary, while few of the participants (18%) attribute social cohesion primarily to indigenous Mizo customs, majority of the participants view the church or religion as the indispensable architecture of modern Mizo society. In Mizoram, religion provides the core mechanisms—civic, philanthropic, and corrective, and helps in sustaining collective identity and social harmony.



The results demonstrate that religion in Mizo society is not merely an ideological preference but a structural necessity. It provides the moral code (86% agreement), the philanthropic safety net (90% agreement), and the corrective mechanisms for social deviance (88% agreement). While the presence of civil administration and judicial systems is acknowledged, the findings suggest that the internal "moral authority" of the church remains the paramount factor in resolving social problems and sustaining collective identity in Mizoram (Doungel, 2024; Laldinpuii, 2022).

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