

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344270762>

# PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MIZORAM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Article in *Critical Review* · July 2020

CITATIONS

0

READS

1,205

3 authors:



Lokanath Mishra

Mizoram University

33 PUBLICATIONS 169 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



F. Lalrinzuali

Mizoram University

2 PUBLICATIONS 0 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



Tushar Gupta

Mizoram University

19 PUBLICATIONS 117 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Violence against girls in Secondary Schools of Mizoram [View project](#)



Post-Doctoral Research [View project](#)

# PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MIZORAM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Prof. Lokanath Mishra<sup>1</sup>, Dr. F. Lalrinzuali<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Tushar Gupta<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Director, Faculty Development Center, Mizoram University, Aizawl, India

<sup>2</sup>Asst Professor, Department of Education Mizoram University, Aizawl, India

<sup>3</sup>Post-doctoral fellow, Mizoram University

Received: 14 March 2020 Revised and Accepted: 8 July 2020

**ABSTRACT:** All the schools around the country temporarily closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Primary education in the state will suffer a lot during the above period. Different curricular and co-curricular activities were also not organized in the schools as a result student may face many problems. Task forces are being set up in all localities and villages across Mizoram under the aegis of the Young Mizo Association (YMA). Due to the immense popularity of YMA in Mizo society, the government has urged the organization to work with it to ensure smooth implementation of the lockdown and ensure supplies to households and look after the education system of their locality. This paper will highlight about the status of primary education, the problems faced by the teachers and students during lockdown period and the role of local level task force during the above period. The researcher used qualitative methodologies for the above study. Purposive sampling technique was used in this study. Interview with stake holders like teachers, Parents and local Taskforce members was done to collect the data. The study found that majority of the teachers and students faced problems like no internet connection, availability of smart phone and teachers are not trained to implement online education for transacting the lesson during COVID-19 period. The local level taskforce plays a vital role for the same.

**KEYWORDS:** Coronavirus, COVID-19, Primary education, local level task force

## I. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus also known as COVID 19 is an ongoing pandemic which is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). On 11 March, The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID 19 as pandemic. India reported its first case of COVID-19 on 30<sup>th</sup> January, in Kerala, on 24 March, the prime minister ordered a nationwide lockdown for 21 days, affecting the entire 1.3 billion population of India. India has been seeing rise in COVID cases every hour and having the total cases of 33,87,500 as on 28.08.2020. The numbers are shooting day by day. From the government report it can be seen that COVID 19 recoveries have crossed over 1.5 million, which is almost 70 percent. It can also be seen from the report that even the fatal rate have been declining. India still stands as the third-worst affected country globally after the United States and Brazil. According to the report of the United Nations (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, it has affected nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all over the globe. Closing of schools and other learning places have affected 94 per cent of the world's student population, up to 99 per cent in low and lower-middle income countries. Adib (2020) studied to design and implement scientific literacy worksheets for distance learning in the topic of covid-19 to primary school students. The approach for this research is mixed method sequential exploratory model. The sample consisted of 35 primary students who are studying in distance mode due covid-19 pandemic. This research is a design of scientific literacy worksheets which is based on the core stage of the scientific approach, this had been reviewed and judged by expert. James, Gideon, Matthew and Jeff (2020) studied the staggering impact of covid-19 on education systems around the world is unlike anything we have seen in the post-war era. From the findings it can be seen that more than 1.6 billion students have been affected, representing over 91% of the world's students population. The demand for online education is at its peak. It has become a compulsion now. In the last 30 days, there were 10.3 million enrollments in courses on Coursera, up 64% from the same period last year. As all the learning institutions have been closed and campus learning is not possible, schools, colleges and universities have taken initiatives to provide academic continuity through "emergency remote teaching."

Mizoram is located in the northeastern part of the country and is bounded by Myanmar (Burma) to the east and south and Bangladesh to the west and by the states of Tripura to the northwest, Assam to the north, and Manipur to the northeast. The capital is Aizawl, in the north-central part of the state. Mizoram has 8

districts namely Aizawl, Kolasib, Lawngtlai, Lunglei, Mamit, Saiha, Serchhip, Champhai, with 22 towns and 817 villages.

Mizoram consisted of a formal system of education from elementary to university level, training to technical courses. By census 2011, the state has the third highest literacy rate in the country i.e. 92% next to Lakshadweep and Kerala. The Elementary Education in the State comprises of Primary Schools from Class I to IV as Lower Primary and from Class V to VII as Upper Primary Schools. From the year 2011 academic session, Class VIII which used to be one of the components of Secondary Schools has been shifted to Middle Schools so that the Elementary structure is now from Class I to VIII. At present, the number of primary schools are 1950 with 8330 teachers having 159334 students; there are 1511 Middle Schools with 10159 teachers having 93277 students. Child centric education has been employed in the primary schools of Mizoram. Due to COVID -19, learning institutions have been closed in almost all parts of the world. This pandemic had an adverse effect on the education of Mizoram as well. During the lockdown period the primary education of the state was totally closed. Different curricular and co-curricular activities was also not organized in the schools as a result student may face many problems. Task forces are being set up in all localities and villages across Mizoram under the aegis of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) to maintain the farm-to-plate supply chain of grains, vegetables, meat, fish and other essentials. Due to the immense popularity of YMA in Mizo society, the government has urged the organization to work with it to ensure smooth implementation of the lockdown and ensure supplies to households and look after the education system of their locality. In order to know the status of primary education and the role of local level task force during the lockdown period the researcher interested to take the study with following objectives.

## **II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

1. To study the role of local level task force in Aizawl during COVID-19 Pandemic
2. To study the mode of teaching and learning in primary schools of Mizoram during COVID-19 Pandemic
3. To assess the challenges faced by the teachers and students on teaching and learning process during COVID-19 pandemic.

## **III. METHODOLOGY**

Survey method was used for the study. The researcher used qualitative methodologies to study the observations of stake holders which is based on role of Task force during COVID-19. The researcher interviewed 10 primary school teachers, 10 students and 10 members of Local level taskforce of Aizawl district. An Interview schedule was developed in a workshop via zoom and this was used to gather the data from the students, teachers and Local level taskforce members. All the teachers, students and taskforce members extended their full cooperation through their opinions and valuable suggestions. Throughout the interpretation and presentation of the study's results a thematic approach was taken. Data which was obtained from the various sources were triangulated and analyzed qualitatively. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.

## **IV. FINDINGS**

Govt. of Mizoram initiatives during COVID-19 pandemic: In this context, Government of Mizoram has strengthened the surveillance and control measures against the disease. With the undertaking of State Government and approval of ICMR, COVID-19 laboratory is now functional at Zoram Medical College (ZMC), Falkawn. In wake of COVID-19 outbreak, the general public is advised to adhere to health advisories issued by the State Government. (Health and Family Welfare GOM 2020). The Government of Mizoram in its swift action to prevent any incidence of COVID-19 cases has taken a number of measures in the interest of public health and safety. The State Task Force on Mitigation of COVID-19 is closely monitoring the situation on a daily basis with the Chief Minister and the Health Minister at the helm of affairs. The State Task Force is formed under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary. These Task Forces at the community level which includes Local Council (Panchayat) representatives and NGO representatives have been formed in all localities. They are strictly monitoring all home quarantine cases of people; they are also monitoring availability of essential items and prices of goods. Announcements in this regard are being made by the Task Forces over public address systems in localities. (DIPR, GOM 2020) On 15th March 2020, the state government announced to observe 14 days quarantine for people coming home from outside the state. Following the safety measures and restrictions put forth by the government, local level task force and NGO's, the obedience and discipline maintained by the mizo people is remarkably outstanding. (DIPR, GOM 2020) On 22nd March, after Janata Curfew was observed in whole of India, the state declared a lockdown. Mizoram is one of the few states that do not require external forces or Lathi charges to maintain discipline. Mizoram has reported its first case of COVID-19 on 25th March

2020, after a 50 year old man, who came back from Amsterdam in the Netherlands, tested positive. (The Hindu, 2020). An interview was held with the local level task force in Ramhlun South locality and the following were the responses given by them. Duty roster had been made and the timing is usually from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. seven persons were detailed for duty each day and night.

Local and village level task force took the initiative to maintain the lockdown, At the same time the local level task force has catering to the needs and requirements of people in their respective locality. Local community, NGO's and churches have donated generous sum of money to the local level task force. They have also received funding from the Chief Minister's relief fund, funding was also received from Aizawl Municipal Council and items like seeds, hand sanitizer, gloves and rice bag were also donated by Mizoram Legislative Assembly. Shops and essential commodities are controlled by local level task force where and when deemed necessary. Groceries were collected in bulk by the local level task force and distributed to their respective locality in lower rate, whereas in some places free of cost. After house to house survey was done in Ramhlun South locality, 230 houses were given food free of costs. The distribution of food is extended to non-mizo like labourers, truck drivers, shopkeepers who are stranded in Mizoram during the lockdown.

So far, the people of Ramhlun South comply with the safety measures and restrictions put forward by the local level task force. During lockdown, whenever there are cases where the people have to go somewhere important prior permission have to be taken from the task force. There is open hour for the people to collect essential commodities within the locality, and it was reported that there were no shops which were selling their items overpriced. The government is now taking measures for those daily and essential workers to be able to work within their locality. Different departments under the state government and educational institutions has contributed their one-day salary to the chief minister's relief fund. The participation of the people in the fight of COVID 19 is remarkable, many landlords free their house rent during these difficult times. Home tailored personal protective equipment (PPE) had been contributed by various tailors across the land to meet the shortage of supply for the medical workers and the local level task force. The state task force is now more focused on the borders of Mizoram where the Mizoram police kept a close watch on these borders' day and night and they really are the heroes of Mizoram during these difficult times.

### Teaching Learning

During the global COVID-19 pandemic, disruption to education can have long term implications — especially for the most vulnerable section of the society. There is a real risk of regression for children whose basic, foundational learning (reading, math, languages, etc.) was not strong to begin with. According to the India Internet 2019 report by IAMAI and Nielsen, only 36 percent of the Indian population, about 385 million above the age of 12, has access to the internet. It is evident from the findings that regarding access of internet only 27 percent in rural areas and 51 percent in urban areas. There are around 400 million subscribers of WhatsApp in India, where majority of the subscribers are from urban areas. This pandemic clearly shows digital divide between the rich and the poor. (CNBC, 2020). To add on this issue, millions of children who have already been deprived of their right to education, particularly girls, are being more exposed to health and well-being risks (both psychosocial and physical) during COVID-19. Some private schools are making use of famous applications, conducting classes over whatsapp, Google classroom, Hangouts or Zoom, Youtube and sending assignments, tests and videos for learning. Whereas, there are a large number of students who did not have the resources to grasp this basic education. The teachers of Aizawl started online teaching for primary school students through what's app group during the lockdown period. Home assignment is given to the students by means of what's app and e-mail. Education at the school level is imparted by means of television programme in DDK where the some of the lessons are taught by assigned teachers. This programme has been telecast from time to time. They also posted the lessons particularly mathematics in YouTube and local TV channels. Teachers are also taking help from time to time the central government's digital learning portal DIKSHA, where lessons are available in multiple languages for all classes from primary. Teacher Y said majority of the year's curriculum was completed, the month of March and April are used to revise concepts and introduce students to newer subjects that will be part of the next year's curriculum. These are important to bridge the gaps found in learning levels in government schools, where more often than not students of different age groups and grades study in the same classroom. Very good, well prepared schools already using technology reasonably effectively are those most likely to navigate the transition to online learning most effectively and efficiently. Often, these are located in well resourced, reasonably affluent communities. Conversely, students and teachers in schools. As per the opinion of teachers and students many of beneficiaries do not have access to internet connectivity, computers or smart phones. It may not be feasible through technology to teach for primary school students. Mr X, a teacher at the primary school, said "for teaching his students during this pandemic, it is possible to send revision lessons to his students of class 1 to 4. The big problem he is facing is that only 15 out

of the 34 students in his school are having access to internet by using their smart phones. "It is difficult to teach new concepts online and most of my students are not able to access the videos we are sending. We have made a group with 15 parents who have WhatsApp and I am sending some videos from DIKSHA app also." The students also said that they are not able to learn properly during this period. Many students are facing problem in accessing online learning, which will result in loss of interests in their lessons and they will probably be of limited value for most of them. This is the real scenario that is happening in poor communities, in households where Internet access is poor or non-existent, who have a very little experience and lacking the skills for online learning, and are subject to numerous other disadvantages. Some students have the advantage as their parents are well educated and are able to learn independently by taking the advantage of online learning resources offered by different companies and non-profit groups. The taskforce member also creates awareness among the students to learn through different apps and availability of such resources. Local level task force considers all responses to remote learning – high tech, low tech and no tech – some local level educated youth started home tuition during the lockdown period and supplied the reading writing material to the students. The Task force member delivered the mid-day -meal to the students at their home. Local task force like Ramhlun South, is opening a library for those who are interested and issuing of books is handled by the task force keeping a record and delivering it to their homes. This is a remarkable performance which is not seen in any parts of Mizoram.

### **Challenges faced by the teachers and students on teaching and learning process during COVID-19 pandemic:**

From the interview conducted among the teachers and the students it can be seen that during these difficult times they are facing many problems especially because of the slow speed of the internet and network problem. It can be seen that the older teachers face difficulty using the online resources and they are seeking help from their sons and daughters. At the primary level students did not have mobile phone or laptop so it is the parents who have to guide and perform most of the task, this creates difficulty where the parents are not expert with those resources or did not have those resources like laptop at home. Few teachers are able to take online classes and the problem they face is that many students could not join their online classes due to network problem. There are students who faced problem due to the negligence of the parents as well. So, it is very difficult for the teacher to maintain discipline and draw a strict dead line for the task given to the students.

### **V. CONCLUSION**

The Government of Mizoram is doing its best to contain the virus, it has given importance to Mizoram borders as there are many passersby each day, the government is taking back Mizo people who are stranded due to the lockdown and put them in quarantine center. Meanwhile the government did not neglect the field of education, there has been meeting with the education minister at the school level, college level and at the University level for what should be done at this point of time and teachers are trying their best by means of online learning to connect with the students. Much effort is given to continue education by means of online system wherever feasible and students are given an activity so that they will use their time fruitfully. We can say that the present situation creates a lot of problems and confusion on the parts of the students as well as the teachers, as this is done without proper training, for smooth functioning of online learning it will need proper training and resources. So, the teachers are in a stage of experimenting and trying their best for their students.

**Funding:** This research has not funded from any funding agency

**Conflicts Of Interest/Competing Interests:** There is no conflicts of interest for developing this article

**Availability Of Data And Material:** Data will be available on special request to the corresponding author

### **Reviewers Comment:**

R1- This paper developed by the author is conceptually strong and appropriate methodology followed. The originality of the research paper is out standing. English grammar is appropriate. Discussions and findings is up to the mark. Hence it may accept for publication as it is.

### **VI. REFERENCES**

- [ 1] Adib. S (2020). Scientific Literacy Worksheets for Distance Learning in the Topic of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). 10.35542/osf.io/swjmk
- [ 2] CNBC(2020).<https://www.cnbctv18.com/technology/digital-education-during-covid-19-lockdown-not-for-all-5785491.htm>
- [ 3] COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response UNESCO <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

- [ 4] Directorate of Information & Public Relations. Government of Mizoram. <https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post/state-task-force-on-covid-19-in-mizoram-ah-kar-khat-lock-down-neih-a-rel>
- [ 5] El Zowalaty, M.E., Järhult, J.D., (2020). From SARS to COVID-19: a previously unknown SARS-CoV-2 virus of pandemic potential infecting humans – call for a one health approach. *One Health* 9, 100124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.onehlt.2020.100124>
- [ 6] Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Mizoram(2020). <https://health.mizoram.gov.in/post/covid-19-bulletin-date-842020>
- [ 7] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020\\_coronavirus\\_pandemic\\_in\\_India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2020_coronavirus_pandemic_in_India)
- [ 8] India locks down over 100 million people amid coronavirus fears, Al Jazeera, 23 March 2020 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/scores-indian-districts-lockdown-coronavirus-200323041150247.html>
- [ 9] India todayCovid-19 impact (2020) Will digital education take over the conventional education? Here's what experts have to say<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featureophilia/story/covid-19-impact-digital-education-conventional-education-divd-1661185-2020-03-30>
- [ 10] India's Coronavirus Lockdown: What It Looks Like When India's 1.3 Billion People Stay Home. Ndtv.com. 22 February 2019. Retrieved 11 April 2020 <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/indias-coronavirus-lockdown-clear-roads-clean-air-80s-tv-2209373>
- [ 11] James, Gideon, Matthew and Jeff (2020)Higher Ed Needs a Long-Term Plan for Virtual Learning<https://hbr.org/2020/05/higher-ed-needs-a-long-term-plan-for-virtual-learning>
- [ 12] Kiprosh, (2020). Covid-19 Outbreak in India. <https://www.dout.in/>.downloaded on 21/04/2020
- [ 13] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare GOI(2020). <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/>Retrieved 29 April 2020
- [ 14] PM Modi announces extension of lockdown till 3 May. Livemint. 14 April 2020. <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/pm-modi-announces-extension-of-lockdown-till-3-may-11586839412073.html>
- [ 15] Scipioni, Jade (18 March 2020). "Why there will soon be tons of toilet paper, and what food may be scarce, according to supply chain experts". CNBC. Retrieved 19 March 2020. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/18/supply-chain-experts-foods-that-could-be-less-available-in-pandemic.html>
- [ 16] The Great Lockdown: Worst Economic Downturn Since the Great Depression. IMF Blog. <https://blogs.imf.org/2020/04/14/the-great-lockdown-worst-economic-downturn-since-the-great-depression/>
- [ 17] The Hindu. COVID-19(2020), Mizoram man who returned from Netherlands is second positive case in Northeast<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/covid-19-mizoram-man-who-returned-from-netherlands-is-second-positive-case-in-northeast/article31160338.ece>
- [ 18] UNICEF(2020)<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/keeping-worlds-children-learning-through-covid-19>
- [ 19] Wang, H., et al (2020)Phase-adjusted estimation of the number of Coronavirus Disease 2019 cases in Wuhan, China. *Cell Discov.* 6. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41421-020-0148-0>downloaded on 12/04/2020
- [ 20] World Health Organization (2020). Coronavirus [https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1) (Accessed 23 March 2020)
- [ 21] Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond AUGUST (2020) [https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wpcontent/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg\\_policy\\_brie\\_covid-19\\_and\\_education\\_august\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wpcontent/uploads/sites/22/2020/08/sg_policy_brie_covid-19_and_education_august_2020.pdf) Accessed 28 August 2020