

NAVIGATING INDIGENOUS REALITIES: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AMONG TRIBES IN MANIPUR

Khuigai Kahmei

Research Scholar, Department of Economics, Manipur International University

Dr. Chandibai Potsangbam

Assistant Professor cum Research Officer, Assistant Registrar Management
Manipur International University

Abstract

This study goes into great depth about how the native tribes of Manipur, Northeast India, handle their social and economic situations. Surveys collect first-hand information that is used to look into important things like how people live, what they do for a living, how much schooling they have, how easy it is to get health care, how much property they own, how they get around, their employment status, how much energy they can get, and their overall living conditions. The results show a variety of job paths, with farming and small businesses showing up as major sources of income. Differences were big in how much schooling people had and how easy it was to get medical care. Indigenous people have big problems getting power, getting around, and owning land. It is emphasised in the report how important targeted interventions and legislative efforts are for dealing with these complicated problems and promoting inclusive development. Long-term social and economic success can come to indigenous communities in Manipur if policymakers and other interested parties focus on growth that looks at the whole person, fair access to resources, and community development.

Keywords: Indigenous tribes, Socio-economic dynamics, Livelihood patterns, Education access and Healthcare accessibility

Introduction

Indigenous tribes in Manipur depend on the interplay of historical, cultural, and structural elements that shape their socioeconomic conditions in order to survive, thrive, and maintain their health. Manipur lies in northeastern India and is home to numerous indigenous tribes. Everybody has distinct cultural identities, customs, and social and economic structures. However, these aboriginal communities frequently face numerous issues, such as difficult access to financial, medical, educational, and construction opportunities. Their living in isolated places and susceptibility to environmental deterioration exacerbates these issues (Zimik 2023). This study's primary goal is to provide a comprehensive picture of the social and economic circumstances that Indian residents of Manipur face. Concerns like economic inequality, educational success, access to health care, land ownership, jobs, transportation,

energy supply, and general living standards will be looked at in more detail. This study looks at poll data to find out what factors affect the social and economic well-being of indigenous groups, how they change, and where these factors come from. The findings would improve the growth, adaptability, and long-term development for the indigenous people of Manipur by giving them advice on fact-based answers, policy ideas, and development plans.

Aim and Objectives

The main goal of this study is to look into the social and economic situations of the tribes in Manipur. The main goal of the study will be to find out what problems, chances, and plans these people face every day. There are many ideas for the project. The main goal is to learn about the past of the people who live in Manipur by looking at how their social systems and economies have changed over time. This part also talks about the groups' social and economic situations. It does this by checking things like their income and how easy it is for them to get housing, medical care, and training. Furthermore, the research aims to identify the major issues that native groups are facing, including those related to land rights, government representation, culture preservation, and economic growth. These groups deal with problems in society in strong and flexible ways, which is another part of the study. This is clear when you look at traditional information systems, work on projects in your neighbourhood, or talk to people from other places. We want to do these things with the study. Their goal is to find information that will help us understand how the local tribes of Manipur live in terms of social and economic issues. After getting this information, projects led by the community and policy changes will be able to happen. Health will ultimately improve as a result, and the groupings will gain greater influence.

Literature Review

Manipur's native communities are affected by the complex web of political, cultural, social, and economic problems that affect them. This review of the literature attempts to provide a comprehensive overview of all the studies conducted in the fields of anthropology, sociology, economics, and indigenous studies that have been conducted on the topic (Guite et al. 2022). The primary objective of the research is to fill in knowledge gaps in the literature and acquire significant data that would aid in understanding the issues, solutions, and coping strategies that the indigenous people of Manipur employed.

Historical Context:

Manipur's long and rich past must be studied in order to understand the local people's current socio - economic situations (Yumnam 2020). There are many different clan groupings in the area, and they all have their own traditions, social structures, and commercial methods. Throughout the 1800s, these towns were British colonies, which had a big impact on them (Davenport 2020). It affected the ownership of land, companies, and society. In Manipur, a number of indigenous groups took land when the British were in authority. Researchers have looked at this's long-term effects. The employment of non-governmental techniques violated established guidelines for resource allocation and governance. As a result, there were now even greater disparities in wealth and poverty among the various racial groups.

Socio-Economic Status:

Life quality, access to basic services, health care, and schooling for the different tribes that live in Manipur are all different. Manipur State Planning Board (MSPB) and North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFi) researchers have found big differences between tribes and people who are not from tribes. As an example, a 2018 NEDFi study (Jain et al. 2022) says that Manipur's native areas have bad infrastructure, high rates of poverty, and low literacy. Studies have also shown that living in remote places with bad internet connections makes the economic problems Native American communities already have even worse.

Challenges:

The social, economic, and overall well-being of the indigenous tribes of Manipur is impeded by numerous factors. Land rights become crucial, and conflicts over who owns what, how to use forests, and where a territory ends up frequently result in violence both inside and between tribal communities (Devi and De 2022). Uncertainty about who owns the land and a lack of formal protection make these conflicts worse. Also, when indigenous knowledge systems and cultural practices are pushed to the edges, they risk the cultural identity and strength of tribal groups.

Indigenous tribes have trouble making a living because they can't get to enough markets, credit facilities, and jobs. This makes economic growth another important issue that needs to be addressed right away. It is harder to make money and broaden the economy when there is a lot of traditional work and subsistence farming (Ziipao 2020). Manipur's native people frequently remain excluded from the government's structures and decision-making processes. This is why it's so important for them to be involved in politics and feel like they have a voice. Even though the law says that groups can vote, people are still worried about the way regional governments are organised and how help projects are run.

Adaptive Strategies:

Different groups of people who live in Manipur have thought of many ways to solve these issues. They do these things to protect their rights, keep their culture alive, and make their towns stronger. Singh et al. (2022) stated that community-based projects like traditional councils, cooperative societies, and self-help groups are important for meeting local needs, fostering community, and getting resources. Bringing back original knowledge systems and ways of doing things could help cultures recover, make climate systems more stable, and make better use of resources in the long term. Using herbal medicines, making things by hand, and bringing back old farming methods are all successful activities that make people proud of their cultural background. It's hard to say what the social and economic standing of the native tribes of Manipur is because of how their history, current politics, and current economic conditions all affect each other. In the face of ongoing problems like losing their land, being removed from the business, and losing their culture, indigenous people display self-control and determination (Roy et al. 2024). They do this by using flexible methods that come from the way they were raised in the same social and cultural environment. For this reason, to resolve these issues in the future, plans must be made that honour the rights, goals, and efforts made by indigenous people to create their own future. To make sure that

Manipur's native people stay healthy and have a good future financially, policies and studies should be put in place that stress community-led development projects, open government, and keeping traditional knowledge systems alive.

Methodology of the study

Surveys and questionnaires were used to get information from people in the area for this study. The results give a full picture of the social and economic situations the native tribes of Manipur are in.

Sample Design: tribe records and census data were used to make sure that the sample frame included all of Manipur's different tribe groups (Haokip 2020). Our choice of families will come from a "stratified random sampling" of families from different states and racials. Stratification according to socioeconomic status, tribal membership, and location (rural vs. urban) will provide fair representation for everyone and lessen discrimination.

Making a Survey Instrument: A structured questionnaire will be made to find out about important socioeconomic factors like family income, education, access to healthcare, property ownership, job status, and the availability of basic services (Haokip 2022). Some people who have already filled out the form will take part in a pre-test to see how well it works, what it asks for, and how clear it is. Based on feedback from the pre-test, changes will be made to the poll tool to make it more valid and reliable.

Collecting data: Trained enumerators who are fluent in the local languages will know about tribal customs and practices and will do the surveys in a set number of homes. Before any data is collected, all individuals will be asked for their informed consent, with a focus on their choice to take part and the privacy of their answers (Chanu et al. 2022). The polls will be given in person to make sure that a lot of people respond and to make it easier to understand the questions. The data collection will be done in a methodical way, following all study guidelines and ethical rules to the letter.

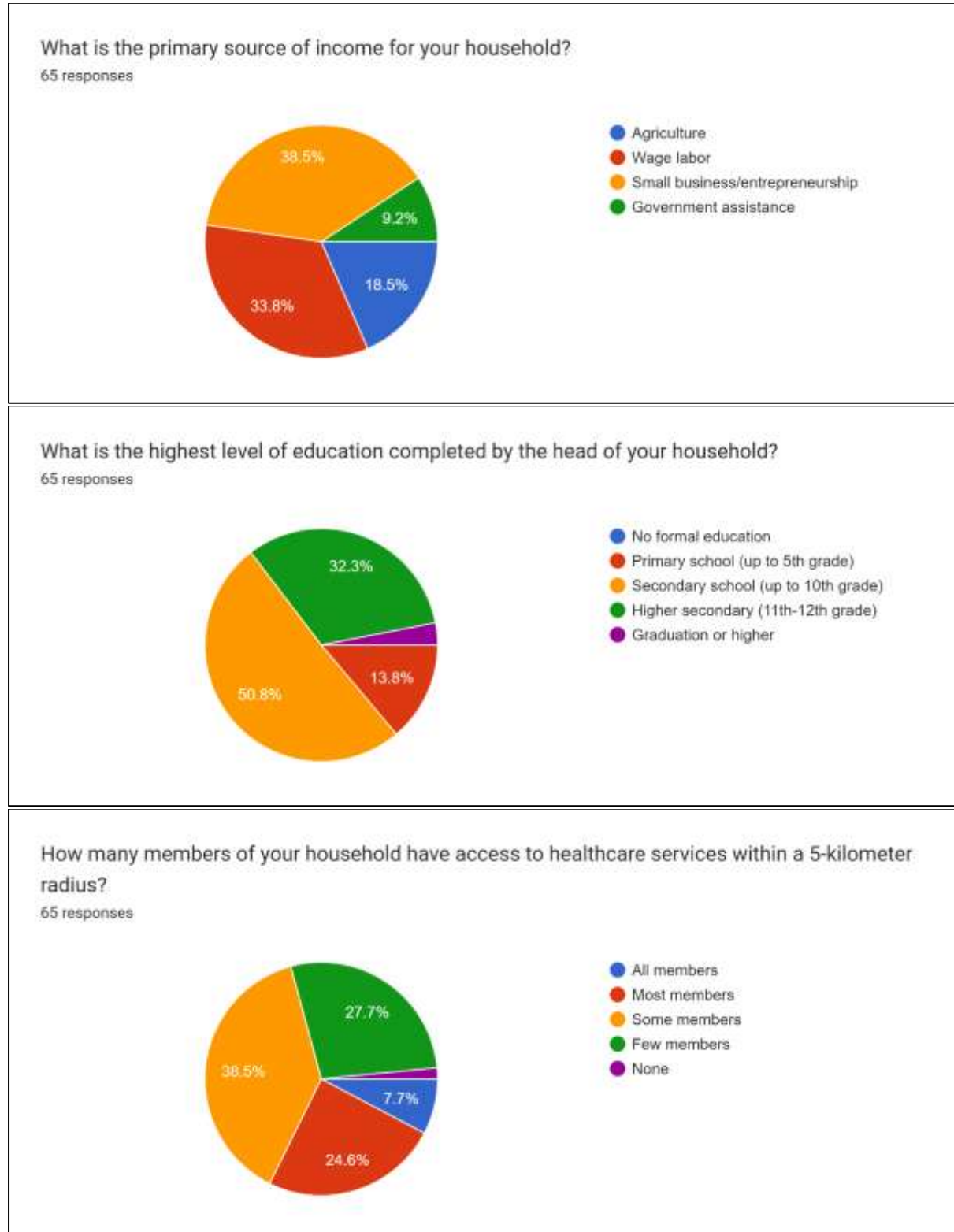
Data Analysis: To list the social traits of the native tribes in Manipur, descriptive statistics like means, frequencies, and percentages will be used in quantitative data analysis (Nair et al. 2022). Inferential statistical methods like regression analysis, chi-square testing, and correlation analysis will be used to look into the connections between variables and find the things that affect socioeconomic results. Statistical analysis tools like SPSS or STATA will be used so that the data can be processed quickly and clearly.

Assurance of Quality: Throughout the study process, quality assurance steps will be taken to make sure that the data is real, correct, and trustworthy. As per Thesongti Monsang (2021), this means giving enumerators a lot of training, watching them closely as they collect data, and regularly checking the data to make sure it is correct and consistent. In order to make the data more reliable, more will be done to deal with possible sources of bias, like sample mistakes or people who didn't respond.

Ethics: At every step of the study, strict rules will be followed to make sure that subjects' rights and feelings are respected, that their information is kept private, and that their informed consent is followed (Haokip 2022). Before collecting data, institutional ethical permission will be asked for, and steps will be taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information responders give.

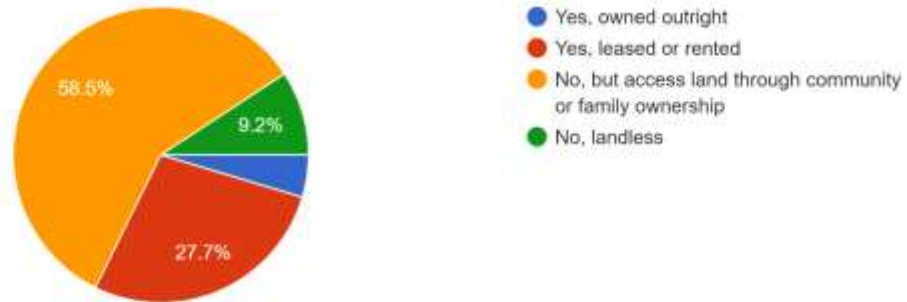
Using a quantitative research method and polls to collect first-hand information, this study aims to give real-life examples of the social and economic situations of indigenous groups in Manipur (Pampuinath and Meitei 2021). This knowledge will help with interventions based on evidence, making policies, and academic discussion about indigenous issues in the region.

Data analysis and findings



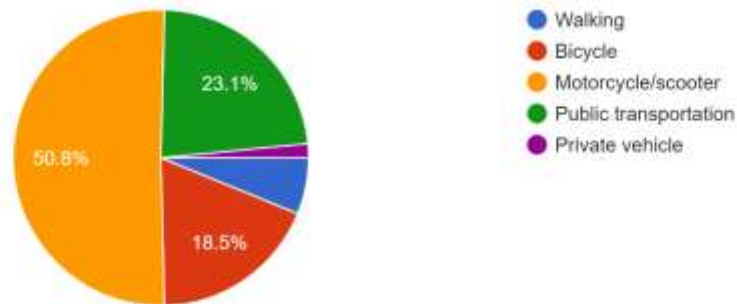
Does your household own land for agricultural purposes?

65 responses



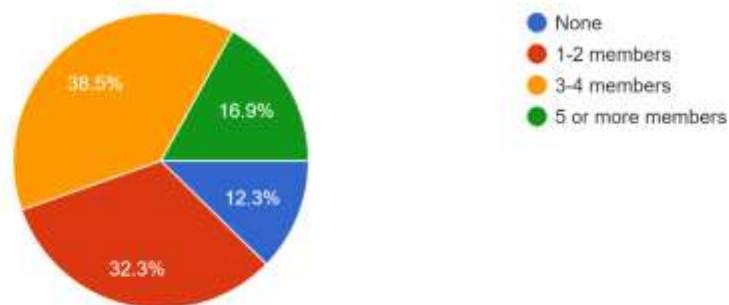
What is the primary mode of transportation used by your household for daily activities?

65 responses



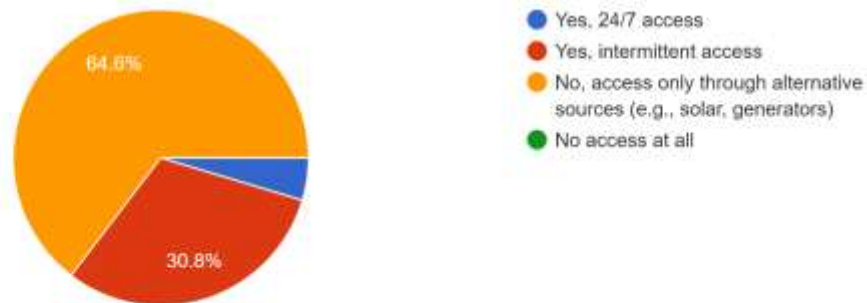
How many members of your household are currently employed in formal or informal sectors?

65 responses



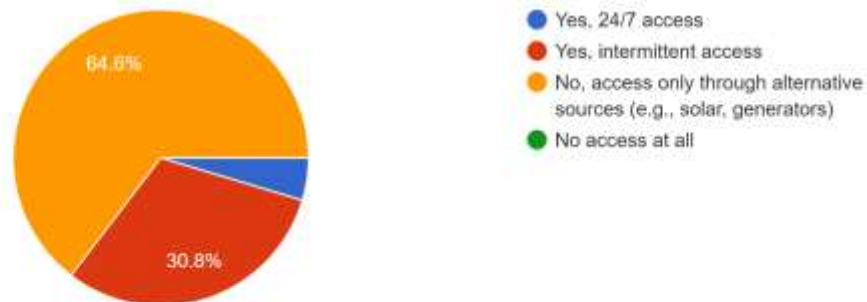
Does your household have access to electricity for lighting and other domestic needs?

65 responses



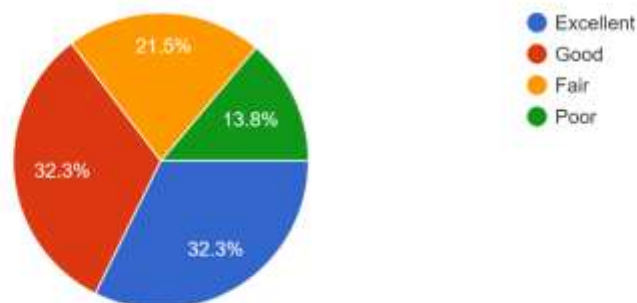
Does your household have access to electricity for lighting and other domestic needs?

65 responses



How would you rate the overall living conditions of your household?

65 responses



By looking at the poll data that has been given, one can learn more about how the native tribes of Manipur's economy work. By closely examining the answers to each question, patterns, trends, and differences can be seen. These show different things about how these communities make a living, like jobs, healthcare, schooling, owning property, and getting to basic services.

Main Source of Income: The households surveyed had a wide range of main sources of income. Many of the people who answered said they were interested in agricultural activities, which shows that agriculture is a major source of income. This means that a lot of food needs to come from conventional farming ways (Chanu et al. 2021). A lot of households also say that small companies or being an entrepreneur are their main source of income, which shows that there is a lot of entrepreneurial activity in the community as a whole. But a big part of them also relies on government aid and wage work, which shows that there are different types of jobs and different economic situations in tribal areas.

Levels of Education: The level of education of the head of the family varies between respondents, which shows that indigenous people have different access to formal education. A lot of household heads have only finished primary or secondary school, even though some have finished better levels of education like high school graduation or upper secondary schooling (Maningba Augustine et al. 2020). This shows that some groups of people face educational barriers that keep them from going to college, which could affect their chances of moving up in society and becoming more successful.

Access to Health Care: Based on the responses, it looks like families within a 5-kilometer radius have different levels of access to health care services. Some homes say that all members can get in, while others only say that some or a few people can get in. This difference in access to health care shows possible problems with being geographically isolated, having the right health care facilities, and getting health care services to tribal areas (Mishra et al. 2021). People often worry about fair access to healthcare resources and the need for targeted steps to make it easier for poor people to get medical care.

Homeownership of Land: The figures show that among the households surveyed, there were different ways of owning land for farming. Some families say they lease or rent land for farming, while others say they own their whole property (Kumar and Baraik 2021). A big part of them also say that they can get land through family or community ownership, which suggests that indigenous groups often use shared land tenure arrangements. But a good number of families say they don't own any land. This could mean they have problems with land ownership, being landless, or not having easy access to arable land, all of which can affect food security and the long-term viability of their livelihoods.

Modes of transportation: Family polls show that bikes and motorbikes/scooters are the most popular ways for people to get around for daily activities. Walking and public transportation are also mentioned. This means that people use both motorized and non-motorized vehicles to get around (Arora and Ziipao 2020). This is likely affected by geography, culture preferences, and how easy it is to get to infrastructure. But there may be differences in the facilities and ease of access to transportation, especially in rural or underdeveloped areas. This could make it harder to get to markets, join social groups, or move around.

Employment Status: People who answered the poll said that people in their households have a range of jobs in both the formal and informal sectors. In some places, many people are working, while in others, few or no one is working at all. This points to a wide range of jobs, including paid work, self-employment, and work in agriculture (Guite and Sharma 2023).

Still, the fact that some families don't have anyone working makes me worry about how likely it is that the people being studied will be underemployed or unemployed.

Access to electricity: The households that were looked at seem to have varying levels of access to electricity for lights and other household needs. Some families say they always have power, but others say they only have it sometimes or use other sources like solar or generators (Diallo and Moussa 2020). This brings up differences in the energy infrastructure, rates of electrification, and energy availability in tribal groups. These can all have an impact on daily life, the economy, and people's general happiness.

Overall Living Conditions: By asking people to rate their own overall living conditions, we can find out more about how happy and satisfied they are with their life. Others think their living conditions are great or great, while still others think they are fair or bad (Roy 2021). Based on a person's social support networks, living situation, socioeconomic level, and access to resources, among other things, these are subjective opinions that change over time. Living conditions that aren't equal show how complex socioeconomic well-being is and how important it is to have thorough development plans that consider the many needs and goals of indigenous people. In order to fully understand the social and economic situations of the native tribes of Manipur, it is necessary to look at the survey results (Peter 2023). It shows how difficult the social and economic situations are in these places, where people have different levels of access to land, healthcare, education, and food, and have trouble getting work, transportation, and energy. To deal with these tough issues, we need rules that are tailored to each situation, community-led projects, and activities that are appropriate for the situation. The native people of Manipur should benefit from these projects because they should lead to more equal growth and higher living standards.

Conclusion and recommendations

Looking at poll statistics is a good way to learn about how the native tribes in Manipur do with their social and economic lives. Some of these findings are different ways of making a living, levels of schooling, health care issues, problems with owning land, transportation problems, job differences, energy access differences, and personal assessments of the quality of life in these places. Stakeholders, lawmakers, and community members need to work together to solve these difficult problems and raise the general standard of living, job opportunities, and growth for all of Manipur's indigenous people.

Recommendations:

Different strategies should be used to fully solve the social and economic problems that the native tribes of Manipur are facing. Getting more people to receive better education is the first step to removing hurdles to learning, especially in poor and rural places. This could be done by giving funds, focusing on trouble spots, and paying for the building of new schools. Young people can also become financially independent by taking part in programmes that help them learn new skills and get ready for work. Second, it's very important for the healthcare business to put building, staffing, and services at the top of its list of priorities. To improve the health of mothers, preventative care, and health care for indigenous people, we need to start community health projects, social schemes, and mobile clinics. It's also critical to address land tenure-related issues. This entails putting land reforms into action, advocating

equitable land allocation, and defending indigenous peoples' land rights. It is critical to provide farming support through outreach services, financial resources, and market connections in order to encourage long-term farming, increase food security, and grant tribal farmers greater economic power. Developing connections, public transport systems, and roadways are examples of infrastructure development that can be invested in to help indigenous people move around more easily.

Special consideration will be given to construction projects in outlying locations that will facilitate people's access to hospitals, schools and stores. Increasing the amount of electricity accessible through funding grid extension projects, distributed energy systems, and renewable energy sources is vital. Promoting the use of clean energy methods would make it easier for people to get energy and keep it going. Solar power and tools that use less energy are two examples of these technologies. To encourage community empowerment and participation, a complete method is needed. This should include ways for everyone to be involved in making decisions, projects that build people's skills, and community-led development programs. Strengthening local institutions, cooperatives, and self-help groups can help indigenous communities get the joint action, social cohesion, and sustainable development projects that are best for their needs and goals. By following these suggestions in their entirety, policymakers, development experts, and community leaders can work together to solve socioeconomic problems, promote growth that benefits everyone, and achieve long-term development results that greatly improve the health and standard of living for Manipur's indigenous people.

Limitations and future scope

Limitations:

There are a few things to think about before looking at poll data, even though it might give you useful information. First, the study sample might not really show how different the native groups in Manipur are. It might be harder to use the results in other situations because of this. When you only use self-reported data, there is also a chance of answer bias or mistakes because of social preference or memory loss. The poll's cross-sectional method also only looks at the social situation at one point in time; it doesn't look at long-term patterns or changes that happen over time. Also, because the poll was closed-ended, people may have found it harder to give detailed or complicated information, which would have limited the analysis's possible scope. Last but not least, outside factors that might have an impact on socio-economic processes were not examined, even though they could. These include the fact that politics, the environment, and the economy can change at any time.

Future Scope:

That being said, there are still numerous directions that additional study and research may go. To begin, ongoing studies may help us learn more about how social trends and changes occur over time, which will allow us to test cause and effect and change in a more complete way. In addition to numeric polls, qualitative research methods such as focus groups, interviews, and interactive reviews can be used to learn more about the situation and get different points of view from people in the community. Comparing situations and needs with those of other areas or groups may help in finding the best answers. These studies may also show how the

social and economic world is different in each case. Combining approaches from the arts, the environment, and government with social study may also give us a lot of information about the health and ways of living of indigenous people. This last point is that working together between local communities, schools, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations might make it easier to create and apply development policies that value the rights, voices, and hopes of indigenous people.

References

- Arora, V. and Ziipao, R.R., 2020. The roads (not) taken: the materiality, poetics and politics of infrastructure in Manipur, India. *Journal of South Asian Development*, 15(1), pp.34-61.
- Chanu, T.M., Mondal, S. and Chatterjee, D., 2022. Assessment of Preferences and Achievements on Livelihood Security with Respect to Tribal Sub Plan in Manipur.
- Chanu, T.M., Mondal, S. and Adhikary, M.M., 2021. Achievement of Different Components of Livelihood Security Under Tribal Sub Plan in Manipur.
- Davenport, R.J., 2020. Urbanization and mortality in Britain, c. 1800–50. *The Economic History Review*, 73(2), pp.455-485.
- Devi, L.H. and De, U.K., 2022. Multidimensional Deprivation in the Development of Manipur, a North-Eastern State of India.
- Diallo, A. and Moussa, R.K., 2020. Does access to electricity affect poverty? Evidence from Côte d'Ivoire. *Economics Bulletin*.
- Guite, S., Sharma, H.I. and Thoudam, L., 2022. Determinants of Livelihood Diversification among the Thadou-Kukis of Manipur, India. *Economic Affairs*, 67(1s), pp.79-86.
- Guite, S. and Sharma, H.I., 2023. A Study on Agrarian Economy in the Hills of Manipur with Special Reference to Thadou-Kuki Ethnic Group. *Journal of Land and Rural Studies*, p.23210249231163951.
- Haokip, N.E., 2020. Cultural beliefs and practices of the indigenous tribals (Kukis and Nagas) of Manipur: Their assimilation and modification by catholicism. *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 10(5), pp.15-35.
- Haokip, S., 2022. Reservation Policy: An Analysis of Scheduled Tribes Reservation on Higher Education in Manipur. *Journal for Peace and Justice Studies*, 31(1), pp.100-118.
- Haokip, T., 2022. Voting behaviour in deeply divided societies: partisanship and ethnic voting in the hills of Manipur. *Asian Ethnicity*, 23(3), pp.427-441.
- Jain, A., Sheekha, N.M. and Tanu, S., 2022. Agricultural Sustainability in the North Eastern Region of India: A Sustainable Livelihood Security Index (SLSI) Approach. *Ecology, Economy and Society—the INSEE Journal*, 5(2).
- Kumar, B. and Baraik, V.K., 2021. Tribes at the margin of tribal space: Urban socio-spatial exclusion. *Urbanisation*, 6(2), pp.145-164.
- Maningba Augustine, L., Jeyaseelan, M. and Stephen, A., 2020. Factors Associated With School Dropout: A Sociological Study Among The Maram Naga Primitive Tribe, Manipur. *birth*, 1(2), p.121.

- Mishra, P.S., Pautunthang, N. and Marbaniang, S.P., 2021. Geographical divide led inequality in accessing maternal healthcare services between hills and valley regions of Manipur state, India. *Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health*, 11, p.100744.
- Nair, S., Hijam, M., Alee, N.T., Haobijam, N., Kaur, H. and Rao, M.V.V., 2022. Continuing Qualitative Data Collection During the COVID 19 Pandemic: Lessons Learnt from A Study Among Tribes in Manipur, India. *National Journal of Community Medicine*, 13(08), pp.578-580.
- Pampuinath, B. and Meitei, M.D., 2021. group of Manipur, India. *Current Science*, 120(5), p.945.
- Peter, P., 2023. Religion and sustainable development of Rongmei tribe in Manipur. *Journal of Research and Multidisciplinary*, 6(1), pp.670-682.
- Roy, A., Kumar, S. and Rahaman, M., 2024. Exploring climate change impacts on rural livelihoods and adaptation strategies: Reflections from marginalized communities in India. *Environmental Development*, 49, p.100937.
- Roy, P., 2021. Thadous Community and Socio cultural life: A study of Chandel District of Manipur State. *Revista Review Index Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 1(1), pp.05-11.
- Singh, S.B., Singh, R., Chiphang, S., Nongbri, B., Bey, B.S., Singh, K.J. and Hemochandra, L., 2022. Livelihood Assessment of Households in Wetland of Manipur: A Micro-Level Study. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 77(3).
- Thesongti Monsang, A., 2021. District councils in manipur: a study of the Chandel autonomous district council.
- Yumnam, R., 2020. Retelling the history of Manipur through the narratives of the Puyas. *Journal of History and Social Sciences*, 11(2).
- Ziipao, R.R., 2020. *Infrastructure of injustice: State and politics in Manipur and Northeast India*. Taylor & Francis.
- Zimik, A.S., 2023. Assessment on the Socio-Economic Status of Manipur: A Study base on Economic Perspectives. *Management*, 11(2), pp.01-09.