

Educational Mobility and Public Employment in Mizoram: Assessing the Role of Income and Institutional Background

K. Lalkroschhuanga*
Prof. Benjamin L. Saitluanga**

Abstract

A systematic analysis of the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of successful candidates recruited through the Mizoram Public Service Commission (MPSC) has remained largely unexplored. In Mizoram, where government employment continues to be one of the most secure and preferred occupations due to limited alternative employment opportunities, recruitment through the MPSC carries significant socio-economic importance. The present study examines the relationship between family income, educational background, and public employment attainment among successful candidates recruited through the Commission.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from successful candidates through a simple random sampling method, while secondary data were obtained from official reports, statistical publications, government records, and relevant literature. The analysis focuses on educational dimensions such as places of study, ownership patterns of institutions, medium of instruction, and academic performance.

The findings reveal considerable disparities in educational mobility and institutional access across income groups. Higher-income families possess greater access to institutions outside the state, English-medium education, and wider academic exposure. The study also highlights the dominant role of government institutions and the increasing importance of English-medium and bilingual education in shaping recruitment outcomes. The findings underscore the need for policies aimed at reducing educational inequalities and promoting equitable access to educational opportunities and public employment.

Keywords: *income, public employment, educational mobility, educational inequality*

*K. Lalkroschhuanga, Research Scholar, Department of Geography & Resource Management, Mizoram University, E mail: krosakhawlhiring@gmail.com, Phone 8837490517

**Prof. Benjamin L. Saitluanga, Professor, Department of Geography & Resource Management, Mizoram University

Introduction

Public employment occupies a central position in the socio-economic structure of Mizoram owing to the limited expansion of large-scale industrial and private-sector activities within the state. In the absence of substantial employment opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors, government service continues to be regarded as one of the most secure and prestigious avenues of livelihood. Consequently, recruitment conducted through the Mizoram Public Service Commission assumes immense social and economic significance.

Despite the importance of public employment in the state, systematic studies examining the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of successful candidates recruited through the Commission remain limited. Recruitment outcomes are often perceived as being based solely on merit and competitive performance; however, educational opportunities and access to quality institutions are themselves shaped by broader socio-economic conditions such as family income, geographical location, medium of instruction, and institutional background. Therefore, an examination of the profiles of successful candidates provides important insights into the structural factors influencing access to public employment.

The economic structure of Mizoram further reinforces the relevance of such an enquiry. According to the Economic Survey of Mizoram 2024–25, agriculture and allied activities contributed only 23.71 per cent to the Gross State Value Added (GSVA) in 2021–22, indicating gradual structural transformation but limited diversification of employment opportunities outside the government sector. In such a context, public service recruitment becomes not merely an administrative exercise but also a critical channel of socio-economic mobility.

Although Mizoram is relatively homogeneous in terms of ethnicity and tribal composition, disparities based on income, educational access, spatial location, and institutional exposure continue to influence opportunities available to individuals. Differences in access to quality schooling, higher education outside the state, English-medium education, and financially resourceful institutions may create varying levels of preparedness among candidates appearing in competitive examinations.

Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to analyse the relationship between family income, educational background, and recruitment outcomes among successful candidates of the Mizoram Public Service Commission. The study specifically examines places of study, ownership patterns of educational institutions, medium of instruction, and academic performance in order to understand how socio-economic conditions shape educational attainment and opportunities for entry into public service.

Study Area

Geographically, Mizoram is a landlocked state located in the northeastern part of India. It lies between latitudes 21°56'N and 24°31'N, and longitudes 92°16'E and 93°26'E, covering an area of approximately 21,087 square kilometres. The state shares international boundaries with Myanmar (about 404 km to the east and south) and Bangladesh (approximately 318 km to the west), and is bounded by the Indian states of Assam, Manipur, and Tripura.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the decennial national census—normally conducted every ten years—was delayed. Consequently, the 2011 Census remains the most recent source of official population data. According to this census, Mizoram had a total population of 1,097,206, comprising 555,339 males and 541,867 females. Rural population shares 47.59 per cent by 2011.

The Mizoram Public Service Commission (MPSC) is a constitutional body established under Part XIV of the Constitution of India to regulate public employment and service administration in the state. Following the attainment of statehood in 1987, Mizoram was constitutionally required to establish its own Public Service Commission. Accordingly, the Mizoram Public Service Commission Regulation, 1989 was promulgated, providing for a Chairman and up to three Members. The Commission formally began functioning in October 1991 under the leadership of its first Chairman, Pu S. R. Vala, with Pu M. Lalmanzuala as the first Member, supported by a small administrative staff.

The primary function of the Commission is to conduct recruitment to various civil services and posts under the Government of Mizoram through fair, transparent, and merit-based procedures, including written examinations and personal interviews. In addition to direct recruitment, the Commission plays a crucial advisory role to the Government on matters relating to appointments, promotions, transfers, and disciplinary actions concerning government servants. It also provides expert consultation on the framing, amendment, and relaxation of Service Rules and Recruitment Rules, thereby ensuring a sound and updated regulatory framework for public administration.

Furthermore, the Commission conducts departmental and limited departmental examinations for in-service personnel, facilitating career progression and enhancing administrative efficiency. These functions underscore the institutional role of the MPSC in facilitating a merit-oriented and rule-governed recruitment system within the state's administrative framework. Over the years, the Commission has made significant contributions to public service recruitment, having recommended a total of 3,805 candidates for direct appointment up to the year 2024–2025, reflecting its pivotal role in strengthening the administrative machinery of Mizoram.

Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected from successful candidates recruited through the Mizoram Public Service Commission (MPSC) by adopting a simple random sampling technique. A total of 293 valid responses were obtained in 2021. Considering that 3,506 candidates had been recruited by the MPSC up to the financial year 2020–2021, the sample represents approximately 8.36% of the target population, which is considered sufficiently representative for the purpose of analysis.

Secondary data were collected from reliable and authoritative sources, including the official website of the Census of India. In addition, various government reports, statistical publications, records, and official documents were consulted, both through physical access to concerned offices and through their respective online platforms. These sources provided the necessary background information and contextual data for the study.

With regard to income analysis, the respondents have been classified into different categories on the basis of their household income levels. Similarly, respondents have also been grouped under various categories for the purpose of other socio-economic analyses.

The study primarily adopts a descriptive and analytical approach. No advanced statistical techniques have been employed; instead, the data have been systematically organised, interpreted, and critically analysed to understand the underlying patterns and to present a realistic picture of the geographical and socio-economic dimensions of recruitment. This approach enables a clear and meaningful interpretation of disparities without over-reliance on complex statistical modelling.

Discussion

For convenience, the sample populations are categorized into five income groups based on their average monthly income, with the highest income group being those earning above Rupees one lakh per month, and the lowest income group earning below ₹5000 monthly.

Table 1 : Average monthly income of the respondents and their share in the recruitment done by MPSC

Sl. No.	Average Monthly Income (in Rupees)	% to total respondents
1	Below 5,000	7.55
2	5,001 – 10,000	16.55
3	10,001 – 50,000	46.40
4	50,001 – 100,000	17.99
5	Above 100,000	11.51

Source : Author's field survey

1. Income and Places of Study

Family income significantly influences the place of schooling of an individual. Higher-income families generally possess greater financial capacity to send their children to educational institutions outside the state, where better academic facilities, exposure, and opportunities may be available. In contrast, lower-income households are often constrained by financial limitations and therefore depend largely on nearby or locally available institutions. As a result, educational mobility and access to wider academic opportunities tend to increase with rising income levels.

Table 2 : Places of Study by Income Groups

Income Groups	Elementary		Middle		High School		HSS		Graduate	
	Mizo-ram	Other State	Mizo-ram	Other State	Mizo-ram	Other State	Mizo-ram	Other State	Mizo-ram	Other State
Below 5,000	91.67	8.33	87.50	12.50	87.50	12.50	79.17	20.83	72.73	27.27
5,001 – 10,000	93.48	6.52	93.48	6.52	93.48	6.52	89.13	10.87	71.74	28.26
10,001 – 50,000	96.92	3.08	95.42	4.58	94.66	5.34	85.50	14.50	62.79	37.21
50,001 – 100,000	90.20	9.80	86.27	13.73	86.27	13.73	74.51	25.49	45.10	54.90
Above 100,000	100.00	0.00	93.75	6.25	87.50	12.50	78.13	21.88	43.75	56.25

Source : Author's field survey

The table presents the relationship between household income and the places where respondents pursued their education at different stages, namely Elementary, Middle, High School,

Higher Secondary School (HSS), and Graduate levels. The data reveal important socio-economic patterns in educational mobility and access to institutions outside Mizoram.

At the elementary and middle school levels, an overwhelming majority of respondents across all income groups studied within Mizoram. In most income categories, more than 90 per cent of respondents completed their early schooling within the state. This indicates that primary and middle-level educational facilities within Mizoram are sufficiently accessible to most sections of society, irrespective of income level.

However, as the level of education advances, the proportion of respondents studying outside Mizoram gradually increases, particularly among higher-income groups. At the Higher Secondary level, the percentage of students studying outside the state becomes more noticeable. For instance, among respondents belonging to the income group of ₹50,001–100,000, about 25.49 per cent pursued Higher Secondary education outside Mizoram, while the figure stands at 21.88 per cent for those earning above ₹100,000.

The disparity becomes most pronounced at the graduate level. Among the lowest income group (Below ₹5,000), only 27.27 per cent studied outside Mizoram for graduation. In contrast, more than half of the respondents belonging to the higher income groups pursued graduate studies outside the state, accounting for 54.90 per cent in the ₹50,001–100,000 category and 56.25 per cent among those earning above ₹100,000.

The table therefore indicates a strong relationship between family income and educational mobility. Higher-income households possess greater financial capacity to send their children outside Mizoram for higher education, where they may gain access to better educational institutions, wider academic exposure, and enhanced career opportunities. On the other hand, lower-income families remain more dependent on educational institutions within the state due to financial constraints.

Overall, the findings suggest that economic background significantly influences educational opportunities, particularly at higher levels of education. The increasing tendency of affluent groups to pursue higher studies outside Mizoram reflects unequal access to broader educational resources and may subsequently influence competitive recruitment outcomes and socio-economic advancement.

2. Places of study by ownership status of the schools / institution

The analysis conducted aimed to shed light on the educational backgrounds of successful candidates in the recruitment process overseen by MPSC. This investigation encompassed considerations such as school ownership, which directly correlates with family income. Notably, while certain church-owned schools may not charge fees, gaining admission to such institutions remains highly competitive. Conversely, government-owned schools typically offer more affordable education, rendering them accessible to lower-income families.

Table 3 : Places of Study in terms of ownership of School / Institute

Sl. No.	Owner of institution	Educational Level (in %)				
		Elementary	Middle School	High School	HSS	Graduate
1	Central Govt (Govt. of India)	1.39	2.07	3.10	11.76	27.97
2	Govt. of Mizoram	54.86	52.76	51.03	46.71	38.46

3	Other State Government	1.74	1.38	2.07	7.61	18.53
4	Church	15.97	17.59	15.86	15.22	4.20
6	Deficit Mission School / College	5.90	7.24	12.76	7.96	3.85
7	Deficit school / college managed by Managing Board	1.39	2.41	3.79	1.73	3.85
8	Private	18.40	16.21	11.03	7.96	0.00
9	Others	0.35	0.34	0.34	1.04	3.15

Source : Author's field survey

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents according to the ownership of schools and institutions attended at different educational stages, ranging from elementary to graduate level.

The findings clearly indicate that institutions run by the Government of Mizoram constitute the principal avenue of education at all levels. More than half of the respondents studied in state government institutions during the elementary (54.86%), middle school (52.76%), and high school (51.03%) stages. Although the proportion gradually declines at higher levels, Government of Mizoram institutions still account for the largest share at the HSS (46.71%) and graduate levels (38.46%). This reflects the dominant role played by the state government in providing educational access across Mizoram.

Institutions under the Central Government exhibit a steady increase in representation as the level of education advances. Only 1.39% of respondents attended Central Government institutions at the elementary stage, but the proportion rises significantly to 27.97% at the graduate level. This trend suggests that Central Government institutions are comparatively more concentrated in higher and specialised education.

Similarly, institutions run by other state governments account for a very small proportion at the school level but increase substantially at higher levels, particularly at the graduate stage (18.53%). This may indicate interstate educational mobility among students pursuing higher education outside Mizoram.

Church-managed institutions occupy an important position in the educational system, especially at the school level. Their share remains relatively stable from elementary (15.97%) to HSS level (15.22%), demonstrating the historical and social significance of church-sponsored education in the state. However, their presence declines sharply at the graduate level (4.20%), indicating limited church participation in higher education.

Deficit Mission Schools/Colleges and deficit institutions managed by managing boards also contribute meaningfully, particularly at the high school stage where deficit mission institutions account for 12.76% of respondents. Their role appears supplementary to government institutions in expanding educational opportunities.

Private institutions exhibit a declining trend with increasing educational level. While 18.40% of respondents studied in private institutions at the elementary stage, the proportion falls steadily to 7.96% at the HSS level and becomes negligible at the graduate level. This suggests that private educational participation is more concentrated in early schooling rather than higher education.

Overall, the table highlights the overwhelming dependence on government institutions for education in Mizoram, while also revealing the complementary contributions of church, deficit, and private institutions in shaping the educational experiences of students.

3. Medium of Instruction

Students' comprehension and understanding of what they learn in school largely depend upon the medium of instruction adopted in the educational system. The issue of medium of instruction has long remained a subject of academic and policy debate, particularly in multilingual societies such as India. Recognising its significance, the Government of India has laid down specific policy guidelines in this regard. According to the National Education Policy 2020:

“Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible.” (NEP 2020)

The policy underscores the importance of mother tongue or local language instruction during the foundational years of education in order to enhance conceptual clarity, cognitive development, and effective learning outcomes among students.

The present study indicates which educational policy is more likely to provide opportunities for becoming a government servant. However, the proportion of Government schools using vernacular language as the medium of instruction is not comparable with institutions following other policies. In this context, if the share of schools adopting other educational policies were at par with that of Government schools, the findings and outcomes of the study might have been different.

Table 4 : Medium of Instruction of Successful Candidates of MPSC's recruitment

Sl. No.	Medium of Instruction	Educational Level (in %)		
		Primary	Middle	High School
1	English	26.64	26.90	41.38
2	Hindi	0.00	0.00	0.34
3	Mixed (English + Local Language)	21.80	21.72	39.31
4	Mixed (Hindi + Local Language)	0.35	0.34	0.00
5	Native / Local language/dialect (Mother Tongue)	51.21	51.03	18.62
6	Others	0.00	0.00	0.34

Table 4 presents the medium of instruction followed by successful candidates of Mizoram Public Service Commission during their primary, middle, and high school education. The table highlights significant shifts in the medium of instruction as students progress through different stages of education.

The findings reveal that mother tongue or native/local language constituted the dominant medium of instruction at the primary and middle school levels. More than half of the respondents studied through their native or local language at the primary (51.21%) and middle school (51.03%) stages. This reflects the strong prevalence of vernacular education during the foundational years of schooling in the state.

However, the proportion of students educated through the mother tongue declines sharply at the high school stage to only 18.62%. This suggests a gradual transition from local language instruction to English-oriented education as students move towards higher levels of schooling.

In contrast, the share of respondents studying through English medium increases considerably with educational advancement. While only 26.64% and 26.90% of respondents studied in English medium at the primary and middle levels respectively, the proportion rises substantially to 41.38% at the high school level. This trend indicates the growing importance of English as students approach higher education and competitive examinations.

Similarly, respondents educated through a mixed medium of instruction (English and local language) also show a notable increase at the high school stage. The proportion rises from 21.80% at the primary level and 21.72% at the middle level to 39.31% at the high school level. This reflects the existence of bilingual or transitional educational practices, where both English and local languages are used simultaneously in the learning process.

The use of Hindi medium and mixed Hindi-local language medium remains negligible throughout all educational stages, indicating the limited role of Hindi as a medium of instruction in the educational context of Mizoram.

4. Academic record

An individual's academic achievements significantly influence the types and levels of employment they secure, whether in the public or private sector. Those with stellar academic records are rarely left unemployed, as their qualifications open doors to diverse opportunities. However, it's crucial to recognize the interplay between academic success and family income.

While the exceptional talents of gifted individuals can lead to success regardless of socioeconomic background, it remains undeniable that children from higher-income families typically receive superior education in prestigious institutions. Consequently, their academic records are often bolstered by access to top-tier educational resources. The following figures provide compelling evidence of this reality, highlighting the profound impact of family income on academic attainment and subsequent career trajectories.

Table 5 : Academic Record of Respondents

Division	Share of Different Divisions in Board Exams (in %)				
	PSLC	MSLC / MESLC	HSLC	PUC/ HSSLC	Graduate
Distinction	31.10	23.19	17.65	4.14	5.99
I Div.	44.88	43.48	33.22	31.38	29.23
II Div.	14.96	24.28	28.03	47.93	48.59
III Div.	4.72	5.07	19.38	16.21	6.34
Simple Pass	4.33	3.99	1.73	0.34	9.86

Source : Author's field survey

Table 5 presents the academic performance of respondents at different stages of education, ranging from PSLC to Graduate level, based on the divisions secured in public examinations. The data reveal noticeable variations in academic achievement across different educational stages.

At the elementary and middle school levels, a substantial proportion of respondents secured higher divisions. In the PSLC examination, 31.10 per cent obtained distinction, while 44.88 per cent secured First Division. Similarly, in the MSLC/MESLC examination, 23.19 per cent achieved distinction and 43.48 per cent obtained First Division. This indicates that a majority of respondents demonstrated strong academic performance during the early stages of schooling.

However, the proportion of respondents obtaining distinction gradually declines at higher educational levels. In the HSLC examination, the share of distinction holders decreased to 17.65 per cent, while it further declined sharply to 4.14 per cent in the PUC/HSSLC examination and slightly increased to 5.99 per cent at the graduate level. This trend suggests increasing academic competition and greater difficulty in securing top grades at advanced stages of education.

At the same time, the proportion of respondents obtaining Second Division increases progressively at higher educational levels. While only 14.96 per cent secured Second Division in PSLC, the figure rose to 47.93 per cent in PUC/HSSLC and 48.59 per cent at the graduate level. This indicates that average academic performance becomes more common as students advance in higher education.

Another important observation is the relatively higher percentage of Third Division in the HSLC examination (19.38 per cent), compared to other stages. In contrast, the share of simple pass candidates remains comparatively low throughout most levels, except at the graduate stage where it rises to 9.86 per cent.

Overall, the table indicates that although many successful candidates performed well academically during their early education, the proportion securing top divisions decreases at higher educational stages. Nevertheless, the presence of a considerable number of candidates with Second and even Third Divisions among successful respondents suggests that recruitment success is not exclusively confined to academically exceptional individuals, but may also be influenced by other socio-economic and institutional factors.

Conclusion

The present study reveals that educational attainment and recruitment outcomes in Mizoram are closely associated with socio-economic background, particularly family income, institutional access, and educational exposure. Although recruitment through the Mizoram Public Service Commission is formally based on merit and competitive examinations, the findings demonstrate that opportunities for success are significantly shaped by broader structural conditions.

The study shows that higher-income families possess greater capacity to provide educational advantages to their children, particularly through access to institutions outside the state, English-medium education, and better educational environments. Educational mobility beyond Mizoram increases substantially at higher educational stages among affluent groups, indicating unequal access to wider academic opportunities and exposure. In contrast, respondents from lower-income backgrounds remain more dependent on locally available institutions due to financial constraints.

The findings further highlight the dominant role played by Government of Mizoram institutions in the educational trajectories of successful candidates, especially during the elementary and secondary stages. At the same time, the increasing presence of Central Government and out-of-state institutions at higher educational levels reflects the growing importance of advanced educational exposure in shaping career prospects.

With regard to medium of instruction, the study indicates that mother tongue or vernacular education continues to play a major role during the foundational years of schooling. However, English-medium and bilingual education become increasingly prominent at higher educational stages, particularly among successful candidates. This transition suggests the growing importance of English proficiency in higher education and competitive recruitment processes.

The analysis of academic performance demonstrates that while a substantial proportion of successful candidates secured high divisions during early schooling, recruitment success is not confined exclusively to academically exceptional individuals. Candidates with average academic records also succeeded in entering public service, indicating that multiple socio-economic and institutional factors interact in shaping recruitment outcomes.

Overall, the study underscores that public employment in Mizoram is influenced not only by individual merit but also by disparities in educational access, income, institutional background, and educational opportunities. The findings therefore highlight the need for policies aimed at reducing educational inequalities, strengthening rural and government educational institutions, improving access to quality education across socio-economic groups, and ensuring a more equitable framework of opportunity in public recruitment.

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