



A STUDY OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: A CASE STUDY OF URBAN AIZAWL, MIZORAM

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the employment status, skill levels, and job-seeking behaviour of youth in urban Aizawl, Mizoram, focusing on individuals aged 20 to 30 years. Against the backdrop of limited formal employment opportunities and a growing urban youth population, the research seeks to understand the socio-demographic characteristics of job seekers, their educational backgrounds, skill possession, and preferences regarding job types and locations.

Using primary data collected through structured questionnaires from 304 respondents, the study reveals that the majority of youth are recent graduates with general education and minimal technical or vocational skills. The labour market is dominated by informal and precarious employment, with only 1.4% of respondents holding regular jobs, while 33.2% are completely unemployed. Furthermore, more than half of the employed youth continue to search for better opportunities due to low pay, job insecurity, and lack of career growth.

The study also highlights a strong preference among job seekers to work within Mizoram, although nearly half of the respondents are open to jobs regardless of location, reflecting rising economic pressures. The findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions to enhance employability through skill development programs, vocational education, and improved employment services.

In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of balanced regional development to reduce rural-to-urban migration and calls for greater integration of youth into formal labour markets. The insights derived from this case study contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by educated but underemployed youth in northeast India and inform future policies aimed at sustainable and inclusive employment generation.

KEYWORDS: Youth Employment, Urban Aizawl, Unemployment, Informal Labour Market, Job Search And Job Preference.

1. INTRODUCTION

Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram, is witnessing a growing number of youths entering the labour market with limited employment opportunities. The mismatch between educational attainment and labour market demands, coupled with the underperformance of traditional sectors like agriculture and industry, has resulted in an increasing reliance on government jobs. This scenario has led to a youth demographic that is predominantly unemployed or engaged in precarious work. The study seeks to capture a comprehensive view of the profile of youth labour force, employment patterns, skill gaps, and employment aspirations in urban Aizawl, shedding light on the challenges and policy imperatives in addressing urban youth unemployment.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the socio-demographic characteristics of youth job seekers in urban Aizawl.
2. To assess the current employment status and nature of employment among the youth.
3. To evaluate the skill levels and skill gaps of the job seekers.
4. To identify the reasons behind continued job searching among the employed youth.

5. To examine the attitudes and perceptions of job seekers regarding job locations.

3. METHODOLOGY

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the youth employment scenery in urban Aizawl, this study employed a structured research methodology which was designed to systematically capture the socio-demographic profile, employment patterns, skill levels, and job-seeking behaviour of young individuals aged 20 to 30 years.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine the employment status, skills, and job-seeking behaviour of youth in urban Aizawl, Mizoram. The objective was to capture the socio-demographic characteristics, employment patterns, skill levels, and job preferences among youth aged 20–30 years.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in urban Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram, which experiences a high rate of youth migration from rural areas and faces acute employment challenges due to limited opportunities in the formal sector.



3.3 Sampling Method

A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents within the target age group of 20 to 30 years. The sample included both employed and unemployed job seekers, ensuring diversity in employment status and educational background. The study determined a sample size of 304 of the respondents using Slovin’s sample size formula focusing on the urban youth actively seeking employment or currently employed who are in the age group of 20-30 years.

3.4 Data Collection

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires, which were administered via field surveys conducted between 2020–2021. The questionnaire was designed to capture quantitative data across several dimensions including socio-demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, marital status, migration status), Educational qualifications, Employment status and job types, Skill possession beyond formal education, Job search behaviour among employed youth, Perceptions and preferences regarding job location. Secondary data sources, such as the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) and Census data, were used to contextualize findings and support comparative analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and cumulative distribution to identify trends and patterns. Tables were used extensively to present results clearly and interpretation of results was done using qualitative reasoning to derive

meaningful insights and connect findings to broader economic and policy contexts. No sophisticated statistical software or advanced econometric techniques were employed in this study. The analysis intentionally remained straightforward to reflect the nature of the data and the scope of the study, which aimed at generating practical insights rather than statistical generalizations. Interpretative reasoning was applied to explore patterns and implications within the context of the local youth labour market.

4. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The characteristics of employed and unemployed job seekers will help us in understanding the supply side of the urban labour market. Without reliable information on the characteristics of job seekers such as age group, gender, skills and qualities, training and educational attainments, etc., it is unlikely possible to reveal the various aspects of labour supply side. Lack of understanding on the characteristics of labour force intensifies difficulties in formulating effective policies to address problems related to employment and unemployment, which can lead to a detrimental impact on the efficacy of policy recommendations. The broad characteristics of employed and unemployed job seekers in the age group of 20 – 30 years are described across six different attributes viz; gender, marital status, social group, migration status, educational level and the status of registration in Employment Exchange is shown in table-1

Table-1: Characteristics of Job Seekers (20-30 Years)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	170	55.9
Female	134	44.1
Marital Status		
Single	299	98.4
Married	5	1.6
Migration Status	Frequency	Percent
Migrant	143	47.0
Non-migrant	161	53.0
Age Composition	Frequency	Percent
Below 20	16	5.3
20-25	280	92.1
25-30	6	2.0
30-35	1	.3
35-40	1	.3
Educational Level	Frequency	Percent
Graduate & above (General)	177	58.2
Graduate & above (Pro & Tech)	12	3.9
Post Graduate	107	35.2
Diploma/certificate course	8	2.6
Status of Registration in Employment Exchange	Frequency	Percent
Registered	30	9.9
Unregistered	274	90.1
Total No. of Persons	304	100.0

As shown in table 1, more than half of the job seekers were male with 55.9 per cent compared to their female counterpart with 44.1 per cent. This result is by and large consistent with the all-India level data where women are in short of male in both the

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and Workforce Participation Rate (WPR). As per the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of 2021-2022, Mizoram has WPR of 61 for male in urban areas whereas it is only 28.7 for female. From



these results, it is obvious that job creation must focus on female to absorb the current job seekers on the one hand and women empowerment to increase WPR on the others.

It is also observed that majority of the respondents are single (unmarried) constituting 98.4 per cent. This may be attributed to the fact that young people delay getting married and starting families so long as they do not have a job that pays well and offers security. Since, gainful employment are hard to find in agriculture and industrial sectors in the state, young people are compelled to compete for government jobs which takes some time to get it but only meagre fraction of them are selected. This has a serious implication on the state demographic features. First, it increased the average marriage age, leading to a greater number of single among adults. This has badly shocked fertility and hence population growth rate in the State. If we look at the population growth rate of the last three Census, the decadal growth rate of Mizoram has dramatically decreased from 61.69 per cent in 1991 census to as low as 22.87 per cent in 2011 census. Considering such a drastic change in population growth rate, various Non- Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Churches and the State Government have been taken initiatives to improve the population growth rate in the State. In this respect, Presbyterian Church of India, Mizoram and Mizoram Baptist Kohhran in 2009 had passed resolution against birth control across the state that offer support to families that have more children. The Synod had already passed resolutions against the government's birth control policy twice, in 1976 and 1985.

As evident from table 1, 47 per cent of the respondents are migrants, mainly in search of better jobs. People from rural areas are moving to cities because of the pull factors of better employment opportunities, decent pay and access to medical and educational services. The pushed factors such as lack of employment opportunities, low pay, inadequate healthcare and poor education facilities in rural areas also led to internal migration. As such, high rate of internal migration indicates concentration of economic development in particular urban areas and also shows failure of the government in the distribution of resources. Since almost half of the respondents are migrant from rural areas, it clearly demonstrates that the government has unfulfilled obligations to maintain stable economy. It also revealed the necessity of redistributing resources to put more emphasis on rural areas so as to reduce the development gaps.

The age composition of the respondents in the study reveals a highly concentrated youth demographic, with the overwhelming majority falling within a narrow age bracket. Specifically, 92.1% of the respondents are aged between 20 and 25 years, making this the most dominant age group among the surveyed individuals. This suggests that the study primarily captures the experiences and challenges faced by very young job seekers, many of whom are likely to be fresh graduates or individuals at the early stages of their job search. A smaller portion of the respondents, 5.3%, are below 20 years of age, possibly including final-year students or recent school graduates. Only a minor fraction (2.6%) of the respondents is aged above 25, with 2.0% in the 25–30 age group, and a mere 0.6% above 30 years old. This sharp concentration in the early twenties indicates that the urban labour market challenges discussed in the study are most relevant to the emerging youth segment, who are just stepping into the workforce and facing the realities of employment in Aizawl.

As regard to level of education, 58.2 per cent and 35.2 per cent of the respondents are graduate and post graduates respectively. They are, of course, new entrants to the labour market. In terms of registration in Employment Exchange, only 9.9 per cent get registered themselves and the remaining 90.1 per cent have not registered with the District's Employment Exchange. The reason for low enrollment in employment exchange may be attributed to two factors: the inability to promise employment upon registration and the incredibly low rate of job recruitment through employment exchange. In addition, some respondents were unfamiliar with the Employment Exchange.

5. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF THE STUDY AREA: AN OVERVIEW

The insufficient prospects for gainful employment as well as the ongoing shortage of decent work is one of the impeding problems in India. The state of Mizoram is also experiencing employment challenges in a variety of fields. Table 2 shows the employment status of the respondents in the study area. Mention may also be made here that classification of the respondents on the basis of Usual Principal Status, Current Weekly Status or Current Daily Status is beyond the reach of the present study as it requires lots of energy, time and money. As such, respondents are classified based on the nature of job as shown in table 2.

Table-2: Employment Distribution of the Respondents.

Employment Status	Frequency	Percent
Regular (Government)	2	0.7
Regular (Private)	2	0.7
Part time & Contract (Government)	5	1.6
Part time & Contract (Private)	8	2.6
Self-Employed	12	3.9
Casual Labour	80	26.3
Undefined job	94	30.9
Unemployed	101	33.2
Total	304	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2020-2021



Table 2 reveals a challenging and informal-heavy labour market scenario for youth in urban Aizawl. Among the 304 respondents, only a negligible share (1.4%) is employed in regular government or private sector jobs, indicating a severe scarcity of stable, formal employment opportunities. Part-time and contract-based positions account for another small portion of 1.6% in government and 2.6% in private sectors, suggesting that secure jobs are rare even within the public and private domains. Self-employment stands at 3.9%, reflecting limited entrepreneurial engagement or support for start-up ventures.

A significant proportion of respondents of 80 individuals (i.e. 26.3%) are engaged in casual labour, and 94 individuals (i.e. 30.9%) report having undefined jobs, which likely includes a range of informal and irregular work such as daily wage labour, seasonal employment, or multitasking across informal gigs. When combined, these two groups represent more than half (57.2%) of the total respondents, strongly indicating that the informal sector dominates the employment landscape. The prevalence of informal work points to widespread issues of job insecurity, low wages, absence of social protection, and lack of career progression.

Additionally, the unemployment rate is alarmingly high at 33.2%, further highlighting the gap between education and employability, and the limited capacity of the labour market to absorb youth. The findings highlight an urgent need for targeted policy interventions that promote skills development, formal

sector expansion, and informal-to-formal transitions, especially to support educated youth struggling to find decent and secure employment in Mizoram.

6. STATUS OF SKILLS POSSESSION

Due to the government's inability to generate adequate employment opportunities, coupled with the underdeveloped state of both the agricultural and industrial sectors, the current generation is facing a significant employment crisis. In this context, a general education obtained through undergraduate or postgraduate programs is often insufficient to secure a stable and respectable job. To ensure a sustainable livelihood, even those pursuing self-employment must enhance and diversify their skill sets.

Furthermore, the rapid evolution of the labour market, driven largely by advancements in information and communication technologies, has intensified the demand for a highly skilled workforce. Consequently, understanding the specific skills and competencies of job seekers has become essential in order to respond effectively to these shifting labour market demands.

To assess the skill profiles of job seekers, respondents were asked any additional skills they possess beyond their formal educational qualifications. These skills were then grouped into six distinct categories, as presented in table 3.

Table-3: Possession of Skills by Job Seekers (%)

Short Term Courses	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
CCC	82	27.0	27.0
DCA	72	23.7	50.7
Baker & Confectioner	2	0.7	51.3
Carpenter	2	0.7	52.0
Web designing	1	0.3	52.3
Others	15	4.9	57.2
None	130	42.8	100.0
Total	304	100.0	

Source: Field Survey 2020-2021

As presented in table 3, majority of the job seekers (i.e. 42.8 per cent of the total respondents) did not have any extra skills other than their graduate or post graduate degrees. This is the current big problem among the Mizo youth where majority of the student opted general education. Technical and professional courses as well as vocational courses are rarely the chosen option. This has been a hindrance for getting employment or self-employment since specific skills are not acquired in general education. Additionally, the range of skills acquired by the respondents is very limited signifying the urgent need for skills development training and capacity building for the present and future generations. Fortunately, half of the respondents acquired minimum skill requirements in respect of computer knowledge where 27 per cent possessed Course on Computer Concept (CCC) along with 23.7 per cent acquired Diploma in Computer Application (DCA). Thus, it can be concluded that half of the job seekers in the study area attained the minimum computer proficiency qualification as insisted by the Government of Mizoram, for applying and recruitment into all groups A, B and C. The remaining skills listed in Table 3 were found to be negligible in both number and significance.

This clearly reflected the pressing need of skills development and capacity building for the young aspiring youth. Even in respect of computer knowledge, the respondents possessed only minimum requirements, which also demonstrates that the labour market of the study area need more attention to equip the workforce entering into either government sector or private sector with the vital skill set to cope up with the ever-changing scenario in IT sphere.

7. REASONS FOR JOB SEARCH AMONG EMPLOYED JOB SEEKERS

As evident from table 2, 66.8 per cent of the respondents are employed, yet they still search for other jobs. The reasons for searching new job by employed individuals may stem from the economic factors or a mix of economic and non-economic factors. While searching a better job is natural, the decision to actively search a new and better job must often depends on the perceived benefits weighed against the costs and uncertainties involved. In many cases, if the current job could provide the average standard of living for a family or if the individuals are satisfied with their current job, the incentive to look for



alternative employment is likely to decline. As such, examining and identifying the reasons for job search among the already employed individuals is very important to demonstrate the true picture of labour market in urban Aizawl, which in turn is

expected to have effective implications in policy formulation. The reasons for job search are classified based on the responses of the respondent as presented in table 4.

Table-4: Main Reasons for Job Search among Employed Job Seekers

Reasons	Frequency	Percent
Low Pay	47	43.93
Poor career & No scope to learn	13	12.15
Poor Job Security	31	28.97
No further promotion	2	3.74
Not supported by family	2	1.87
Others	10	9.35
Total	107	100

Source: Field Survey 2020-2021

Table 4. revealed the different reasons for job search among the employed individuals in the study area. Among the 260 employed respondents, 57 per cent of the employees still search for other jobs. As depicted in table 4, low pay has been the main reason for searching alternative job among the employed people with 44 per cent. This might reflect how the worker's pay affect his commitment and determination to his work on the one hand and the poor performance of informal sector in the study area on the other. If the workers are rewarded only subsistence level or just above the subsistence, the tendency of searching other jobs is likely to increase and hence workers' passion in their current jobs will be adversely affected directly or indirectly. Similarly, feeling of job security also plays a crucial role in employees' commitment and determination to their jobs. As shown in table 4., 29 per cent of the employed respondents are searching new jobs because of their current job insecurities. When employees lack confidence and security in their jobs, they frequently change their jobs where they can find stability. In Mizoram, job insecurity and low pay are the main cause of

the youth's intense efforts to work in the government sector even though this sector only offers a small number of jobs. The third largest factor in job searching is poor career & no scope to learn with 12 per cent. This is a heartening result since it indicates that 12 per cent of the employed respondents aware of the importance of a set of skills and search for jobs that could boost up their skills and capacity. The remaining reasons for job search are only negligible per cent since the first three reasons already counted for 85 per cent of the respondents.

8. ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTION OF RESPONDENTS ON JOB LOCATION

The main purpose of this section is to understand the attitudes and perceptions of job seekers while searching for decent jobs. Accordingly, to comprehend the attitudes and perception of the job seekers, we categorized jobs location as within Mizoram, outside Mizoram and not choosy/picky which is presented in table 5.

Table-5: Attitudes and Perception on Job Location

Attitudes and Perception on Job Location				
Gender	Within Mizoram	Outside Mizoram	Not Choosy	Total
Male	25.7	4.6	25.7	55.9
Female	22.4	3.3	18.4	44.1
Total	48.0	7.9	44.1	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2020-2021

The data on attitudes and perceptions toward job location reveals that a significant portion of respondents, across both genders, show a clear preference for employment within Mizoram. Specifically, 25.7 percent of males and 22.4 percent of females prefer to work within the state, accounting for a total of 48.0 percent of all respondents. This strong preference for local employment may reflect a desire to stay close to family, cultural familiarity, or the lack of resources or willingness to relocate.

In contrast, only a small proportion of respondents are willing to seek employment outside Mizoram. Among males, just 4.6 percent indicated this preference, while among females, it was even lower at 3.3 percent. Together, only 7.9 percent of the total respondents are open to working outside the state. This limited interest in jobs outside Mizoram suggests potential barriers

such as relocation difficulties, language or cultural differences, and possibly a lack of support networks in other regions.

A noteworthy portion of respondents, however, indicated they are not choosy about job location. Among males, 25.7 percent are flexible regarding where they work, compared to 18.4 percent of females. In total, 44.1 percent of respondents expressed no particular preference for job location. This flexibility likely stems from the urgency to secure employment, regardless of location, particularly in a context where job opportunities may be limited.

When comparing genders, it becomes evident that male respondents show slightly more openness toward job mobility than their female counterparts. The lower percentage of females willing to work outside Mizoram or without location preference



may be influenced by cultural expectations, safety concerns, or family obligations.

9. KEY FINDINGS

The study reveals that the majority of youth job seekers in urban Aizawl fall within the age group of 20 to 25 years, accounting for over 92% of the respondents. This indicates a youthful labour market primarily consisting of recent graduates or first-time job seekers. Educationally, a significant portion holds general graduate (58.2%) or postgraduate degrees (35.2%), yet this higher educational attainment does not correspond with employment outcomes. Notably, only 9.9% of these educated youth are registered with the Employment Exchange, suggesting a disconnect between formal job-seeking mechanisms and the aspirations or awareness of the youth.

In terms of employment status, the data points to a labour market heavily dominated by informal and insecure employment. Only 1.4% of respondents have regular jobs (either in the public or private sector), while a staggering 57.2% are either engaged in casual labour or have undefined forms of employment. Furthermore, the unemployment rate stands at an alarming 33.2%, which highlights the inadequacy of job creation in both the public and private sectors to absorb the growing youth population. These figures underscore a deep structural issue in the local economy, where decent work opportunities are scarce, and job security remains elusive for the majority.

A major concern arising from the study is the evident skill gap among youth job seekers. Despite their academic qualifications, 42.8% of the respondents do not possess any additional or technical skills beyond their general education degrees. While about half of the respondents meet the minimum computer proficiency required for public sector jobs (through CCC and DCA certifications), the uptake of vocational or specialized technical courses remains negligible. This limited skillset severely restricts the employability of the youth, particularly in a labour market that increasingly values practical and technological competencies.

Another critical insight from the study is the continued job search among employed individuals. Among the employed respondents, 57% are still actively seeking new job opportunities. The primary reasons for this include low wages (43.93%), job insecurity (28.97%), and lack of career growth or learning opportunities (12.15%). This persistent job search behaviour suggests dissatisfaction with current employment conditions and reflects the precarious nature of many jobs available to young people in Aizawl. It also indicates a deeper issue where employment does not necessarily translate to economic stability or professional fulfilment.

Finally, in terms of job location, 48% of the youth prefer to work within Mizoram, and only 7.9% are open to opportunities outside the state. Gender differences are also evident, with men more attracted to higher salaries and women more flexible about job types and locations. These perceptions reflect not just personal choices but also the socio-cultural and economic constraints shaping youth employment in Mizoram.

CONCLUSION

The study paints a concerning picture of youth employment in urban Aizawl, characterized by high unemployment, informal employment, and inadequate skill acquisition. The overwhelming focus on general education without employability training has hindered job market readiness. A large segment of youth remains dependent on insecure and low-paying jobs, with many persistently seeking better opportunities. Policy measures need to focus on promoting vocational education, expanding formal employment avenues, enhancing skill development programs, and improving job matching services through stronger Employment Exchange systems. Additionally, equitable development across rural and urban areas is critical to addressing migration pressures and regional disparities in employment opportunities.

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