

Intergenerational Knowledge Transfer among the Lushai Tribe: Public Libraries' Role in Fulfilling IFLA Recommendations

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Abstract

This study looks at how Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is communicated within the Lushai tribe of Mizoram, the obstacles that hinder its effective transfer, and the role of public libraries in preserving and sharing IK. A descriptive survey method was used, with a bilingual semi-structured questionnaire distributed among 300 participants, consisting of both library users and librarians from five different public libraries. The responses were analyzed using SPSS. Our study found that modern influence and changes in lifestyle pose growing challenges for the transfer of IK. Results also show that storytelling and community gatherings are the most common methods of sharing IK. In these selected public libraries, manuscripts and documents are the main sources of preserving IK, while oral traditions are less represented. The public libraries of Mizoram face some major issues like lack of funding, poor storage facilities, and insufficient staff training. Still, some libraries have made active efforts to promote IK by setting up dedicated sections for IK preservation, organizing events, and collaborating with local communities. This study highlights the crucial role of libraries in associating traditional and modern knowledge systems and recommends enhanced infrastructure and policy frameworks to preserve cultural heritage.

Keywords: Indigenous Knowledge, IFLA, Public Libraries, Lushai Tribe, Mizoram.

1. Background

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is a unique and community-oriented system that is transmitted orally through stories, songs, and rituals. This transmission is a diverse process that is strongly associated to cultural practices and social structures. Intergenerational knowledge transfer serves as the foundation of cultural continuity and identity among indigenous communities worldwide, serving as a mechanism for the preservation and transmission of valuable customs and practices from elders to younger generations (Zurba & Berkes, 2024). The Lushai tribe, which inhabits the state of Mizoram in Northeast India, constitutes a prominent ethnic group characterized by an extensive cultural and historical heritage. The Lushai, commonly referred to as the Mizo, are the decedents of the Tibet-Chinese ethnic lineage who migrated from the Chin Hills region of Myanmar. The region is populated by several tribes such as Lushai, Mara, Lai, Pang, Bawm, Hmar, Paite, Bru, Chakma, and they constitute the

largest proportion of tribal people (94.8%) in India. The term ‘Mizo’ translates to people of the cold region, reflecting their geographical origins in the mountainous and forested Lushai Hills (Purkayastha, 2019). The Lushai tribe preserves a vast array of IK that guides their daily life. This knowledge, essential to their cultural heritage, is transferred primarily through oral traditions and hands-on learning. Elders, as knowledge bearers, use storytelling, songs, and proverbs to teach practical skills and social values, promoting respect for nature and a sense of community. These stories and teachings, often shared during family gatherings, ensure that each generation internalizes and practices these traditions (Lalramnghinghlova and Jha, 1999). The practice of jhum (shifting cultivation) reveals the Lushai tribe’s remarkable familiarity with the dynamics of soil health, climatic variations, and the phases of crop development. Elders mentor the young member of the tribe in jhum practices, which promotes sustainable natural resource management (Jeeva et al., 2006).

The Lushai tribe holds a significant position in the socio-cultural landscape of Mizoram. Their indigenous knowledge, rooted in extensive lived experiences comprises deep understandings of medicinal plants, agriculture, craftsmanship, rituals, folklore, and ecological balance. For instance, Ralte and Singh (2024) recorded 102 medicinal plant species utilized by the Lushai Tribe, reflecting a rich tradition of medicinal practices in their healing methods. Additionally, the Lushai community is recognized for their weaving arts, bamboo and cane craftsmanship, musical instruments, and commitment to environmental stewardship. The transmission of such knowledge has traditionally occurred through intergenerational learning, narrative sharing within families or communities, participation in festivals and rituals, and local governing bodies like village councils (Lalruatpuii, 2023). However, modernization, formal education, migration, and the rise of global knowledge systems have posed challenges to these transmission methods. As a result, younger generations are increasingly detached from traditional practices, resulting in knowledge gaps. Furthermore, much of this knowledge remains unrecorded, existing solely in oral or implicit forms, which increases its vulnerability (Ralte & Singh, 2024).

In this context, public libraries in Mizoram have the capacity to play a transformative role in bridging the knowledge transfer process. In recent years, scholars have argued that public libraries can act as custodians of IK by acquiring, cataloguing, digitizing, and curating local cultural heritage materials. Meanwhile, Lalruatpuii and Ngurtinkhuma (2023) suggest that libraries in Mizoram must evolve beyond repositories into active facilitators by engaging with communities, offering digital platforms, and promoting traditional and modern modes of knowledge sharing. Accordingly, this study aims to explore the mechanisms of Indigenous Knowledge transfer within the Lushai community and to evaluate the role, obstacles, and prospects of public libraries in facilitating the sustainability of that transfer process.

1.1 Recommendations for IK preservation in libraries by International Federation of Library Association

The guidelines of IFLA promote the development and preservation strategies that are sensitive to the cultural relevance and ownership of IK. The organization encourages libraries to work alongside Indigenous communities to guarantee that preservation initiatives are conducted with respect and cultural awareness (Oyelude, 2023). The Core Programme of IFLA on Preservation and Conservation (PAC) supports these efforts by promoting international cooperation that enhance the preservation of cultural heritage (Barros et al., 2015). The management of IK by library professionals, as suggested by the IFLA guidelines,

involves framework for collection, documentation, and dissemination to ensure its accessibility (Sarkhel, 2017). A total of six guidelines were provided by (IFLA, 2002) in order to ensure the continuity, preservation, access and elaboration of IK, which are listed below:

- i. Conduct programs to collect, preserve and disseminate indigenous and local traditional knowledge resources.
- ii. Make available and promote information resources which support research and learning about indigenous and local traditional knowledge, its importance and use in modern society.
- iii. Publicise the value, contribution, and importance of indigenous and local traditional knowledge to both non-indigenous and indigenous peoples.
- iv. Involve Elders and communities in the production of resources and teaching children to understand and appreciate the traditional knowledge background and sense identity that is associated with indigenous knowledge systems.
- v. Urge governments to ensure the exemption from value added taxes of books and other recording media on indigenous and local traditional knowledge.
- vi. Encourage the recognition of principles of intellectual property to ensure the proper protection and use of indigenous traditional knowledge and products derived from it.

For this study, only the first four of the six IFLA recommendations were considered, as they align with the objectives of the research.

1.2 Public Libraries in Mizoram

The public library environment in Mizoram demonstrates both the challenges and opportunities that libraries face in this region. The Raja “Rammohun Roy Library Foundation” (RRRLF) has a significant influence on Mizoram’s public libraries, providing financial help and assisting with the implementation of library legislation to ensure smooth operations. The implementation of public library law in Mizoram is a collaborative effort between the government and library authorities, with the purpose of modernizing libraries and resolving key issues such as inadequate facilities and resources (Saini, 2011). According to official sources of Mizoram Government, there are a total of 5 government District Public Libraries in Mizoram. The list of these libraries is presented in table 1.

Table - 1: List of Public Libraries in Mizoram

Sl. No	Name of Library	Year of establishment	District
1	State Central Library	1974	Aizawl
2	Aizawl District Library	1969	Aizawl
3	Champhai District Library	1983	Champhai
4	Kolasib District Library	1980	Kolasib
5	Lunglei District Library	1975	Lunglei

Source: Government of Mizoram

2. Previous Studies

Public libraries are social institutions that have wide range of cultural resources to support learning and cultural development (IFLA UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 2022).

Libraries, traditionally focused on promoting reading, are now increasingly recognized for their potential to manage and preserve IK through digitization (Sarkhel, 2017). Digital libraries offer a modern approach to preserve indigenous knowledge, ensuring it is accessible to a wider audience while safeguarding it against intellectual property theft (Mdhluli et al., 2021).

Previous studies have shown that libraries in Botswana have initiated projects to preserve IK by utilizing various methods such as face-to-face discussions and recording in CDs, regardless of challenges like inadequate infrastructures and cultural sensitivities (Jain and Jibril, 2016). In another instance, libraries in Zimbabwe preserve IK through folklore, poetry, and live recordings, (Chigwada and Ngulube, 2023). This effort is not only about documentation but it also includes several factors such as respecting cultural sensitivity and intellectual property rights (Oyelude, 2023). In Indonesia, the Blitar Public Library uses social media to promote local IK, demonstrating the capabilities of digital tools in enhancing its outreach and accessibility (Pratiwi et al., 2022). In Nigeria, libraries promote the collecting of IK by creating inventories and using digital technologies, while also dealing with several infrastructural challenges (Christopher, 2015). Together, these initiatives highlight the diverse functions of libraries in safeguarding and advancing IK, while also guaranteeing its transfer to future generations. In this context the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) in India demonstrates a successful initiative. This initiative documents traditional medicinal knowledge to prevent its misuse and to establish it as part of the national cultural heritage (Ansari, 2020). Despite these efforts, the current state of cultural heritage institution in India is unsatisfactory (Goswami, 2023). Therefore, the inclusion of indigenous librarianship into the Library and Information Science (LIS) is crucial, highlighting the importance of having Indigenous librarians and practitioners to guide and practice within this complex intersection of IK and LIS (Hangshing, 2019).

This literature review identifies a notable gap in existing research on the communication of IK within the Lushai Tribe, underscoring the relevance and necessity of the present study. Regardless of the rising awareness of IK transmission, there is limited research into effective methods for preserving and sharing IK, particularly regarding the roles of oral traditions, storytelling, and community involvement in knowledge retention and intergenerational transmission. Addressing these gaps is important for effective preservation of IK for future generations of Lushai Tribe. Therefore, the study sought to explore the role of public libraries of Mizoram in alignment with IFLA's recommendations to preserve and disseminate IK. Further this study offers a thorough analysis of how IK is passed down and preserved among community members, identifying gaps and suggesting actionable strategies. Based on this, the study seeks answers to the following research objectives.

3. Objectives of the Study

- a) To explore how IK is transmitted among the Lushai tribe.
- b) To investigate the challenges and barriers faced by the Lushai tribe during the process of IK transfer.
- c) To explore the strategies employed by selected public libraries in Mizoram to collect, preserve, and disseminate IK, and to examine the challenges that hinder its effective preservation.
- d) To examine the strategies employed by public libraries to promote awareness of IK and to engage with Indigenous communities for effective resource sharing.

4. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the role of selected public libraries in alignment with IFLA recommendations in Mizoram, India. This survey utilized a bilingual semi-structured questionnaire that included both closed and open-ended items in both English and Mizo languages. Supplementary research elements were investigated through structured interviews and personal contacts, supported by a Mizo-to-English translator. The target population consisted of two distinct groups: library users and librarians across five public libraries in the state. There were approximately 381 registered library users and 5 librarians, with one librarian assigned to each library. To ensure balanced representation of both groups, stratified random sampling was used. The population was first divided into two main strata: library users and librarians. For the library users, further stratification was applied based on their respective libraries to ensure equal representation from each institution. From each of the five libraries, 60 users were randomly selected using a simple random sampling technique, resulting in a total sample of 300 library users. In the case of librarians, due to the small population size (five in total), a census approach was used, and all librarians were included in the study. This ensured the perspectives of all professional staff were captured without sampling error. The survey consisted of two main parts: Using objectives and multiple-choice options, the first part was dedicated to investigating the participants' perspectives in terms of awareness and familiarity, perceived impact in daily life, methods of preservation and transfer challenges faced during sharing of indigenous knowledge. The second part of the questionnaire focused on the status of IK preservation practices in public libraries, based on IFLA's recommendations to libraries regarding the preservation of and access to IK, and it was intended to be answered only by the librarians of the respective libraries. Prior consent was obtained from library authorities, and the questionnaires were distributed in person and/or electronically, depending on the accessibility and convenience of the participants. The collected data were coded and analysed using appropriate statistical tools, including descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The study was confined to government-funded public libraries in Mizoram and, while not addressing all six IFLA recommendations, it concentrated on first four recommendations which are most relevant to the research objectives.

5. Data analysis and results

Table 2 reveals significant gender-based differences in participation across various methods. The four primary modes of knowledge transfer evaluated are traditional rituals, storytelling, community engagement, and written documentation. Among males, community engagement is the most common method, accounting for (19.3%) of the total, followed by traditional rituals (15.0%), storytelling (9.3%), and written documentation (4.7%). Females most frequently use storytelling (17.0%), followed by traditional rituals (12.7%), community engagement (14.7%), and written documentation (7.3%). Overall, community engagement emerges as the most common method of knowledge transfer (102 instances) highlighting its role as a central mechanism in the Lushai community. Written documentation, however, remains the least prevalent mode across both genders, representing just (12.0%) of the total responses.

Table - 2: Means of Transmission of Indigenous Knowledge within Lushai community

Gender		Traditional rituals	Story telling	Community engagement	Written documentation	Total
Male	Observed	45	28	58	14	145
	% of total	15.0 %	9.3 %	19.3 %	4.7 %	48.3 %
Female	Observed	38	51	44	22	155
	% of total	12.7 %	17.0 %	14.7 %	7.3 %	51.7 %
Total	Observed	83	79	102	36	300
	% of total	27.7 %	26.3 %	34.0 %	12.0 %	100.0 %

Our findings align with CDC (1997) Community engagement is essential for sharing IK, as it encourages collaboration and mutual understanding among everyone involved. It ensures the process is a two-way exchange that benefits all participants. Studies conducted by Slavova and Metiu (2021) identified and demonstrated that traditional rituals actively shape IK transfer, serving as dynamic, participatory means of sharing, learning, and passing down knowledge within communities. In contrast, females prefer storytelling, with traditional rituals and community engagement also being significant, these findings are supported by the study on Sámi-specific aspects of the death system, story-telling was found to be an effective method for conveying important material and immaterial cultural values across generations (Kroik et al., 2020). This method of knowledge transfer ensures continuity and helps maintain a collective identity, as stories are shared in familiar settings that foster a sense of security and emotional expression (Porta et al., 2017).

In Table 3 the survey on the challenges in the transfer of IK among the Lushai community reveals significant gender-based differences. Among males, the most prominent challenge is modern influences (18.0%), followed by change in lifestyle (14.3%), lack of interest (10.7%), and loss of traditional practices (5.3%). For females, modern influences also top the list (23.7%), but lack of interest (10.0%) and change in lifestyle (10.7%) are nearly equally significant, with loss of traditional practices (7.3%) being a lesser concern.

Table - 3: Challenges in Transfer of Indigenous Knowledge among community members

Gender		Generational gap	Modern influences	Changes in life style	Lack of interest	Total
Male	Observed	32	54	43	16	145
	% of total	10.7 %	18.0 %	14.3 %	5.3 %	48.3 %
Female	Observed	30	71	32	22	155
	% of total	10.0 %	23.7 %	10.7 %	7.3 %	51.7 %
Total	Observed	62	125	75	38	300
	% of total	20.7 %	41.7 %	25.0 %	12.7 %	100.0 %

The analysis reveals gender-based differences in challenges to IK transfer in the Lushai community. For both genders, modern influences are the major concern. However, males are more affected by lifestyle changes and declining interest, while females view lack of interest and lifestyle changes as equally important, with less concern for the loss of traditional practices. Our findings align with prior studies of Zent and Maffi (2009), they found that socio-economic changes such as urbanization and migration further complicate the transmission of IK. The study by Ulluwishewa (1993) notes that loss of IK stems is mainly from the rapid changes in local communities' lifestyles, with younger generations often

disregarding IK due to the impact of modern technology and education. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to bridge generational gaps, document IK and integrate it with modern education systems.

Table 4 analyses IK resources across five district libraries in Mizoram. Resources are categorized into oral history from indigenous elders, documents and manuscripts, audio and video recordings, and community created resources.

Table - 4: Sources of preservation of IK by the libraries

Sources of IK		Name of library					Total
		State Central Library	Aizawl District Library	Champhai District Library	Kolasib District Library	Lunglei District Library	
Oral history from Indigenous Elders	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1
	% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	7.7%
Documents and manuscripts	Count	1	1	1	1	1	5
	% of Total	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%	38.5%
Audio and video recordings	Count	1	1	0	1	1	4
	% of Total	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	7.7%	30.8%
Community created resources	Count	1	0	0	1	1	3
	% of Total	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	7.7%	23.1%
Total	Count	3	2	1	3	4	13
	% of Total	23.1%	15.4%	7.7%	23.1%	30.8%	100.0%

Documents and Manuscripts are mostly common, found in all five libraries (38.5%), followed by Audio and Video Recordings (30.8%) and Community Created Resources (23.1%). Oral History is the least represented, available only in Lunglei (7.7%). Lunglei district library holds the highest share of resources (30.8%), while Champhai has the least (7.7%), this shows a regional difference in IK preservation

Table 5 outlines key challenges faced by five district libraries of Mizoram in preserving IK.

Table - 5: Challenges faced by libraries in acquiring IK

Challenges		Name of library					Total
		State Central Library	Aizawl District Library	Champhai District Library	Kolasib District Library	Lunglei District Library	
Lack of funding	Count	1	1	1	1	1	5
	% of Total	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	26.3%
Difficulty accessing IK sources	Count	0	1	1	1	1	4
	% of Total	0.0%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	21.1%
Lack of proper storage and archival facilities	Count	1	1	1	1	1	5
	% of Total	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	26.3%
Limited staff training on IK preservation	Count	1	1	1	1	1	5
	% of Total	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	5.3%	26.3%
	Count	3	4	4	4	4	19
	% of Total	15.8%	21.1%	21.1%	21.1%	21.1%	100.0%

The lack of proper storage and archival facilities, and limited staff training are reported by all five libraries, each accounting for 26.3% of the total responses. Difficulties have been noticed in accessing IK sources by four libraries (21.1%) (excluding State Central Library). Overall, the public libraries of Aizawl, Champhai, Kolasib, and Lunglei each report 21.1% of the total issues, while State Central reports slightly less at 15.8%. This data highlights common, system-wide barriers to IK preservation across the library network.

Table 6 presents a data analysis of various promotional activities undertaken by five libraries in Mizoram to promote Indigenous Knowledge (IK). The most common initiatives were “Creating dedicated IK sections in the library” and “Public events and exhibitions,” each accounting for 30.8% of the total activities. The State Central Library is the most active, contributing 46.2% of the total activities, while the Champhai and Lunglei District Libraries had the lowest participation, with only 7.7% each.

Table - 6: Promotion and awareness programs conducted by libraries

Promotional activities		Name of library					Total
		State Central Library	Aizawl District Library	Champhai District Library	Kolasib District Library	Lunglei District Library	
Creating dedicated IK sections in the library	Count	1	1	1	1	0	4
	% of Total	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%	30.8%
Providing online and digital access	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%
Partnering with universities and research institutions	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%
Conducting outreach programs in schools and universities	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%
Public events and exhibitions	Count	1	1	0	1	1	4
	% of Total	7.7%	7.7%	0.0%	7.7%	7.7%	30.8%
Social media campaigns	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%
Incorporating IK into mainstream education	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%
Total	Count	6	3	1	2	1	13
	% of Total	46.2%	23.1%	7.7%	15.4%	7.7%	100%

It can be seen that only the Aizawl District Library provides digital access to the users. Other activities like partnership with universities, outreach in schools, social media campaigns, and incorporating IK into mainstream education were reported only once. This shows that there are limited efforts in promoting IK across the libraries. These findings reveal a fragmented approach for advancing IK in the public libraries of Mizoram, which is characterized by limited digital access. This points out the necessity for a systematic strategy that enhances digital infrastructure, promote collaborations, and increases community engagement to guarantee the successful preservation and accessibility of IK among the Lushai tribe.

Table 7 presents different methods used by public libraries in Mizoram to engage with indigenous communities. The most widely adopted method across all five libraries is

“Providing indigenous communities with access to IK,” with all five libraries engaging in this practice (23.8% of total activities). Other commonly used methods, each with a total count of three (14.3%), include storytelling and folklore sessions, collaborative decision-making and resource creation, inviting local leaders for events, and hands-on workshops and activities.

Table -7: Methods of user engagement with indigenous communities for resource sharing

Methods of engagement		Name of library					Total
		State Central Library	Aizawl District Library	Champhai District Library	Kolasib District Library	Lunglei District Library	
Conducting interviews and oral history projects	Count	1	1	0	0	0	2
	% of Total	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.5%
Inviting Indigenous leaders for workshops and storytelling	Count	0	1	1	1	0	3
	% of Total	0.0%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	14.3%
Providing Indigenous communities with access to Indigenous Knowledge	Count	1	1	1	1	1	5
	% of Total	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	23.8%
Offering collaborative decision making and resource creation	Count	1	1	0	0	1	3
	% of Total	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	14.3%
Storytelling and folklore sessions	Count	1	1	0	0	1	3
	% of Total	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	14.3%
Indigenous language learning resources	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Hands on workshops and activities	Count	1	1	1	0	0	3
	% of Total	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
Partnerships with schools and educational institutions	Count	1	0	0	0	0	1
	% of Total	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Total	Count	7	6	3	2	3	21
	% of Total	33.3%	28.6%	14.3%	9.5%	14.3%	100.0%

The State Central Library was the most active with 33.3% of total activities, followed by Aizawl District Library (28.6%). In contrast, Kolasib and Lunglei Libraries were the least involved, with only two and three recorded activities respectively (each 9.5% and 14.3% of the total). Less commonly practiced methods include developing indigenous language learning resources and establishing partnerships with schools, each carried out by only one library (4.8%). The data reveals varying levels of engagement across libraries, with a significant focus on providing access to IK.

6. Compliance with IFLA recommendations

6.1 Collection, Preservation, and Dissemination: This study found that documents and manuscripts are the most commonly available across all public libraries, followed by audio and video recordings and community-created resources. Our findings are consistent with Jain and Jibril (2016); they found that libraries in Botswana have initiated projects to capture and document IK with the help of ICT tools. The preservation of rare collections, including ancient texts and manuscripts, is essential for maintaining the flow of cultural information across generations (Dewandaru, 2023). Our study’s focus on preserving audio, video, and

community-created resources aligns with previous research on the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America (AILLA), which focuses on protecting linguistic and cultural materials, particularly audio and video recordings (Kung, 2014). Ultimately, safeguarding IK in diverse formats is not only about preservation, but this initiative also empowers future generations with access to their cultural heritage.

6.2 Challenges: Several challenges were recognized by all five public libraries, such as lack of funding, inadequate storage and archival facilities, and limited staff training in the process of documentation and preservation of IK. Also, difficulty in accessing IK sources was reported by all libraries except the State Central Library in Aizawl. Our findings are similar to previous studies, primarily those focused on libraries in Africa, which face similar obstacles due to financial constraints, insufficient staff training, and inadequate technological infrastructure. For example, in Uganda, the effective management of African IK collections in university libraries is obstructed by challenges such as limited funding and the absence of adequate ICT tools (Rugambwa et al., 2023). For the proper management of IK in libraries, support from the government and other stakeholders is essential to help libraries overcome these challenges.

6.3 Promotion and awareness: In order to enhance the promotion of IK across public libraries in Mizoram, there is a need for more collective and coordinated efforts. Libraries should adopt digital platforms, such as online catalogs, to improve access and visibility. Our findings have similarities with Doyle et al. (2015); they found that the library at the University of British Columbia demonstrates the organization of IK through its unique classification scheme and subject headings. Collaborations with academic institutions, outreach programs in schools, and integration of IK into formal education should be extended in Mizoram. Our findings align with Godfrey et al. (2016); they found that the partnership between Charles Darwin University Library and the Living Archive of Aboriginal Languages demonstrates how academic libraries can support the archiving of cultural heritage through digitization and community engagement. One of our findings, that utilizing social media in libraries can help engage a broader audience and raise awareness among the Lushai tribe, aligns with the example of the Blitar Public Library in Indonesia, which uses social media to promote local IK (Pratiwi et al., 2022). Capacity building through staff training and collaborative workshops could further support the effective promotion and preservation of IK in these public libraries. The preservation and promotion of IK in Mizoram's public libraries will depend on their ability to combine technological innovation with community centred approaches.

6.4 Community involvement: The IFLA encourages engaging elders and communities to create resources and provide guidance to children to value IK and its role in shaping cultural identity. Public libraries in Mizoram should continue to prioritize access to IK and expand culturally relevant programming such as folklore sessions, storytelling, and workshops to support community engagement and knowledge sharing. This aligns with the findings of Chigwada and Ngulube (2023), which highlighted that librarians in Zimbabwe preserve IK through various forms such as workshops, folklore, and live recordings. Moreover, academic health libraries in North America have identified effective practices to engage with indigenous communities, such as building trust and prioritizing community needs (King, 2024). Additionally, exploring innovative practices like indigenous language learning resources and partnerships with educational institutions can enhance impact, this can be achieved by training, funding, and institutional support.

7. Limitations of the study

This study has certain limitations, most notably its geographic location, as it was only done in Mizoram. Consequently, the findings may lack generalizability to other areas out of Mizoram or to Lushai communities residing in remote places in other districts of Mizoram. Future study should overcome this limitation by including several districts and public libraries in India to capture a more diverse range of indigenous activities and opinions. Moreover, using a variety of research methodologies, such as qualitative and mixed methods, as well as conducting comparative or longitudinal studies, would provide a more complete understanding of the rituals, methods, challenges, and strategies involved in the transfer and preservation of IK within the Lushai community.

8. Conclusion and recommendations

This study offers a comprehensive exploration of the transmission, preservation and promotion of IK within the Lushai community, emphasizing the pivotal role played by public libraries in Mizoram in alignment with IFLA guidelines. It highlights the importance of community participation, storytelling and traditional rituals as key mechanisms in dissemination of IK. Distinct gender-based differences emerged, males preferred communal engagement, whereas females showed a stronger inclination towards storytelling, highlighting the importance of culturally and socially sensitive methods in safeguarding Indigenous Knowledge. The study also brought to light the obstacles encountered by both communities and libraries, such as modern influences, shifts in lifestyle, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of staff training.

Although some libraries have implemented measures like dedicated IK sections, public events and collaborations with community, these efforts still remain uneven across districts. To build on these findings, future efforts should focus on developing a cohesive framework that integrates digital innovation, policy support, and active community participation. This will make sure that IK within the Lushai Tribe is both preserved and dynamically shared through Mizoram's public libraries. Longitudinal studies could monitor changes over time, particularly in response to advancing technologies or shifting socio-cultural dynamics. Emerging technologies like Google Translate, Open AI's Whisper, Metadata Maker, Ex Libris Primo with AI Discovery, IBM Watson Assistant and Preservica offer potential directions for digital IK preservation and accessibility. Ongoing research in this domain is not only academic but a vital investment in nurturing the cultural resilience and identity of Indigenous communities. As global pressures endanger traditional knowledge systems, robust, inclusive, and adaptable strategies for IK preservation will be crucial in ensuring that this invaluable heritage persists for future generations.

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