

# MANIPUR: A Tourist Paradise



*E. Ishwarjit Singh*

BR  
ication

# MANIPUR

A TOURIST PARADISE



**E. Ishwarjit Singh**



**B.R. Publishing Corporation**

[A Division of BRPC (India) Ltd.]

Delhi-110 052

**MANIPUR**  
**A Tourist Paradise**

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ISBN 81-7646-506-2

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*Printed & Published by:*

**B.R. Publishing Corporation**  
**[A Division of BRPC (India) Ltd.]**

425, Nimri Colony

Ashok Vihar, Phase IV

Delhi-110 052

E-Mail: [brpctld@del2.vsnl.net.in](mailto:brpctld@del2.vsnl.net.in)

**Rs. 750**

**PRINTED IN INDIA**

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Dedicated  
to  
MY LOVING PARENTS,  
*Mr. E. Ibotombi Singh*  
&  
*Mrs. E. Bimola Devi*



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# Foreword

The more we study the arena of tourism, the more we are struck by the great opportunity that the travel and tourism industry, backed by healthy cultural value, provide for creating a new civilization in the 21st century. Tourism is not merely leisure or entertainment or physical invigoration or mere rejuvenation but it also serves as a potent instrument for eliminating poverty, for ending unemployment, for promoting dialogue and for providing channels in which streams of different cultures could meet and mingle and create a new ethnoscape on which a fair, just, humane and enlightened order could be built for the humanity.

In this book Dr. Elangbam Ishwarjit Singh offers an interesting contribution to the question of regional development of marginal or backward region. Tourism has been widely considered as a key remedy to backwardness and marginality. Dr. Singh addresses this issue in his book, although he may be a bit over optimistic as to the long-term possibilities. His description of the tourist sites of Manipur emphasizes their positive aspects and the tourists interviewed seem to confirm his optimism. He is however, aware of the problems, weakness and obstacles to develop tourism in Manipur.

This is a pioneering work, first of its kind by a geographer, Dr. Elangbam Ishwarjit Singh. The book can therefore be considered as an important contribution to regional development and development of tourism in Manipur. Credit has to be given to Dr. Singh for having carried through his investigation despite enormous hurdles like inaccessibility, bad conditions of roads, steep slopes, difficult terrain and of course non-availability of data. Other persons might have abandoned their research when faced with such major obstacles.

**Abha Lakshmi Singh**

# Preface

“God’s earth in all its fullness and beauty is for the people.”

—Thomas Cook

Tourism is the age-old human activity named travelling, in the new setting of the jet-age, the age of automation. Now, it emerges world’s largest and fastest growing industry and also employed largest workforce.

During the last few decades the developing and under-developed countries have shown more interest in the promotion of tourism sector due to its ability to earn foreign exchange and generate employment opportunities. In this way, it may be said that tourism is a low cost smokeless industry with high added value. It does not require huge investment on the other hand it generate bountiful multiplier affects. It satisfies spiritual quest for adventure, leisure and business. It broadly covers hotels, restaurants and other complexes; travel agencies, tour operators; transport faculties for tourists – air, road, railways; amusement, entertainment and sports units for tourists; units providing cultural, adventure and wild-life experiences to tourists. As a result, it has positioned these countries as strong competitors for the developed countries.

Tourism plays a significant role in socio-economic development of a country. It has also helped in the development of backward areas through increased inflow of tourists income. The growth of tourism, specially domestic tourism, has helped in removing regional imbalances. Tourism promotes national integration and international understanding and augments foreign exchange earnings. It also gives a helping hand to local handicraft and cultural activities.

India becomes as a major destination for travellers across the world. It’s boom time for tourism sector in the country.



Today, tourism is India's third biggest foreign exchange earner—after information technology and jewellery—accounting for nearly \$4 billion. This development is only concentrated in some parts of the country in spite of vast potentials. The Ministry of Tourism should be considered by implementing all the possible efforts to explore all the potentials of the country to tourists, so that travelling to India is all that the catchline "Incredible India" claims it to be.

This book special reference to Manipur, one of the seven sisters of north-eastern region, the most neglected and backward area inhabited by different ethnic groups with rich cultural heritage in fragile ecosystem hunts for the development of tourism in the state. The Government should realise such incredible potential and put it in the impetus of tourism growth for the development of the region. The question of deterioration of fragile ecosystem in the region by *jhum* could also be gradually solved through tourism as fairy penguins survive in Australia and conservation of coral reef and clean beaches in Pacific and Caribbean islands. When money will flow in, when people will get employment, the burning problems of insurgency will be gradually forgotten and political, social and economic stability will usher in.

An extensive approach has been made to frame for understanding the geographical significance of tourism. This book would be of interest to the economic planners, social reformers, political wizards, cultural parameter setters, academic scholars and tourists etc. There is no book on tourism, for Manipur, which provides such detailed and vivid account of tourism development.

**Author**

# Acknowledgements

I express my heartfelt gratitude to my revered supervisor, Prof. (Mrs.) Abha Lakshmi Singh, Department of Geography, A.M.U., Aligarh. Words are scarce to express the indebtedness for her who bestowed all her possible help upon me. Without her able guidance, I would not have completed this work.

I would like to pay my sincere gratitude to Prof. M. Shafi, Prof. Emeritus and Dr. Shahab Fazal of the Department of Geography for their valuable suggestions. I also extend my thanks to the Chairman, Department of Geography, A.M.U., Prof. Azimuddin Qureshi for extending me all the facilities to complete this work.

I owe my thanks to Dr. Sushila, Director of Archives Department, Manipur who provided me all her library facilities and equipments and to Prof. M. Jitendra Singh, Head Department of History, Manipur University for providing me valuable books and giving me the necessary encouragement. I should not forget Mr. Shanti's family for full support which they offered me during the field survey. It is also my duty to thank Jagoi Marup, Johnstone Hr. Sec. School; D.M. College's Tribal Student Union, Mr. Basanta and Mr. Suderson who provided me the necessary information and some rare photographs. My sincere thank goes to Goshwami, Director of DIPR, Manipur, Dr. Suresh and Mr. Y. Laba, member of the Human Right Commission, for their whole hearted cooperation. And to Mr. Bidan, L.D.A. Imphal.

I am showing deep indebtedness to Mr. Ratan Luwangcha, CNB, Poknapham Daily who gave me a new paradigm and precious snaps.

It is my obligation to express my thanks to the Librarians of the Seminar of Department of Geography, M.A. Library, A.M.U., Aligarh; Librarian of Manipur University, Manipur State Library, Imphal and Librarian of J.N.U. Library, New Delhi.

I am highly obliged to Mr. Rajneesh Kumar, Lecturer, Bagla College, Hathras and Mr. Munney Khan, Geography Department, A.M.U., Aligarh who helped me in the preparation of the maps.

Indeed, I am sincerely indebted to Prof. R.J. Singh, Dr. Mukhul and Dr. Neena for providing me family like ambience and shared with me their valuable time in this course of research work.

I am very thankful to Mr. Praveen Mittal, Managing Director, B.R. Publishing Corporation, for his keen and personal interest and help in the publication of this book.

My special thank goes to my seniors—Dr. Ateeq, Lecturer, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Dr. Irfan, Dr. Petter, Dr. Ahmad, Dr. Asghar, Mr. Baharuddin and Ms. Sanobar; to my dear friends—Nando, Suraj, Ranbir, Minhaj, Fatima, Samita, Danish, Amjad and Mashiullah and to Junior sisters Uzma, Nazish, Mona and Saba.

It is my duty to thank Director, North-Eastern Council, Shillong and the Department of Geography, A.M.U., Aligarh for giving me financial assistance during my research work.

Lastly, but not the least, no words of acknowledgement could be entertained for the spontaneous loving support, encouragement, affection and sacrifice that I received from parents—Mr. Ibotombi and Mrs. Bimola; maternal grandpa, Shree Achau; sisters—Pratima, Prabha and Ratna and brother Premjit.

Any suggestions for further improvement are welcome.

**Ishwarjit**





**1 Kabui**



**2 Vaiphei**

**3 Thadou**



**4 Kom**







**5 Rongmei**



**6 Liangmei**

**7 Lamkang**



**8 Koireng**





**9 Chothe**

**10 Mao Dance**



**11 Kom Dance**





**12 Bamboo Dance**

**13 Thangkul Dance**



**14 Kabui Dance**

**15 Anal Dance**





**16 Ras Dance**



**17 Gostha Leela**



**18 Khamba-Thoibi Dance**



**19 Maibi Dance**





**20 Maiba-Maibi Dance**



**21 Pung Cholom**



**22 Dulop Cholom**



**23 Holi Party**



24 Pena Eshei



**25 Thang Yannaba**



**26 Thang Ahum Yannaba**



**27 Lady's  
Thang Yannaba**

**28 Men-Women  
Thang Ta Chainaba**







**29 Sagol Kangjei**

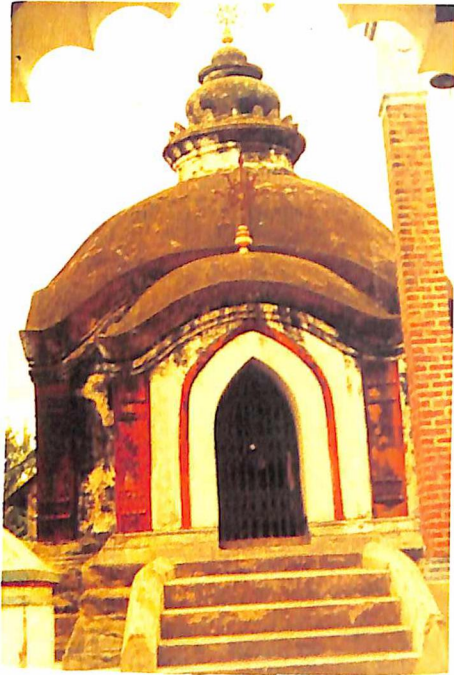
**30 Hiyang Tanaba  
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**31 Yubi Lakpi**

**32 Kaina**





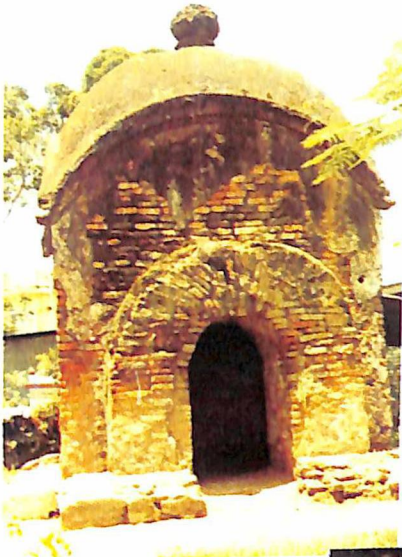
**33 Shree Krishna Temple**

**34 Thangal  
General Temple**



**35 Leimapokpa  
Keirungba**





**36 Samadhi of Maharaj Khaba**

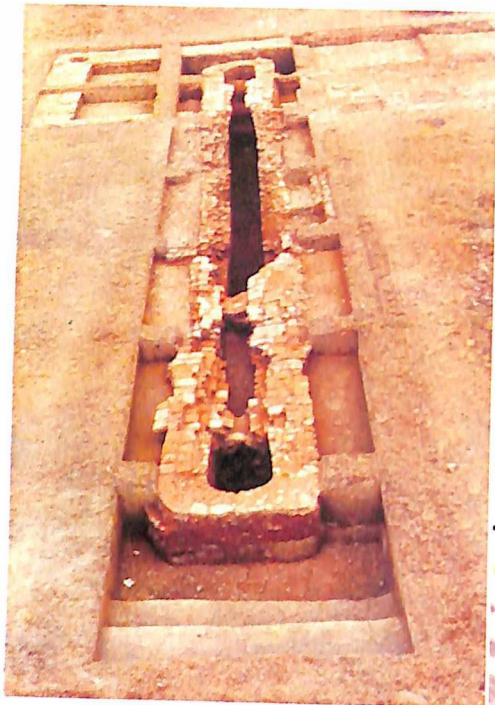


**37 Sekta Kei**

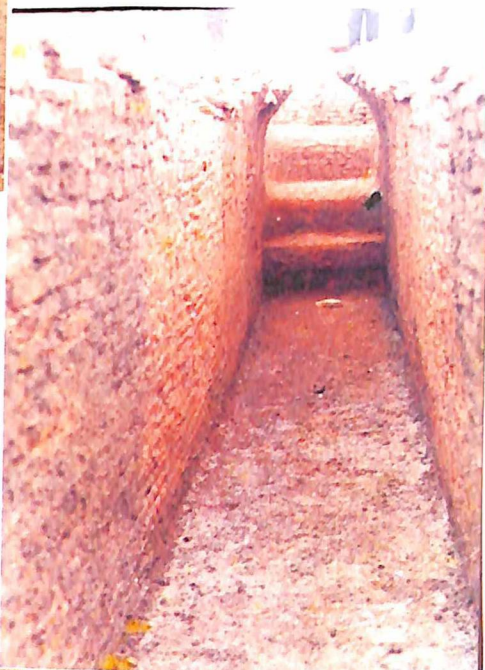


**38 Gateway of Canchipur**





**39 Upper Surface of Underground Passage of Canchipur**



**40 Underground Passage of Canchipur**

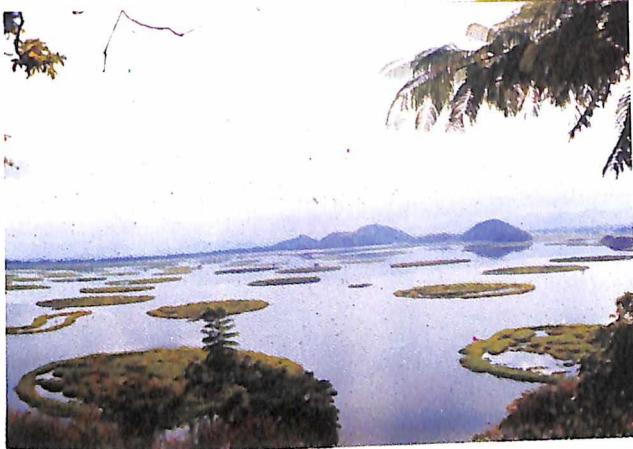
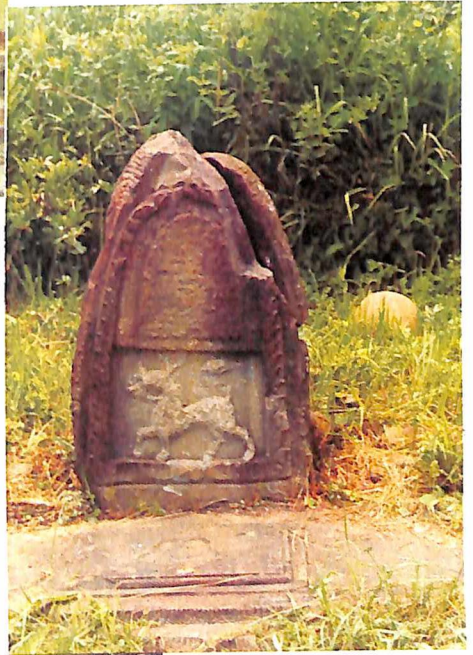


**41 Maharaj Ghambir Singh Temple**



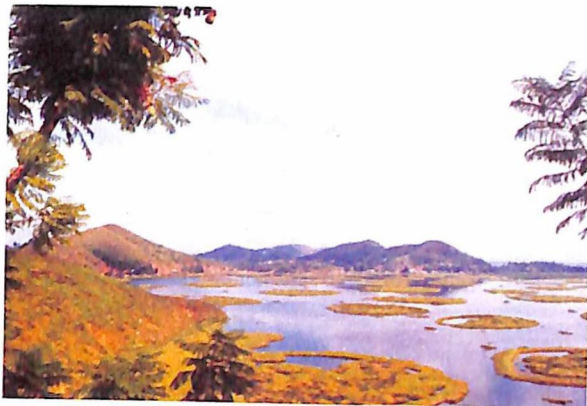
**42 Krishna Avatar**

**43 Inscription**



**44 Scenic Beauty of  
Loktak Lake with  
Phumdi**





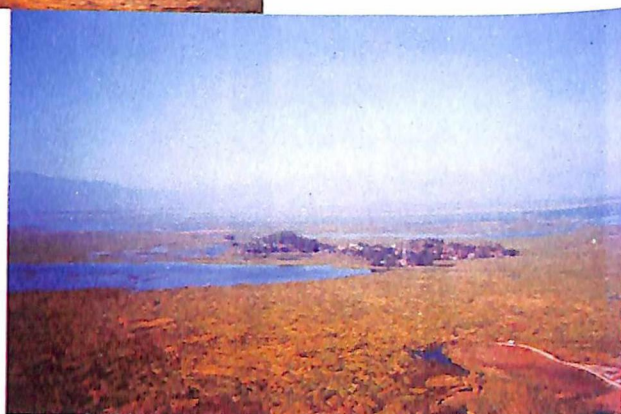
**45 Scenic Beauty of Loktak Lake with Isles**

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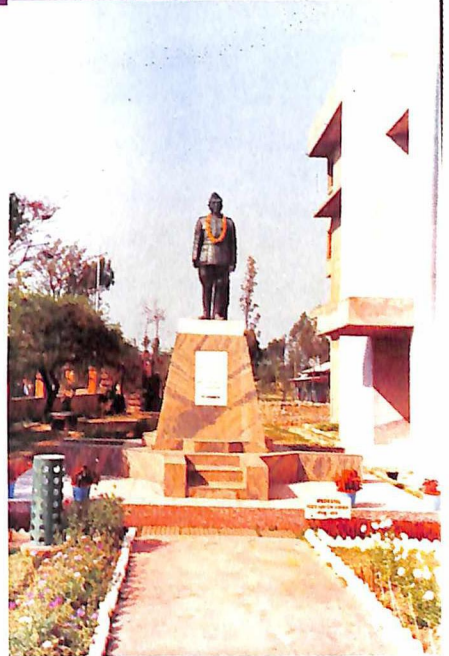
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**49 Floating  
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**50 Bronze Statue of Netaji**



**51 Thangjing  
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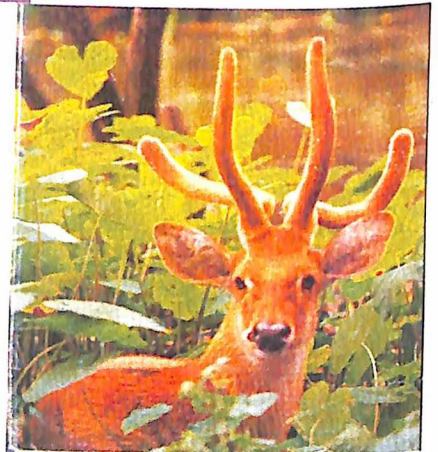
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**54 Woman Fishing in  
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**55 Shangai (Dancing Deer) in  
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**56 Shangai  
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**57 Dzuko  
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"Valley of  
Flower"**



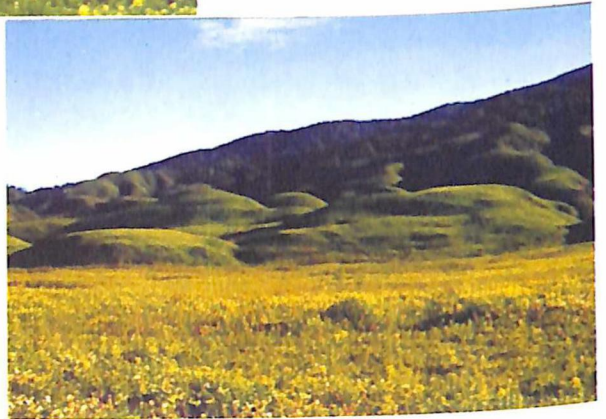
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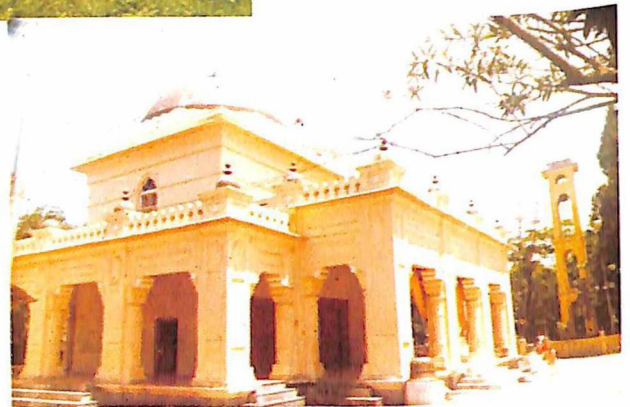
**59 Wet Land  
Formation of  
Dzuko Valley**

**60 Scenic Beauty of  
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smooth hummock**



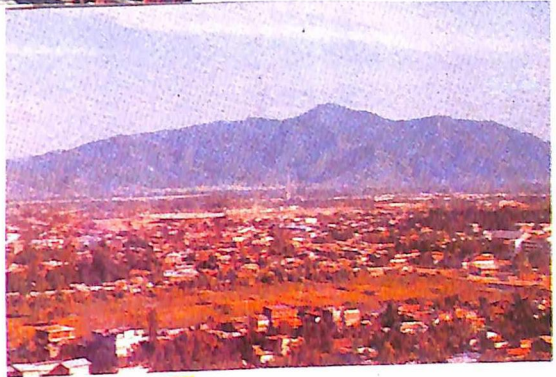
**61 Rock Shelter of  
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**62 Shree Govindaji  
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**63 Govindaji Temple in Festive Season**

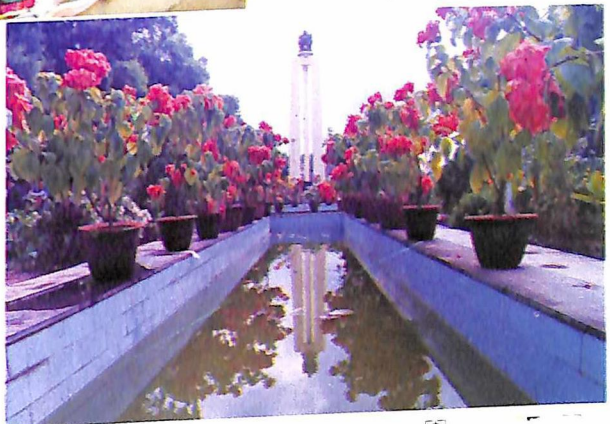


**64 Imphal Town**



**65 Ima Market**

**66 Bir Tikandrajit Park**







**67 Nupi War  
Memorial  
Complex**

**68 Singda Dam**

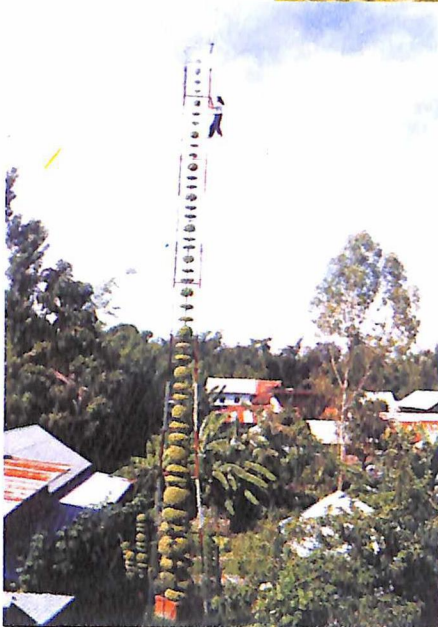


**69 Sambal Lei Sekpil  
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**67 Nupi War  
Memorial  
Complex**

**68 Singda Dam**



**69 Sambal Lei Sekpil  
(Guinness Record)**



**74 Iuku  
Cultural Programme**

**75 Luirá  
Cultural Programme**



**76 Luirá  
Cultural Programme**

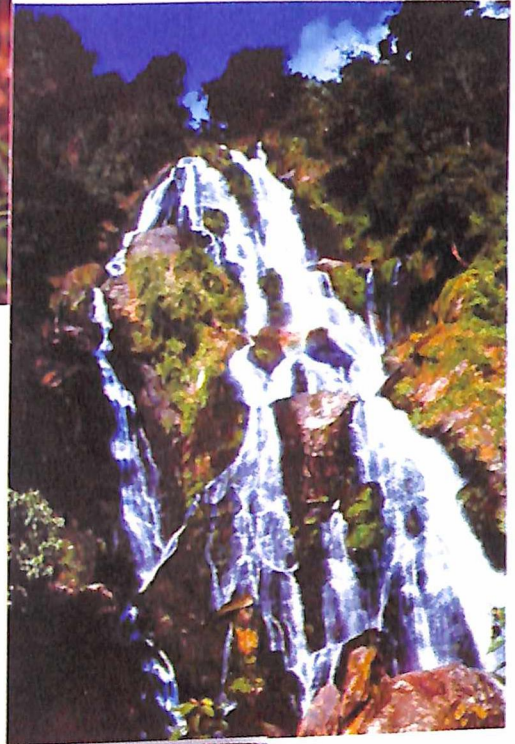
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**78 Siroy Lily**



**79 Khayang  
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**80 Buddhist  
Temple of  
Moreh Town**





**81 Myanmar  
"Land of Golden  
Pagoda"**

**82 Royal Palace of Mandalay  
(Myanmar)**



**83 Golden Statue of Buddha  
(Myanmar)**

# Glossary

## Local Words

Aarti  
Abir (abher)  
Ahom  
Ahum  
Athaphum  
  
Ava (awa)  
Avatar  
Balya Leela  
  
Bamon (Brahmin)  
  
Banchi  
Basanta Ras  
  
Bazaar  
Bhagavata  
Bhama sava  
Bheithob  
  
Bir  
Chainaba  
Chak kouba  
Chengbol  
Ching  
Cholom  
  
Chong  
Chongba  
Darbar  
Dhakhina  
Dharshan

## Equivalent in English

Fire sticks used for ritual functions  
Colour  
Name of the Assam State (in past)  
Three  
Phumdis are made accordingly for fishing purpose only  
Myanmar (Burma)  
Incarnation  
A dance drama depicting early life-style of Lord Krishna  
Person who conducts ritual functions and takes care of temple and deities  
Flute  
A form of Ras Leela performed in the full moon of April  
Market  
Holy book of Hindus  
Scholars assembly  
A ruin building of Kangla fort in Bengali hut style  
Brave  
Fighting  
Call for the feast  
Box used for keeping clothes  
Hill  
A generic name of percussion dance prevalent in Manipur  
Spear  
Jumping (dancing)  
Assembly  
Gift  
Look

Dhol	Manipuri framed drum
Dhoti	White piece of cloth worn by manfolk in occasion
Dulop	Manipuri framed drum
Doolai	Luxurious carrier use only in occasion or for elites, that has to carry by well built four men
Ein	Local fishing net
Enapphees	Ladies upper clothes
Eshei	Song
Fagei	Joke or comic
Geet	Song
Ghar	House
Gopis	Girl friend of Lord Krishna
Gostha Leela	Child life style of Krishna which depict- ed in the form of dance drama
Haiba	Swing
Hao chougba	Dancing and jumping happily in group
Haora	Red and white striped with crossed border designs used by Thangkhol chiefs
Haram	Side
Haraoba	Pleasing
Hawaizar	Fermented soybean
Hiyang hiren	Head of boat
Hoi	Making sound like 'hoi' by shouting
Holi	Festival of colour
Hookah	Pot used for smoking
Huyen lallong	Art of war and weaponry
Ima	Mother
Ironba	It is local curry mixed with fermented fish, chillies, vegetables etc.
Isingsokpi	A girl carrying water
Jagoi	Dance
Jatra	Unbeaten champion
Jhari	Embroidered darbar coat
Kakpa	Cut
Kalumki/Kalemki	The house of bats
Kang	An oval shape made of ivory used for game



Kangdrom	A small ball made of bamboo
Kangjei	Hockey stick like made of cane which is four or five feet in length
Kao phaba	Catching of bull
Kartaal	Large cymbals
Khasi	An ethnic group of Meghalaya
Kheer	A food made of mainly rice mixed with milk
Kei	Granary
Kheichri	Colour mixed rice
Keirung selung	An administrative body of Govindajee temple
Keithel	Market
Khel	Play
Khipu	Tribal leader
Khetri lon	A study of the khetris
Khuang	Making of drum
Khullakpa	Tribal leader
Khunthok	Immigration
Kirtan	A devotional song
Kongsang	A necklace of carnation beads
Konung	Palace
Kouna	Reed
Kufa	Tunnel or passage
Kumbaba	Calculation of days
Kunja	Grove
Kunja Ras	A kind of Ras Leela performed in full moon of October
Kwak jatra	A festival (beginning)
Kwak tanba	A festival (end)
La	Banana leaf
Lai	God
Lai ikouba	Call god from water
Lainura	Goddess
Laipham	Sacred place
Laipumthou	God
Lairikyenbam lon	A study of the lairikyenbam
Lakhori	Thin and small
Lakpa	Controller or leader
Lal	War

Lammei chakpa	Forest wild fire
Lamthokpa	Come out to the public or the open area
Laobi	Shouting or making sound
Lairembi	Goddess
Leela	Drama
Leilangba	Offering of flowers
Leishaphal	Seat for lady
Liba	Telling
Likhai	A basket for measuring grain
Loikum loikak	The exile and return from exile
Loisiang	School
Lon	A study
Long	Used in fishing
Longoop	Bamboo made used in fishing
Madrassa	A place for religious education
Maharaj	King
Maharani	Queen
Maha Ras	A kind of Ras Leela performs in the full moon of November
Maiba	Priest
Maibi	Priestess
Maichaus	Scholars
Manai	Servent
Mandir	Temple
Mandop	Congregation hall
Mantras	Charms
Maram kasa	A festival of tribe
Mayang tekhaolon	Study of the immigrants coming from Assam
Mela	Fair
Mera	October month
Milan	Meeting
Minar	Pillar
Mithun	Ox used only for meat
Moibung khongba	Persons who makes sound of a musical instrument i.e. Moibung (Conch)
Muga	Silk
Mukna	Wrestling
Munglen/Manglen	Cremation place
Morah	Cylindrical shape made of cane used for sitting

Nau	Oar
Ngari	Fermented fish
Ningol	Daughter or sister
Ningthou	King
Ningthoural lambuba	Royal chronicle
Nongda lairal	Lord
Nongpok	East
Nunggoibi	A sacred place of goddess of war
Nupi lal	Women war
Ojha	Master
Pacca	Metalled or cemented
Pakhangphal	Seat for gentlemen
Pala	Song party
Pan	Betel nut
Pana	Team
Pandit	Scholar
Pardah	Women putting veils
Parva/Purva	Ballad
Phanek	Ladies lower clothe (Sarong)
Pharangji	A thick woollen cloth used by Chinese
Phee	Cloths
Pheinak	The traditional Kabui Naga dance dress
Phirook	A decorative flower vase
Phoo	Pot
Phumdi	A thick floating masses of rotting aquatic plants and humus
Poornima	Full moon
Puja	Prayer
Pujari	Priest, cook
Pukhri	Pond
Pung	Mridang
Puranas	Books of old stories
Purvadin/Parvadin	Important days
Radharoman	Name of a building
Raj	King or country
Raja	King
Ras Leela	A dance drama depicting Krishna and Radha with Gopis
Rasmandal	Grove where ras leela is played
Rasoi	Kitchen
Sagei	Surname



Salai	Clan
Sagol	Horse
Salvan	Forest
Samukhongyetpa	Ordeals with the elephant
Sanamahi	Homestead god
Sanathong	Royal gate
Sanggai	House
Sanggai yumpham	Royal resident
Sanglakpa	Caring of temple
Sanjenbal	A dance drama depicting Gopies—the caring of cows by Krishna
Sankirtan	Religious song with music
Sati	Wife thinks their husband as supreme
Sava	Society or public
Senapati	Head of the country's army
Shamu	Elephant
Sha	Mythical beast
Shree	A title for a man who has no other title
Soibum	Fermented bamboo shoot
Subedar	A rank in army
Sum (sham)	Cane made basket used by tribal ladies
Sumang	Courtyard
Swadesh	Self
Sylvan	Forest
Ta	Spear
Taibot	Elephant owner
Tanaba	Competition
Tandava	Beautiful or rhythmic style of movement
Tarung	Ceremonial wood of Thangkhol
Temphu	Tribal leader
Thabal	Moonlit
Thabi	Cucumber
Thang	Sword
Thangjou	Dagger
Tirtha	Pilgrimage
Tongga/Dona	Bowl made from banana leaf
Tuilongpar	Mizo ladies' lower dress imitated from the streamly floral-shaped design
Umang	Forest

Uttra	Ancestral coronation hall
Vaishnavism	A sect of Hindus
Varandah	Porch
Vashuri	Person caring of god cloth
Vedic	Ancient Hindu literature
Wari	Story
Yannanba	Fighting
Yatriniwas	Guest house
Yopak	Spade
Yumpham	Homestead
Yuvaraj	Prince

**Currency**

US \$1 = Rs.47.00

# Introduction

The more we study the arena of tourism and culture, the more we are struck by the great opportunity that the travel and tourism industry, backed by healthy cultural values, provides for creating a new civilization in the 21st century.

Few of us realise that the world has been undergoing a tourism revolution, particularly in the last four decades of the 20th century. In 1964, the number of tourists leaving their home worldwide was 100 million. This number increased to 200 million in 1974, 500 million in 1992 and 700 million in 2001 (*Hindustan Times*, 16th May, 2002). Unfortunately, the two major impediments in the way of tourism development was the disaster of 11th September, 2001 and the general slowdown of the economy. These obstructions were shortlived and the tourism revolution further gained momentum and attained acceleration.

The World Tourism Organisation estimates that tourists spend more than US \$462 billion, which is US \$1.3 billion a day. Tourist arrivals are predicted to grow by an average of 4.1 per cent a year over the next two decades, surpassing a total of one billion international travellers by the year 2010 (WTO, 2002). Tourism is the world's largest employer, generating, directly and indirectly, nearly 200 million jobs or some 10 per cent of the jobs globally (Vania, 2002).

The fastest growing segment in tourism is nature tourism. World Tourism Organisation (WTO) estimates that nature tourism generated 7 per cent of all international travel. Today nature tourism is the largest foreign exchange earner for S. Africa, Kenya, Ecuador and Costa Rica. Moreover, while the tourism industry has an estimated annual growth rate of 4 per cent, nature travel boasts of a growth rate between 10-30 per cent. The argument is that even a fraction of these



revenues, if channelled in the right direction, can go a long way to help the local economy and ecology.

Tourism is not merely leisure or entertainment or physical invigoration or mental rejuvenation but it also serves as potent instrument for eliminating poverty, for ending unemployment, for promoting dialogue among civilizations and for providing channels in which streams of different cultures could meet and mingle and create a new ethicscape on which a fair, just, humane and enlightened order could be built for the humanity.

We, in India are trying to open hitherto closed doors and find new passages. Our overall effort is to present to the world the wonder that India is. Wonder not only in terms of beauties and bounties of nature but also in terms of an ancient civilization that was born and bred here. A civilization that sprang from an original and powerful mind and created three of the five greatest thought processes in the world—Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. India has rediscovered its vast bounties of nature, art, architecture, culture and religious places. It is also tapping all opportunities for hill adventure, rural and wildlife tourism and placing before the world, through tourist spots its unique techniques of *Yoga*, *Siddha*, *Ayurvedic* and *Unani* system. It is laying down an exchanging network of 572 nature endowed areas—89 national parks and 983 wildlife sanctuaries and 3,606 protected monuments (*Hindustan Times*, 16th May, 2002). We are keen to ensure that tourists to India should get physically invigorated, mentally rejuvenated, culturally enriched and spiritually elevated and on return to his country, he should feel India within him.

For the creation of a better world, the challenge is to encourage attitude and trends and evolve policies and programmes which would substantially increase the flow of tourists from affluent to non-affluent countries, cause reduction in disparities of income and resource distribution and through closer and more frequent contacts, create a deeper understanding.

The National Policy put forward by the Government of India has been the development of tourism in the exotic North-East as the key to all economic and social development in the area. It accepts the concept that economic development

of Manipur can be brought about only through robust tourism industry (Singh, 2000). The potentialities of the state for the development of tourism should be highlighted for popularization and marketing. The state abounds in natural scenic beauties like, alpine meadows, pristine forest, kaleidoscopic landscape, rugged mountains, fascinating landscapes, blue hills, dales, rapids, waterfalls, wetland formation on lofty hills, shimmering lakes with colourful lilies, lotus, elegant islands, exotic orchards, wild orchids, salubrious climate etc. and mosaic of enchanting cultures manifests in the form of graceful dances, traditional songs, festivals, ritual functions, nuptial style, martial art, indigenous games etc. All these resources ensure that Manipur could generate huge foreign exchange and also bring cultural renaissance through robust tourism.

### **OBJECTIVES**

In this book an attempt has been made to focus attention on the fact that development could be generated through tourism in Manipur. This process would be a slow one but ultimately it will bring good results. When money will flow in, when people will get employment, insurgency will be gradually forgotten and politico-economic and social stability will usher in.

The present study has certain specific objectives. They are:

1. To assess the geographical personality of Manipur—its geology, relief, drainage system, climate, flora and fauna; its people, culture, religion and present demography; its economic structure and transport system.
2. To study the tourist movement in Manipur during the ancient, medieval, British and post-Independence period.
3. To assess tourist attractions of hilly area and central valley of Manipur—natural factors, socio-cultural factors, religious and historical places and infra-structural facilities.
4. To examine in detail the selected tourist spots of Manipur having different types of attractions—Loktak

lake as a scenic site, Keibul Lamjao National Park as wild life site, Dzuko valley as a biospheric conservation site, Govindajee temple as a religious place, Ukhrul as a hill station and Moreh as a site of commercial centre.

5. To locate other places of tourist attractions around the selected sites in order to make a package tour of the sites.
6. To assess the perception of tourists for further planning and development of tourist sites.
7. To design and plan strategies for the development of tourism in Manipur. Before designing such strategies, the present status of tourism and problems in the way of development of tourism in Manipur will be examined.

### **DATA BASE**

The data were collected from primary and secondary sources. This study is based on primary sources of data which has been collected through:

1. Field surveys.
2. Survey of selected tourist spots.
3. Questionnaire interviews with tourists, government officials, local people, hoteliers, bus owners etc.

The field work was done during the years 2001-2003. For getting accurate information the selected spots were visited frequently.

Data from secondary sources have been collected from various Government offices, private institutions, tourism departments etc.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The following methods have been used in the present study:

1. Assessment of the places of attraction in Manipur both in the hilly areas and in the central valley was done with the help of both primary and secondary sources



of data. The author conducted field surveys to gather the relevant informations.

2. Eight tourist spots, having different types of attraction were selected for indepth study. A comprehensive survey of these sites were conducted and information regarding its location, history, natural scenic beauty, culture, festivals, dances, drama, sports, handicrafts etc. were gathered.
3. The study is based on primary sources of data which were drawn with the help of questionnaire interviews. Tourists, workers, hotel managers, bus owners, local people, officials etc. were interviewed for getting information regarding their views, attitudes, motives, perceptions, difficulties and constraints.

### **HYPOTHESES**

1. Manipur is a 'Land of Promise'. It abounds in scenic beauty and cultural mosaic which can attract tourists not only from India but from all over the world.
2. There are more problems than beauty in Manipur. Its isolation from the outside world, its backwardness, ruggedness of the topography, insurgency, lack of accessibility, lack of transport and infrastructural facilities are the impediments in the way of development.
3. The closed doors of Manipur should be opened and efforts should be made to present to the world the wonder that Manipur is. Wonder not only in terms of beauties and bounties of nature but also in terms of its culture, festivals, dances, martial art, nuptial style, sport, handicrafts etc. Through tourism, development could be ushered in this state.

**Part I**

**Geographical Personality of  
the Study Area: Manipur**

# Physical and Socio-Economic Background of Manipur

## 1.1 PHYSICAL BACKGROUND OF MANIPUR

How development could be generated in an isolated region? In this book an attempt is made to focus attention on the fact that development could be generated through tourism in Manipur. In this chapter an attempt has been made to examine the physical, social and economic features of Manipur to assess its suitability for promotion of tourism. This chapter is based primarily on secondary source of data. Sometimes on spot investigations were made for verification.

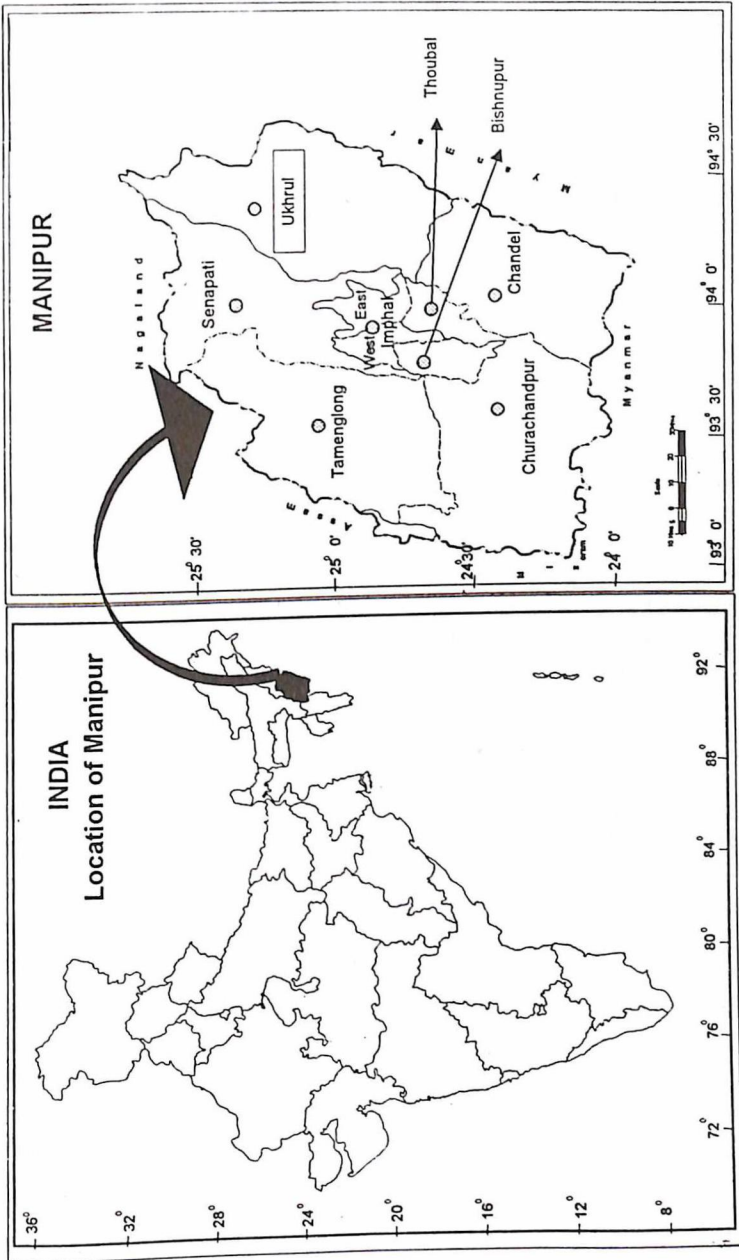
The state of Manipur lies in North Eastern region of India (Fig. 1.1). It forms the extreme eastern border of India. It extends from 93°03' east to 94°78' east longitudes and 23°80' north to 25°68' north latitudes (Chatterjee, 1965). It is bounded on the north by Naga Hills and Tuensang district of Nagaland; on the east by the Sorma tract and upper Chindwind district of Myanmar; on the south it is surrounded by Chin Hills of Myanmar and Mizo district of Mizoram and on the west by the Cachar district of Assam.

About 91 per cent of the state is mountainous and rest of it is shared by the lacustrine plain of Central or Imphal valley studded with few residual hills and the Barak basin, Jiribam on the western fringe.

The total geographical area of the state is 22,327 sq.km. with a population of 2,388,634 (Census of India, 2001). It has only 0.68 per cent of the country's area and 0.23 per cent of the country's population.



Manipur : Locational Setting



Source: Census Atlas, India 2001, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Govt. of India

Fig. 1.1

**Table 1.1: Politico-Administrative Structure of Manipur**

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Area (sq.km.)</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Number of</i>				
			<i>Sub- division</i>	<i>CD/TD blocks</i>	<i>Zila Parishad Autonomous District Council</i>	<i>Inhabited village</i>	<i>Towns</i>
1. Imphal East	670	393,780	4	4	1	206	3
2. Imphal West	558	439,532	4	4	1	117	10
3. Thoubal	514	366,341	3	3	1	87	9
4. Bishnupur	496	205,907	3	3	1	45	7
5. Senapati	3,271	379,214	5	5	2	516	-
6. Tamenglong	4,391	111,493	4	4	1	193	-
7. Churachandpur	4,570	228,707	5	6	1	504	1
8. Chandel	3,313	122,714	4	4	1	292	1
9. Ukhrul	4,544	140,946	5	5	1	222	-
Total Valley	2,238	1,405,560	14	14	4	455	29
Total Hill	20,089	983,074	23	24	6	1,727	2
Total Manipur	22,327	2,388,634	37	38	10	2,182	31

Notes: (i) Area and Population figures are based on 2001 Census.

(ii) Other figures are based on 1991 Census.

Sources: 1. Census of India, 1991 and Census of India, 2001 (Provisional), Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur.

2. Statistical Handbook of Manipur, 2003, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Manipur.

Manipur could be broadly divided into two distinct regions i.e., the mountainous region and the plain region. For the administrative purpose, the state is divided into 9 districts. Five districts viz., Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Senapati, Chandel and Ukhrul fall in the mountainous region and the remaining 4 districts viz., Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur, lie in the plain region. These districts have been further sub-divided into 37 subdivisions and 38 community tribal development blocks (Statistical Handbook, 2003). Table 1.1 shows the politico-administrative and respective population structure of Manipur.

The boundary line is approximately 854 kms. out of which, 532 kms. is the international boundary line with Myanmar in the east.

### **1.1.1 Geology**

The state has a sketchy geological knowledge. Detailed geological survey reports are still awaited. In the early pleistocene age during the cenozoic era, some 55 million years ago, the whole region was uplifted from sea of Tethys to its present position. This has been confirmed from the recent findings of the Geological Survey of India.

Manipur is a part of Assam-Burma geological Unit. It is the eastern part of the Himalayan orogenic formation. The detailed information of its tectonic and geological history is inadequate. The most reliable geological history of the state is the outline classification of rocks which was made by Dayal (1968). It is more or less in line with that of Oldham (1883). The distribution of major rocks follows the pattern from north-south (Fig. 1.2). The geological succession with rock types according to them is: Recent age-alluvium, Miocene-Tipam series and Surma series, Oligocene-Barail series, Eocene-Disang series with ultra basic and Cretaceous-Axial group.

The oldest Axial rock type is found in a small narrow belt in the north-eastern part i.e., in Ukhrul district where limestone occurs as lenses in a sequence of gritty sandstone and buff to grey coloured shale. The term axial was described for the rocks which are older than Disang by the geologist of the



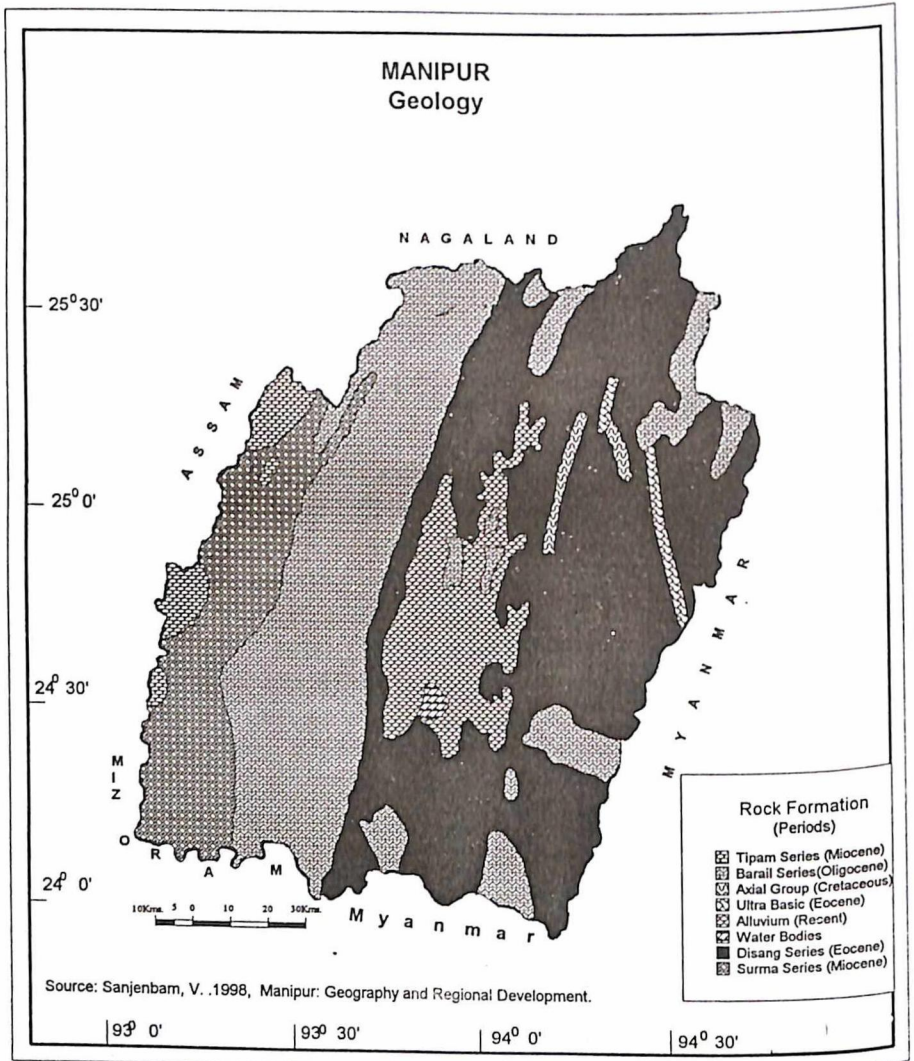


Fig. 1.2

Himalayan ranges, the Manipur valley is enclosed by Manipur eastern and western hills. The valley is an oval shaped with irregular outline (Fig. 1.3). It is also called Imphal valley because river Imphal passes through the heart of the valley.

According to the Manipur *Puranas*, the valley was under water. The nine *Laipumthou* (God) and *Lainuras* (Goddesses), all worked together to make the sixty four hillocks. Thus, they created the land. On other hand, Lord *Shiva* with his consort *Parvati* landed atop the Nongmaijing hill to play *ras leela* in the valley of Manipur, which he found still submerged under water. Lord *Shiva* with his trident made a hole through the hills and provided an outlet for draining the excess water, which gradually drained out and the valley of Manipur came into being. While many geologists have suggested that the valley is a lacustrine plain which was formed due to siltation of an ancient lake. The Loktak lake, biggest fresh water lake in the north east region, located on the south west of the valley is believed to be remnant of an ancient lake (Singh, 1982). The valley is about 57.92 kms. from north to south and 32.19 kms. from east to west where it is broadest. The area of the valley is only 1,864.44 sq.km. (Ansari, 1976). This plain area extends up to the foothills of mountains.

The valley is not fully flat. It is studded with beautiful hillocks. The prominent mounts which rise above the flat surface are Langol, Hingang, Nongmaijing Ching, Langthabal, Waithau etc. lying along with small numerous shimmering lakes.

All rivers of the valley are flowing towards south so as to show the sloping pattern of the valley that is from north to south. The average elevation of the valley is 790 m. from m.s.l. but, in the north it is 832.2 m. and in the south it is 760.01 m. from m.s.l.

### **(ii) Barak Basin**

Barak basin on the western flanks, beyond the Manipur western hills, is a small plain formed by the headward erosion and subsequent deposition of river Barak and its tributary, Jiri. The Barak river is the biggest river of Manipur. This basin is dotted with low sandstone hillocks. The Barak basin

contains rocks of both Surma and Tipam series. It is subdivision of Imphal East district.

The total area of plain of Manipur is 2,067 sq.kms. It is only about 9.25 per cent of the total geographical area of the state.

### **(iii) *The Hills Surrounding the Central Plain***

Hilly area of the state is 20,260 sq.km. i.e. about 90.75 per cent of the total area. The hill ranges stretch roughly from north to south as parallel folds with varying altitudes ranging between 1,500 m. to about 3,000 m. According to mountaineers, there are roughly nine parallel ranges on the west and east which fortify the central valley. Thus, the hilly region of the state can be divided into two, the eastern hills and western hills. These two hilly regions also differ in their structure and relief.

The eastern hills of Manipur have many parallel ranges through which rivers have cut transverse valleys (Dobby, 1964). The hills form a continuous chain along the Indo-Myanmar frontier for about 200 km. and attain an average height of about 1,500 meters. The breadth of the ranges is 50 kms. in the north and 30 kms. in the south. The prominent ranges are Nupithal or Mapithel, Chingai, Malain, Ango-Ching and Yomadung. The important peaks are Khayangbung (2,833 m.), Siroy (2,568 m.) and Kachubung (2,498 m.). The eastern slopes are steeper than western slopes. The main rocks of these hills are of limestone and shale.

The western hill ranges have a total length of 180 kms. but vary in width i.e. in the north it is about 50 kms. and in the south it is more than 70 kms. The prominent ranges of western hills are, Uningthou, Yangpujilong, Daimikilong, Koubru, Khoupum Haobi and Nungba. The important peaks of western hills are, Tenipu (2,994 m.) is the highest peak of the state, Leikot (2,831 m.), Koubru (2561.54 m.) and Iso (2459.74 m.) (Birendra, 1964). There are numerous small valleys along the parallel ranges.

The hill region of the state is covered by exotic pristine forest which varies from tropical deciduous to montane



temperate and is infested with wild animals. It is home of wild flowers too. All these will harbour natural lovers if it is properly opened.

### **1.1.3 Drainage System**

All rivers of Manipur are tributaries of two main river systems. On the eastern side, Chindwin-Irrawaddy river system of upper Myanmar and on the western side is the Ganga-Brahmaputra river system of Assam. Obviously, Manipur forms the catchment area of these two river systems (Fig. 1.4). So, the drainage system of Manipur could be divided into two as Barak river and Imphal river. These two main rivers are perennial.

Barak river and its tributaries drain the western part of State. It is the biggest river of the state. It originated in the northern ranges about 16.09 kms. east of Mao and follows a south westerly course. And finally, it falls into the lower Brahmaputra through Cachar and Surma valley. This river serves as the easiest way to the inaccessible areas of Tamenglong and Jiribam sub-division. Barak river and its tributaries pass through deep gorges, cascading rapids and waterfalls. The main tributaries of Barak are Jiri, Tipai, Makhru, Irang etc.

Imphal river drains through heart of the central plain. It is the most significant river of the state. It rises in the highland of western Kangpokpi and finally falls into Chindwin river after passing through narrow and winding gorges of the southern boundary of Manipur and Chin hills of Myanmar. This river is known as Manipur river in Myanmar. Imphal river passes just east of Loktak lake. The bed of the river is lower than the water level of the lake. So that, excess water of the lake is drained through small stream i.e., Khordak which joins the river in the south of lake. The main tributaries of the river are Iril, Thoubal, Sikmai, and Kongba.

Other rivers which are not the tributaries of the two main river system of the State are Nambol, Numbul and Moirang. These are main rivers which feed Loktak lake. The river Yu is flowing eastward along Indo-Burma border through Kabaw valley and discharges into the Chindwin river. Its tributaries

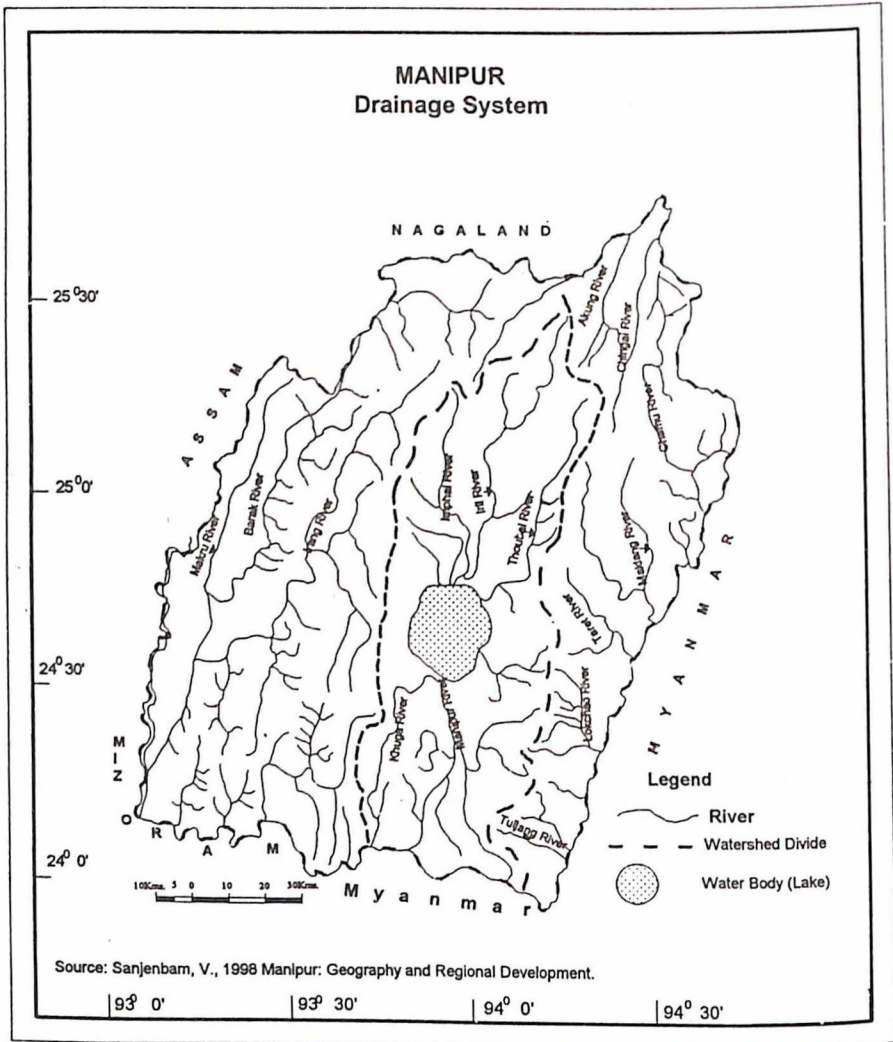


Fig. 1.4

are Tuyungbi, Taret, Lokchao, Lalimlok, Thuidam. Chingai and its tributaries drain the north-eastern part of Ukhrul region and join the Chindwin river. Along Indo-Myanmar border, there are many waterfalls and white cascading rapids.

#### **1.1.4 Climate**

Manipur enjoys a typical monsoonal climate with variant ranging from tropical to temperate conditions. The rapid changes in topography results in climatic changes within short distances. The foothills, plains, sheltered valley and the ranges are marked with climatic contrast. For example, the two small border towns i.e. Jiribam in the west and Moreh in the east border which are located in the plains are comparatively warmer than Imphal. The state as a whole has salubrious climate, except for the rainy months, throughout the year. An Englishman, Sir James Johnstone, opined that eight months in the year the climate of Manipur is most enjoyable (Singh, 1992). This gives us a rough idea of what a man from a cold country like England would feel in the valley of Manipur. Sir James Johnstone does not mention the four months which are not enjoyable. He probably means May, June, July and August. May is the hottest month. In June, July and August, there is monsoon down pour. But even in May, the climate is cooler than that of the Gangetic-Brahmaputra valley.

The three months i.e. December, January and February is the winter season. Sometimes, the temperature goes down below freezing point. January recorded the coldest temperature ranging between 4°C to 20°C. Winter season is considered to be a very pleasant season of the year. Morning fog is quite common in winter and disappears at 10 a.m. then the day turns quite warm up to 4 p.m. The hot summer starts from the month of May then abates the temperature due to arrival of monsoon. Autumn season i.e. September, October and November is also pleasant with absence of clouds, clear sky etc. and moonlit nights are charming.

Thus, there are four distinct seasons: (i) the cold season (December, January and February), (ii) the hot and dry season (March, April and May), (iii) the rainy season (June, July,



August and September) and (iv) the retreating monsoon season (October and November).

The amount of rainfall is higher in the western part than in the eastern part. Highest annual rainfall recorded at Thanlon was 303.17 cm. while lowest rainfall recorded at Imphal i.e. 57.01 cm. (Table 1.2).

### 1.1.5 Flora and Fauna

The flora of the state mainly consists of forests. Forest covers 78.01 per cent of total geographical area of the state (Table 1.3). The rapid growth of forest in Manipur is due to the favourable condition such as high temperature, heavy rainfall, thick soil and dissected topography. Most of hills are covered by forest from top to bottom. Medium to thick tropical deciduous and evergreen forests occupy the hills of Manipur. The ground area is covered with thick undergrowth of bushes, shrubs, tall grasses and other types of vegetation. Luxuriant bamboo forests spread widely in lower and gentle hill slopes.

The forests of the state can be divided into four (Champion, 1968) viz., (i) tropical wet evergreen, (ii) tropical moist deciduous, (iii) sub-tropical pine forest and (iv) montane wet temperate forest (Fig. 1.5).

Tropical wet evergreen forest is usually found in the north and south-western parts of Manipur where annual rainfall is above 2,400 mm. Bamboo and cane are the main species of the forest which includes other valuable species like *haldi*, *siris*, *chaplash*, *aini*, *agar*, *toon*, *jasul*, *bon sum* etc.

Tropical moist deciduous forest spreads over Senapati, Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Ukhrul and the Indo-Myanmar border. This region is the home of teak trees. *Oak*, *kangin*, *khen* and *toon* are other important valuable timbers.

Sub-tropical pine forest is found in north-eastern part of Ukhrul, south-eastern part of Chandel and in some parts of Churachandpur district. Beside pine, world reputed siroy lily is found in this forest region of Ukhrul district.

Montane wet temperate forest covers the northern most part of Senapati district. *Oak* tree is the main species.

The main fauna of the state are Java rhinoceros, Malayan sun bear or honey bear or barking deer, *sambhar*, serrow

**Table 1.2: Average Monthly Distribution of Temperature (°C) and Rainfall (cm.) in Manipur (2002)**

Stations	Temp./ Rainfall	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual	Range of temp.
Imphal (Jiri)	Temp. Rainfall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lamphel- pat	Temp. Rainfall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
IFCD- Lamphel	Temp. Rainfall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Raj- Bhawan	Temp. Rainfall	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thoubal- Wangbal	Temp. Rainfall	15.0 0.4	15.5 Nil	19.0 4.82	24.7 1.04	25.5 15.11	26.0 10.9	26.2 22.5	26.0 23.3	25.0 15.52	23.75 8.58	19.0 0.84	13.5 2.06	18.25 105.3	12.75 -
C.C. Pur- Tuibong	Temp. Rainfall	8.5 1.5	14.0 Nil	17.5 5.60	22.0 5.30	21.0 41.0	23.0 29.5	22.0 35.2	23.0 41.8	22.0 43.80	19.5 26.17	13.5 2.60	9.0 2.60	14.2 235.1	14.5 -
Tinsong	Temp. Rainfall	16.0 2.0	20.0 Nil	20.25 5.50	22.5 6.22	22.25 55.16	22.0 34.4	22.5 70.2	23.0 36.2	22.5 50.27	22.75 3.01	20.2 5.18	17.0 8.20	19.75 276.5	7.0 -
Thanlon	Temp. Rainfall	- 0.5	- 0.00	- 7.08	- 8.06	- 48.48	- 26.5	- 56.8	- 64.6	- 51.46	- 31.64	- 6.30	- 1.54	- 303.1	- -
Gelijang	Temp. Rainfall	14.0 1.4	18.5 0.80	20.0 2.00	23.0 2.80	26.5 11.40	25.5 7.10	27.0 9.40	27.5 7.80	28.0 10.80	22.5 6.50	14.0 Nil	13.5 Nil	19.5 60.00	14.5 -
Chandel	Temp. Rainfall	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -

(Contd.)

<i>Stations</i>	<i>Temp./ Rainfall</i>	<i>Jan.</i>	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>Apr.</i>	<i>May</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>Aug.</i>	<i>Sept.</i>	<i>Oct.</i>	<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Dec.</i>	<i>Annual</i>	<i>Range of temp.</i>
Senapati-	Temp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kangpokpi	Rainfall	Nil	Nil	5.51	3.00	46.51	27.7	33.7	65.0	33.91	26.62	Nil	Nil	241.9	-
Saikul	Temp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Rainfall	Nil	Nil	2.51	1.90	45.40	31.3	26.6	49.4	17.50	24.80	Nil	Nil	199.4	-
Tameng- long	Temp.	16.0	-	-	22.5	23.5	25.5	23.0	23.5	-	-	18.5	18.0	-	-
	Rainfall	0.1	-	-	3.60	25.60	41.0	45.1	28.8	-	-	0.10	0.30	-	-
Ukhrul	Temp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Rainfall	Nil	Nil	3.65	20.3	14.12	18.0	49.1	20.3	12.30	-	-	-	-	-

*Note:* (-) not available

*Source:* Statistical Abstract of Manipur, 2003, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Govt. of Manipur.



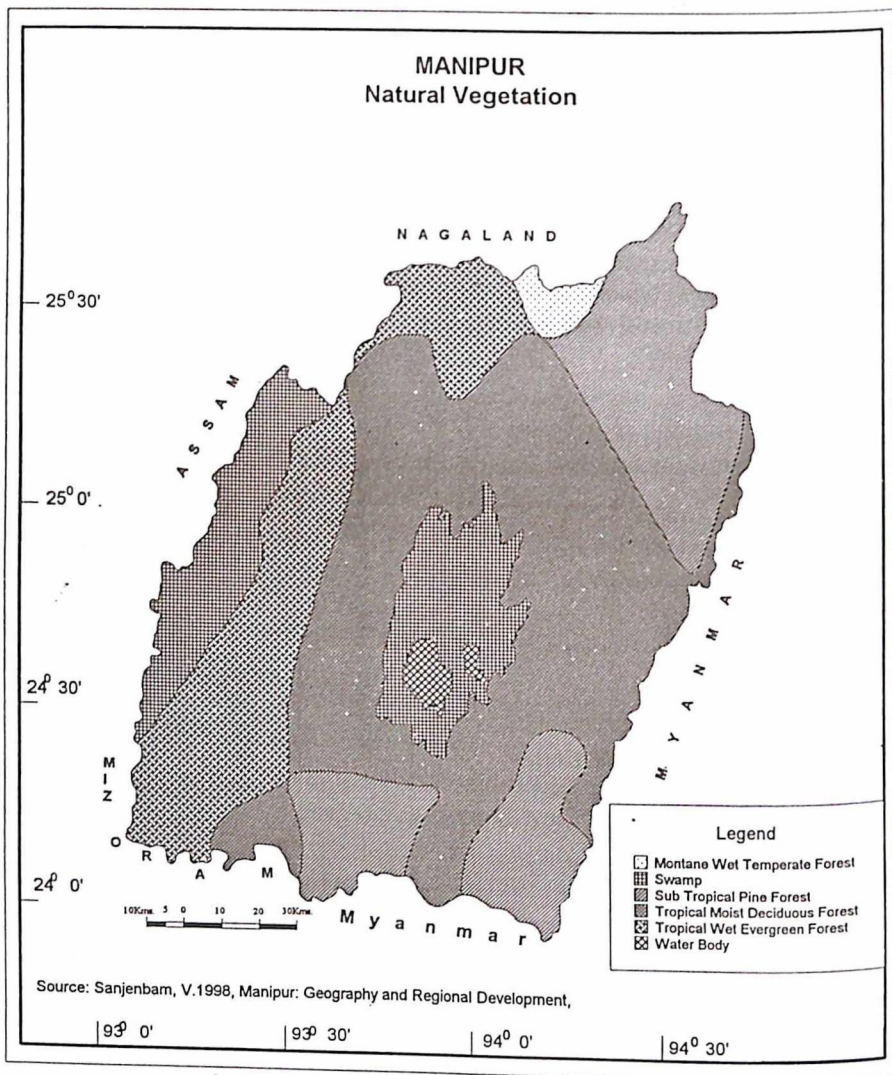


Fig. 1.5

## 1.2 SOCIAL-BACKGROUND OF MANIPUR

Being an isolated hill state, Manipur has a distinct type of population, culture, life style, ritual practices, social taboos, mores etc. from the rest of the Indian sub-continent. In this part of the chapter, an attempt has been made to assess the social background of Manipur. This part is based on both secondary and primary sources of data which were collected through field surveys.

### 1.2.1 People

Manipur was inhabited by pre-historic man since stone age. The evidence of their settlement in this state was made by archaeological findings from the caves of Kangkhui (Ukhrul District), Songbu (Chandel District), and Tharon (Tamenglong District) and open air sites at Nongpok Keithelmanbi (Senapati District), Mongjam (Imphal District) and Wangu (Bishnupur District). The palaeolithic man lived in caves while the neolithic lived in open-air sites. Neolithic man reached the Manipur valley in about 2000 B.C. (Singh, 1988).

Manipur is inhabited by four main aboriginal ethnic groups viz., the *Meiteis* of the valley and the *Nagas*, the *Kukis* and the *Mizos* of the surrounding hills. The *Pangals* (Manipur Muslims) are the immigrants came here in 17th century from Bengal. *Meitei* is the main ethnic group of the state.

There are many theories relating to the origin of the *Meiteis* and other tribes in Manipur. The *Meiteis* and the other tribes have been identified with the *Kiratas* in the *vedic* literature (Singh, 1987). However, the theory of Hindu origin of the *Meitei* has been rejected by many historians. Pemberton (1966) considers them to be the descendants of a *Tartar* colony from N-W frontiers of China. Hudson's theory of *Tai* origin of the *Meiteis* has been criticised on the ground that the *Meiteis* speak Tibeto-Burma language while the *Tais* are of Siamese-Chinese linguistic family (Hudson, 1991). G.A. Grierson (1904) puts forward another theory, that the Tibeto-Burman and other Mongolian ethnic groups inhabited the upper courses of the Yangtze and Hwang-Ho rivers in China.

in pre-historic times. Their kinsmen migrated southwards and settled in the Hukwang valley, present land of the Kachins in upper Burma before they moved further down to the Manipur valley. Recent archaeological findings at Tharon cave and Napachik etc. highlighted the existence of a *Mon-khmer* speaking Australoid-Mongoloid people in Manipur before the arrival of the Tibeto-Burman speakers.

The ethnonym *Meitei* was originally applied to the *Ningthouja salai* (Clan-dynasty) which was one of the seven *salais* who ruled seven independent principalities in the valley in the early history. Later on, the *Ningthouja salai* overruled other principalities thereby, absorbing the different social groups thereof to form the *Meiteis*. Pakangba is considered the founder of *Meitei* because he was the first king of *Ningthouja* who ascended the throne in 33 A.D. at Kangla (old palace).

In the later part, many ethnic groups merged into the *Meitei*. *Shans* like the Burmese and Chinese etc. who settled in the valley either as war captives or a peaceful immigrants were also absorbed. The settlement of people from the east continued since the time of king Naothingkhong in the 7th century A.D. till the time of king Maramba in the 18th century A.D. Absorption of people from the rest of India was rather late. It probably started since the time of king Thangbi Lanthaba (1302-1324 A.D.). The amalgamation of the new immigrants into the *Meitei* society were arranged by conferring them appropriate *sageis* (surnames) into different *salais* (Clans). This *Meiteisation* of different migrants gave the *Meiteis* not only a numerical advantage but also helped them in enriching their literature and culture. Brown (1874) gave to the theory of the *Naga-kuki* origin of the *Meitei*.

*Meitei* language was adopted as the mother tongue of all Manipuris.

### 1.2.2 Culture

Cultural superiority of the *Meiteis* was discernible in almost all fields. Although, each ethnic group has their own-old political organisation, social set up, religion, language and literature, martial arts, tradition, nuptial ways, dance, music and other fine arts.



The beginning of Manipuri literature may go back to 1500-2000 years from now. The *Meiteis* had a strong sense of historicity and maintained chronicles and numerous records about their genealogy, society, religion, government, astrology, charms and *mantras*, lexicography, medicine, earth sciences etc. More than one thousand *Meitei* scriptures had already existed before 18th century A.D. Such a rich heritage could be developed and maintained because, the *Meiteis* probably became literate long back and art of writing spread extensively as a result of their historic association with the Chinese who were the first literate people on the Earth and who invented paper and art of writing etc. The prehistoric cultural affinity with the Chinese Neolithic culture of second millennium B.C. has been exposed at the 1981 excavation of Napachik. The Chinese records of the second century B.C. by Changkien, have thrown limelights on Manipur's cultural link with China from the times immemorial.

A cultural onslaught occurred when all the archaic *Meitei* scriptures were destroyed by king Garib Niwaz at the time of proselytization of the *Meiteis* into Bengali *vaishnavism* in the 18th century A.D. Proselytization of the *Meiteis* into Hinduism and the tribals into Christianity have brought about a metamorphosis of their original culture to a state of a blend of old and new but not to a replacement of the former by the latter.

Social evils of Hinduism did not penetrate into Manipur society. Caste stratification was not featured in the pristine form of Manipuri society. *Sati* and *pardah* systems were unknown. The existence of the seven *salais* (clans) was exogamous and not endogamous as in the Hindu caste system. Womenfolk enjoyed an equal status with menfolk before the advent of Hinduism. Child marriage was absent. At present, families are patriarchal. Polygamy once common in earlier times has become less prevalent. Women are hard-working and are seen in almost every field where men are. Wives are very much loyal to their husbands. Dowry does not constitute an essential feature in marriages.

### **1.2.3 Religion**

The *Meitei* had their own system of religion which had

its own myths and legends, gods and goddesses, priests and priestesses, rituals and festivals, etc. though it was more or less akin to the animism of the tribals. The *Meiteis* embraced Hinduism in the 18th century A.D. The tribes of the hills remained unconverted and were relegated by the new Manipuri Hindus to the 'degraded heathens'. In the later part of the history, when Manipur fell into the hands of British Administrators, missionaries were brought in the hills. The first conversion of Manipuri tribals to Christianity took place at Ukhrul town in 1894. American Baptist mission landed earlier at the North, East and South-East hills of Manipur. Roman catholic mission became active in the fifties.

The Manipuri Muslims or *Meitei pangals* were settled with their religion in Manipur valley during the 17th century onwards. They are called *pangals* because of their original place, Bengal which pronounced as *bangal* or *pangal* (Singh, 1995).

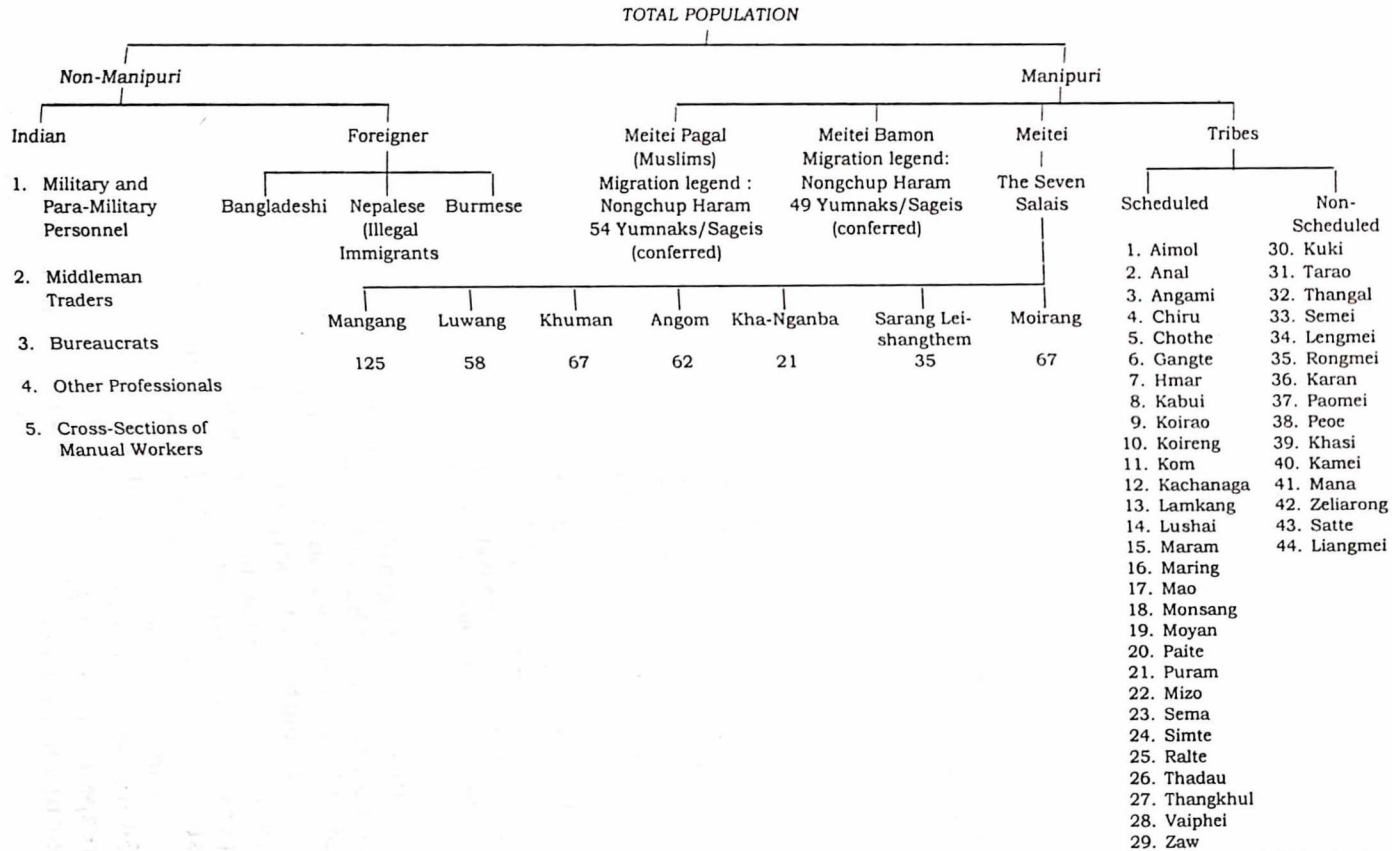
#### 1.2.4 Present Demography

The state is peopled by four major groups—the hill tribes, the *Meiteis*, the Muslims and the non-Manipuris (Singh, 1971; Singh 1975, Singh, 1982). The *Meitei* Hindus constitute the largest ethnic groups of the State. The seven *salais* (clans) of the *Meiteis* have been further divided into *sageis* (surnames). The components of *Meitei* confederacy are:

1. *Ningthouja (Mangang)* (with 125 *sageis*)
2. *Moirang* (67 *sageis*)
3. *Khuman* (67 *sageis*)
4. *Angom* (62 *sageis*)
5. *Luwang* (58 *sageis*)
6. *Chenglei* (35 *sageis*) and
7. *Khaba-Nganba* (21 *sageis*).

Altogether there are 435 *sageis*. There are 44 tribes in the State speaking different dialects. Twenty nine tribes have been categorised as 'scheduled tribes' under Indian constitution. The non-Hindu *Meitei* speaking population have also been categorised as 'scheduled caste'. Table 1.4 shows the population composition of the State.

**Table 1.4: Population Composition of Manipur**



Source: Census of India, 1991, Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur.



**Table 1.5: Area and Population of Manipur (2001 Provisional)**

Districts	Name	Area (sq. kms.)	Popula- tion	Density per sq.km.	Rank	Growth rate (1991- 2001)
Valley districts	1. Imphal East	670 (3.00)	393,780 (16.49)	555	3	19.16
	2. Imphal West	558 (2.50)	439,532 (18.40)	847	1	15.42
	3. Thoubal	514 (2.30)	366,341 (15.34)	713	2	24.62
	4. Bishnupur	496 (2.22)	205,907 (8.62)	415	4	13.90
Hill districts	5. Senapati	3,271 (14.65)	379,214 (15.88)	116	5	81.96
	6. Tamenglong	4,391 (19.67)	111,493 (4.67)	25	9	29.23
	7. Churachand- pur	4,570 (20.47)	228,707 (9.57)	50	6	29.81
	8. Chandel	3,313 (14.84)	122,714 (5.14)	37	7	72.80
	9. Ukhrul	4,544 (20.35)	1,40,946 (5.90)	31	8	28.98
Total valley districts		2,238 (10.03)	14,05,560 (58.84)	628	-	18.51
Total hill districts		20,089 (89.97)	9,83,074 (41.16)	49	-	50.97
Total Manipur		22,327 (100.00)	2,388,634 (100.00)	107	-	30.02

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentages to the total.

Source: Census of India (2001), Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur.

In a total geographical area of 22,327 sq.km. with a population of 23,88,634 is distributed at an average density of 107 persons per sq.km. (Table 1.5). However, there is uneven pattern of distribution (Fig. 1.6). The density of the valley is 628 persons per sq.km. while it is as low as 49 persons per sq.km. (Fig. 1.7) in the hills. The sex ratio of the state is 978 per 1,000 male (Census of India, 2001).

The scheduled tribes and scheduled castes constitute 34.41 per cent and 2.02 per cent of the total population respectively (Fig. 1.8). The Hindus outnumber other religious groups having a share of 57.67 per cent followed by Christians

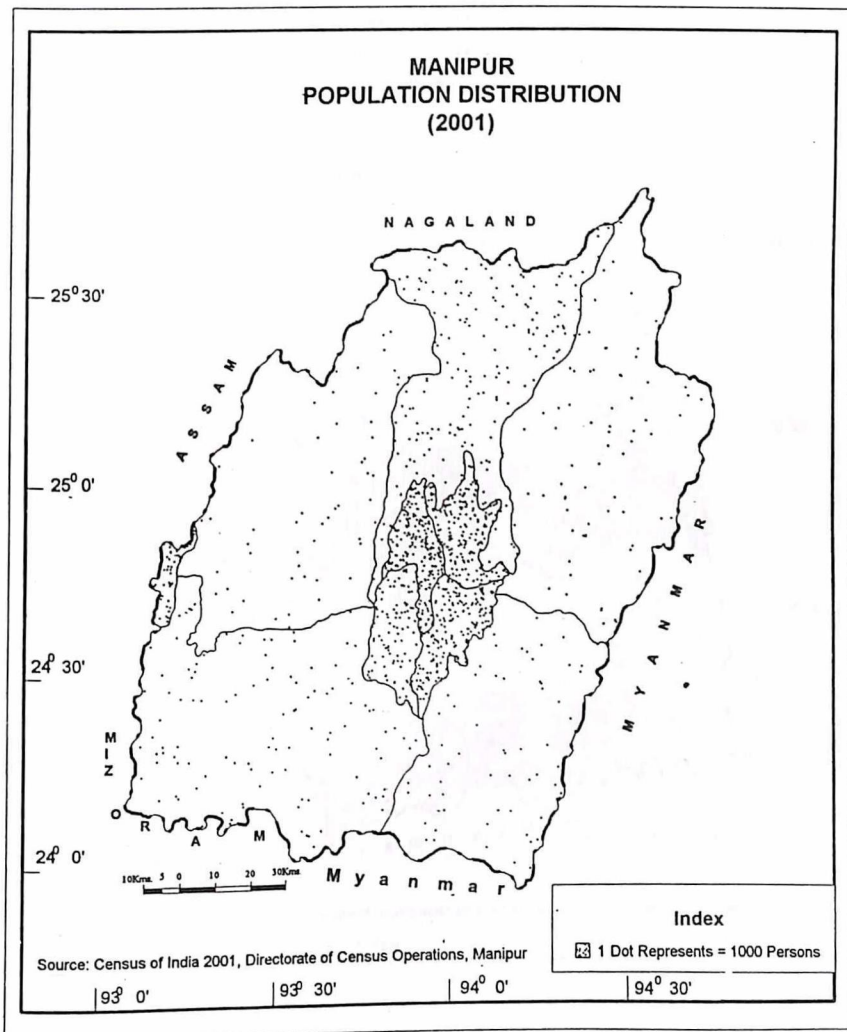


Fig. 1.6

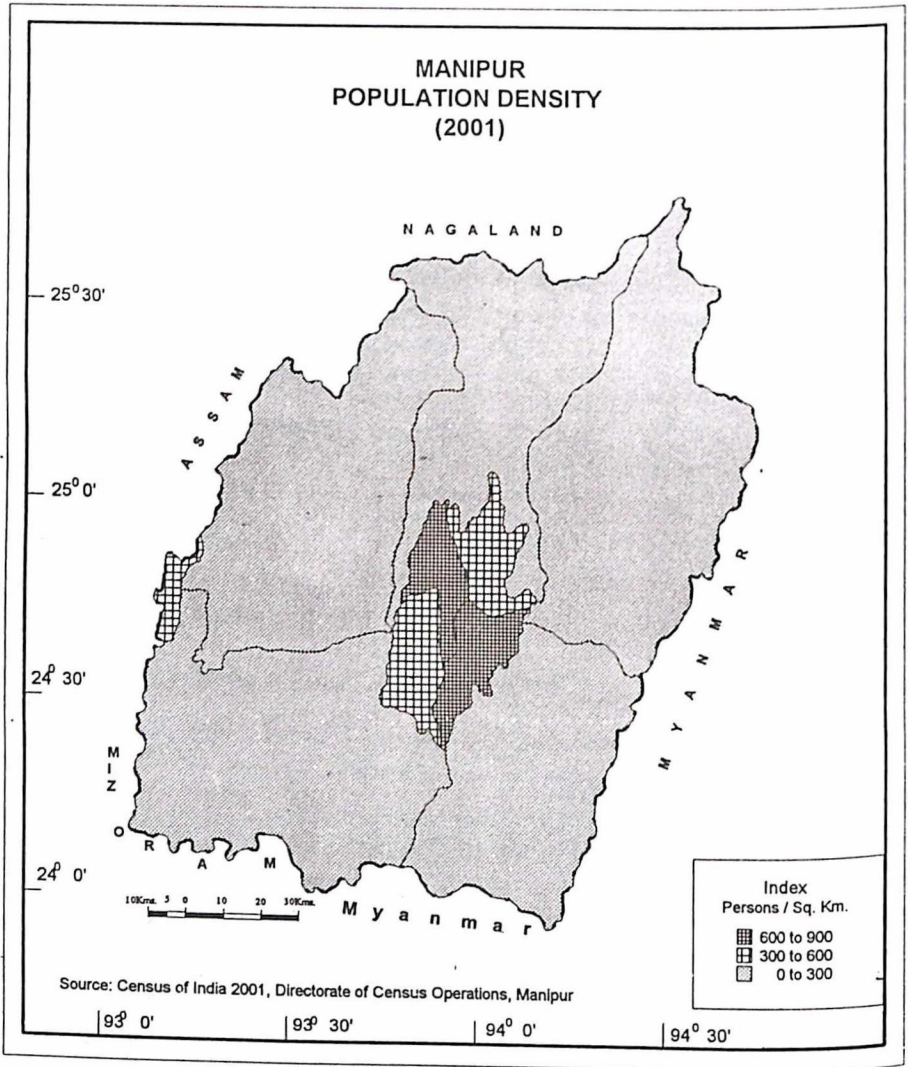


Fig. 1.7



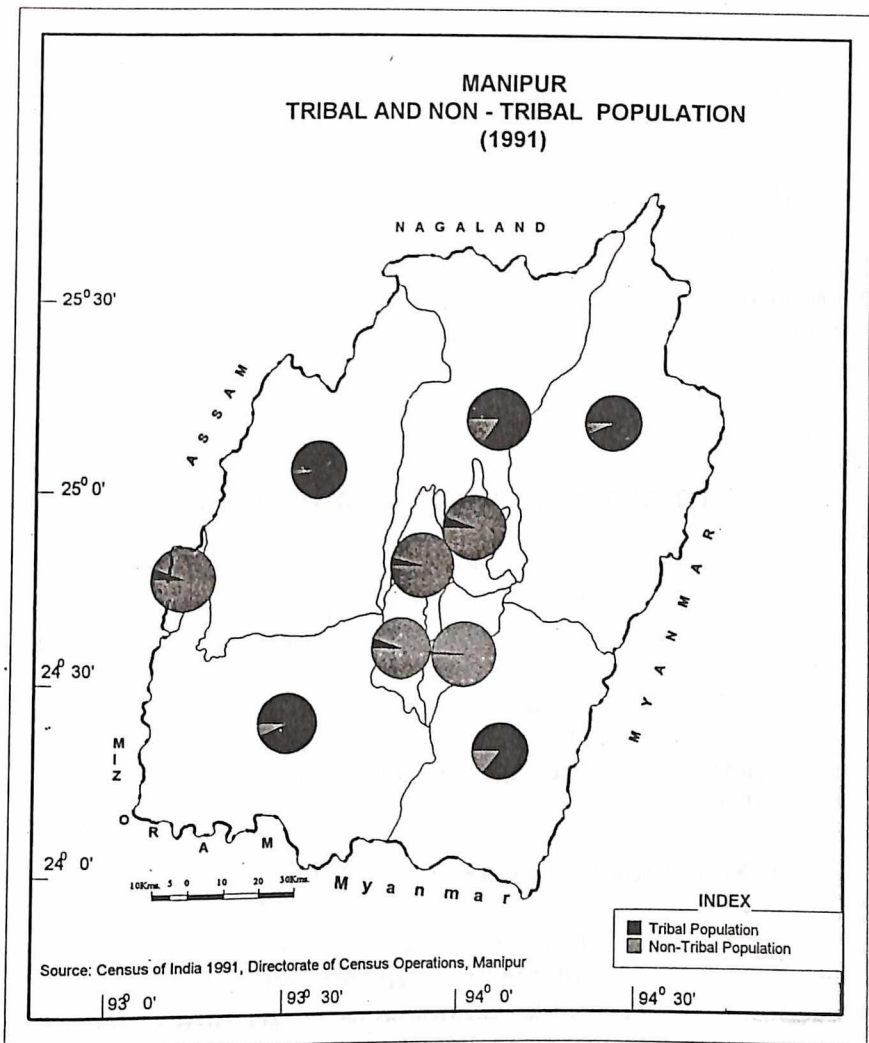


Fig. 1.8

34.11 per cent and Muslims 7.27 per cent . The other religious community from other parts of India had a flux during the sixties. The population escalation during the last three decades has also been helped by the continuous infiltration of illegal foreigners from Nepal, Bangladesh, Burma etc.

Among the hill tribes, the *Tangkhuls (Naga)* of the eastern hills and the *Thadous (Kuki)* of the north-western and southern hills constitute the largest tribal groups. The *Angamis*, *Semas* and *Raltes* form insignificant population groups. The hills are the natural demarcated habitats of various tribal groups, their phenomenal migration towards the plains in the recent years have assumed demographic and socio-economic concern since there is already a demographic imbalance featuring 58.84 per cent of the people in the valley which is 1/10th of the total area of the state while only 41.16 per cent live in the hills comprising an area of 9/10th of the total area.

### 1.3 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF MANIPUR

Besides, remoteness of the State, it is endowed with meagre amount of mineral resources. Topography of the state retards transport and communication. In the hilly areas, people mainly practice *jhum* cultivation on sensitive slopes. Primary occupation is the main occupation of people. In this part of the chapter, an attempt has been made to assess the economic condition of the State. The data employed is generated from secondary sources.

#### 1.3.1 Economic Structure

The small fertile plain of Manipur valley is occupied by large population and it is also suitable settlement site. Main economic activities like business and agriculture are also practised here. Large number of population of the state resides in rural areas.

The State doesn't have any large industrial plan except for some small and medium sized industries like Spinning mill at Loitang Khunou (Imphal west), Khandsari Sugar Factory at Khangabok (Thoubal), Cement factory at Hundung

(Ukhrul), Bamboo chipping factory at Kadamtala (Jiribam) etc. They are not functioning properly due to lack of capital, skilled labour, competition in market. Only old age traditional cottage industries like handloom and loinloom are supplying daily needs. Handloom is practised in the valley and loinloom in hilly areas by women folk.

As a whole, the main population of the state is engaged in agriculture i.e., 57.82 per cent while household industry employs only 9.16 per cent of working group (Table 1.6).

### **1.3.2 Transport**

Manipur does not have any good transport facilities not only within the state but also with the rest of the country. Ruggedness of topography of the state doesn't favour fast system of transportation and it is the main cause of economic backwardness.

At present, the state has only 7,172 kms. length of roads out of which, 4,427 kms. are surface roads and 2,745 kms. are unsurfaced roads (Table 1.7). The roads have been classified into six categories on all India pattern—National Highway, State Highway, Major district roads, other district roads, inter-village roads and municipal roads (Fig. 1.9). There are only two roads which are connected with other states of India. They are N.H. 39 (Imphal Dimapur), so-called life-line of Manipur and N.H. 53 (Imphal Cachar). These two roads connect with the nearest railheads of the State also. The roads are bumpy and in poor condition. There are many luxurious private buses which ply from Imphal to Guwahati via Dimapur. Among the State Highways, the Tiddim road, Imphal-Sugnu road, Imphal-Ukhrul road, Imphal-Tamenglong road, Imphal-Kangchup road etc. are important district roads. Government has made a plan for the development of road in the State that will be completed within short time. The roads are—an outer ring road along the border and an inner ring road in periphery of the valley. The rings roads will connect district headquarters and radial roads will connect the inner ring road with the outer ring road. If it is implemented then economic condition and connectivity will be drastically changed. The existing roads of the state can be divided into



**Table 1.6: Occupational Structure of Manipur (2001 Provisional) (in percentages)**

<i>Districts</i>	<i>Cultivators</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Agricultural labourers</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Household industry workers</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Other workers</i>	<i>Rank</i>
1. Imphal East	20.08	9	14.32	9	15.16	1	50.45	2
2. Imphal West	21.14	8	9.12	5	13.47	2	56.27	1
3. Thoubal	41.01	6	20.47	1	10.94	4	27.58	4
4. Bishnupur	31.76	7	15.50	2	12.83	3	39.91	3
5. Senapati	76.19	2	7.32	7	2.82	8	13.67	9
6. Tamenglong	77.94	1	1.69	9	1.45	9	18.91	8
7. Churachandpur	55.82	5	10.18	4	7.16	5	26.84	5
8. Chandel	61.24	4	7.45	6	5.74	6	25.57	6
9. Ukhru	70.31	3	2.95	8	3.27	7	23.47	7
Total valley districts	28.38		14.82		13.06		43.74	
Total hill districts	69.40		6.68		4.00		19.90	
Total Manipur	46.31		11.31		9.16		33.47	

Source: Census of India, 2001 (Provisional), Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur.

**Table 1.7: Road Mileage in Manipur (1995-2002)**

Classification of roads	As on 31st March							
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
1. National Highways	434.0	434.0	434.0	438.0	957.0	957.0	957.0	957.0
2. State Highways	1,158.0	1,271.0	1,271.0	1,603.0	675.0	675.0	675.0	675.0
3. Major District Roads	1,029.0	713.0	713.0	740.0	964.0	964.0	964.0	964.0
4. Other District Roads	797.0	683.0	767.0	882.0	1,013.0	1,013.0	1,013.0	1,013.0
5. Inter-Village Roads	2,518.0	2,877.0	3,145.0	3,348.0	3,563.0	3,563.0	3,563.0	3,563.0
6. O.M.N.P.	132.0	138.0	142.0	-	-	-	-	-
Total	6,068.0	6,116.0	6,472.0	7,011.0	7,172.0	7,172.0	7,172.0	7,172.0
Surface	4,333.0	4,668.0	4,839.0	5,637.0	4,427.0	4,427.0	4,427.0	4,427.0
Unsurfaced	1,735.0	1,448.0	1,633.0	1,374.0	2,745.0	2,745.0	2,745.0	2,745.0

Source: P.W.D., 2003, Government of Manipur.

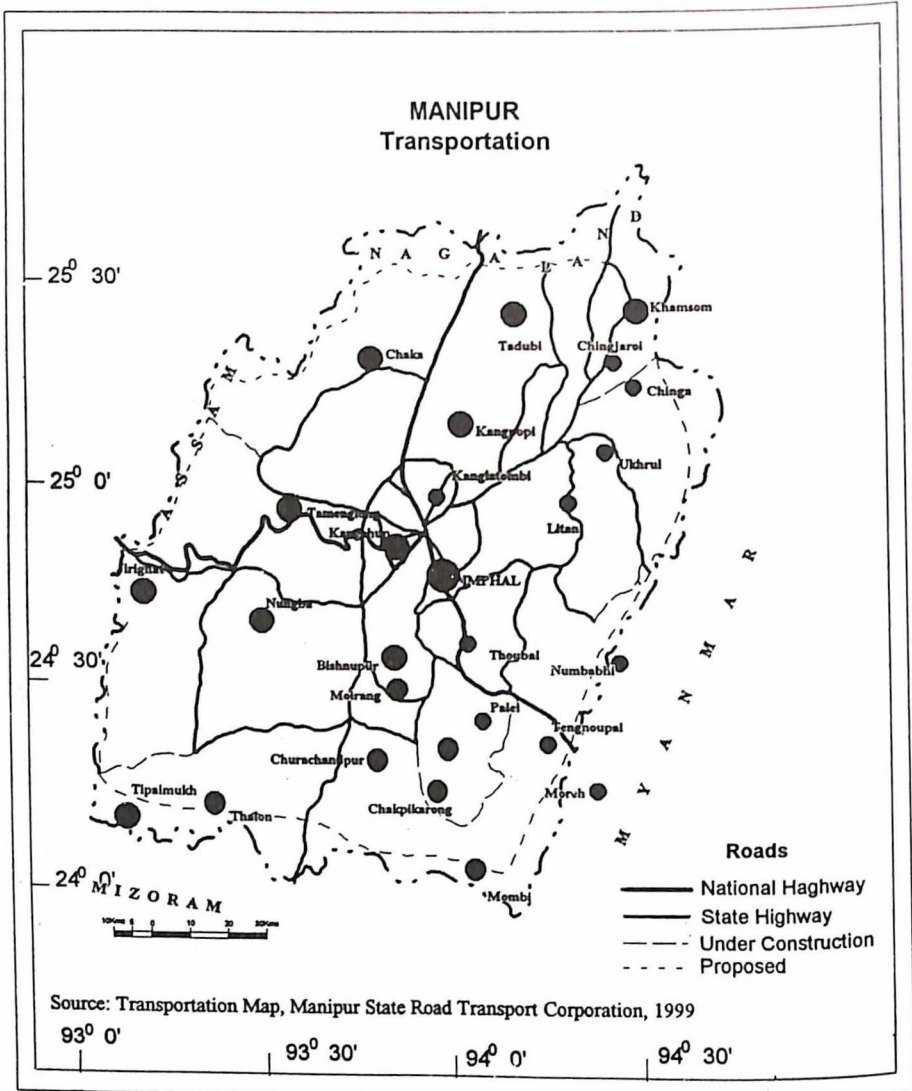


Fig. 1.9



metalled roads, unmetalled roads, cart tracks, hill trails and footpath.

Recently, India celebrated the 50 years of independence, but Manipur is still out of Indian rail route map. Luckily, central government had chalked out a rail track line up to Karong (a N-Western village of Manipur). Construction work is yet to start. Dimapur (215 kms. from Imphal) and Cachar (250 kms. from Imphal) are two nearest railheads of the State.

Water transportation is very limited. It is practised widely in the Loktak lake by fishermen and in the Barak river by which inaccessible areas of Tamenglong district can be reached. In other tributaries of the valley rivers, small boats use as means of transportation during flood.

Guwahati is well connected by air, rail and road with different parts of the country. From Guwahati there are two national highways and an airtlink to Imphal. Thus, Imphal is linked by air with New Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati and Silchar. The frequency of these flights is negligible and the air fare is exorbitant. Recently, a direct flight has been introduced between Guwahati and Bangkok to promote international tourism. But this facility could only bring profits to Manipur when the air connectivity condition from Guwahati to Imphal is improved i.e. regular flights and cheaper air fare are introduced.

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425, Nimri Colony, Ashok Vihar

Phase-IV, DELHI-110052

ISBN 81-7646-506-2



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Rs. 750