CHAPTER IX

TRANSPORT REGIONS

The Need for Transport Regions

The study of transportational characteristics reveal a lot of differences in the various transport features, especially nature and type of transport, the nature and density of traffic flow, the relative as well as the absolute degree of accessibility between different regions. As a result, various transport problems such as inaccessibility, traffic congestion or traffic jam, inadequacies or rural as well as urban transportation also show their areal differences with respect to different regions. Though Manipur is a small state compared to other states of the Indian Union, yet the transportational features and functions differ to much extent in the plain and hill areas, as well as in various districts in respect of road density and accessibility.

Manipur, therefore, can be divided into transport regions, which will be essentially nodal regions because transportation is an essential ele-
ment in the formation of such regions, which have functional structures. These nodal regions are homogeneous in structure and organisation, having a focus or foci of circulatory network.

At present, the motor transport system is the only means for movement of goods and passengers. It is partly operated by government and the rest by private organisations.

**Existing Road Transport Regions**

There are three arbitrary road transport regions in the state, which look after the administrative phenomena such as issue of permits, licences, enforcement of the motor vehicle rules and acts. These three regions are - (i) Imphal, covering the districts of Imphal, Bishnupur, and Thoubal, (ii) Senapati, and (iii) Churachandpur units. These transport regions are based on the general administrative divisions and do not have homogeneity in terms of some specific criteria.

**Bases for Delimiting Transport Regions**

In defining the transport regions, Important
considerations are (i) the degree of accessibility, (ii) nature of traffic flow, and (iii) the density of traffic. For delineating transport regions, the traffic divides drawn on the basis of the relative accessibility to the different regional centres will prove a better criteria. However, the regions do not necessarily conform to the administrative boundaries, and physical barriers, but are drawn on the basis of traffic orientation. The primary regions are served by the district headquarters, which serve as regional towns and where the main traffic is oriented. The secondary regions are demarcated within the primary regions considering the traffic orientation only.

The Transport Regions of Manipur

On the basis of the traffic orientation criteria, Manipur can be divided into three primary transport regions (Map 42):

1. The Central Region
2. The Eastern Region
3. The Western Region
1. **The Central Region:** It comprises the plain districts of Imphal, Thoubal, Bishnupur and some portion of adjoining hill districts. Imphal is the biggest focal point not only of this region but also for the whole state. It ranks first in case of the bus traffic flow. More than 80%-90% of its area lies within 8 km of road. Inaccessible areas are very small mainly in the western hills and eastern hills, while the plain areas are accessible throughout the year. Passenger and goods are the main traffic in this region. Among the goods traffic main items are vegetables, rice, potatoes, flour, grains and pulses, fish and other consumption goods. Out of 32 towns in Manipur, 24 towns are located in this region. Most of the roads are metallled and black-topped. This region may be divided into four sub-regions viz. (i) Imphal, (ii) Bishnupur, (iii) Kakching, and (iv) Thoubal. The maximum traffic is concentrated towards Imphal and diverges from it to different towns and district headquarters. Important towns and centres in Imphal sub-region are Nambol, Lilong, Lamsang, Lamrai, Sekmai, Mayang Imphal, Andro etc.
In the Bishnupur sub-region, important towns are Bishnupur, Moirang, Ningthoukhong, Loktak Project, Kumbi, Kwakta etc. The main traffic comprises of fish, rice, vegetables, fruits, fuelwood, bamboo-shoots etc. In the Kakching sub-region, the main traffic consists of rice, vegetables, fruits and other consumables. In the Thoubal sub-region, important towns are Thoubal, Yairipok, Wangjing, etc. Rice, vegetables, fuelwood, sugarcane and fruits constitute the main traffic of this sub-region. At Thoubal, which is the district headquarter, traffic converges from different directions.

2. The Eastern Region: This region comprises the districts of Ukhrul and Chandel. Ukhrul in the north-eastern part and Chandel in the southern section are the district Head Quarters as well as important towns. The region is the least accessible area of the state. It may be divided into two sub-regions of Ukhrul and Chandel.

In the Ukhrul sub-region, Imphal-Ukhrul Road,
with extension up to Jesami in the north, is the most important road. Two other roads branching off from this road lead to Phungyar and Kamjong in the southern part of Ukhrul district. The Chandel sub-region is served by the National Highway No. 39 up to the border town of Moreh, while Pallel-Chandel road is a Major District Road connecting Chandel with the N.H.39. Chakpikarong is also linked by the State Highway (Imphal-Sugnu-Chakpikaring Road). Except these few centres, other villages in most part of the region are not connected by any kind of road. Inaccessible areas beyond 16 kms of main road comes to about 40% of total area, and is having lowest density of roads per 100 km² areas. The main goods traffic in Ukhrul area consists of vegetables, handloom cloths, rice, potatoes, timber and minerals, particularly limestone. Passenger traffic is equally important in both Ukhrul and Chandel sub-regions. Carts are totally absent in the hilly Eastern Region. Goods traffic in Chandel and Moreh in Chandel sub-region include rice, vegetable, textile goods, both from outside and inside, and various items of consumer goods. Moreh, Chandel and Ukhrul have developed as secondary regional towns or foci. The villages having daily markets are very few, while the number
of weekly and bi-weekly markets are more.

(3) The Western Region: The region includes most of the areas of Senapati, Tamenglong and Churachandpur districts, and Jiribam sub-division of Imphal district, which lies on the western flanks of the state. Inaccessible areas comprise about 30% of total area of the region. Most of the areas are covered by dense mixed forest of tropical moist character. Hence, construction of new roads is immensely difficult. The northern section of this region is more accessible than other parts for its location on the National Highway No. 39. A state Highway-Tiddim Road, passes through Churachandpur to Singhat. A regional highway, maintained by the North Eastern Council, connects Tipaimukh with Churachandpur. Imphal-Tamenglong Road, a state Highway, connects Tamenglong with Imphal via Kangpokpi. Tamenglong is also approachable through the National Highway No. 53. The Road Traffic Density in the region is moderate. Besides the passenger traffic, other items of goods traffic include agricultural, horticultural and forest products. Rural transportation away from the main roads and highways present difficulties mainly due to poor
condition of roads and steep-sided hills. This region is divided into four sub-regions. of Churachandpur, Jiribam, Tamenglong and Senapati. Churachandpur sub-region has more accessibility on its eastern section. Most of traffic consist of daily commuters. Accessibility is much higher in Jiribam sub-region, where freight as well as passenger traffic sometimes pass through the Barak and Jiri rivers. Besides, the road network is quite satisfactory in this part. But poor economy has led to the least development of rural transportation. The main traffic comprise of agricultural and forest produces. However, the main traffic in the Tamenglong sub-region are citrus fruits like oranges and lemons, banana, bamboo and bamboo shoots, agricultural and forest produce as well as handloom and handicraft products. In Senapati sub-region with higher accessibility than other sub-regions of Western Region, agricultural and forest produces constitute main items of freight traffic. The rural traffic faces difficulties due to both poor condition of roads and difficult terrain.

Relationship with the Economic Regions

Transportation and economic activities are
intricately inter-related. Transportation provides interlinkage between two or more economic regions, and as such the transport region includes more than one economic region. In Manipur, the Central Transport Region includes three or more regions of different economic activities. For example, Imphal Region has both agricultural and industrial activities, while Thoubal and Bishnupur regions have agriculture, industrial horticultural and piscicultural activities. Forestry and dairy farming are important on the foothills overlooking the valley and forming the fringe area of the region.

In the Eastern Region, the two regions of similar economic activities such as mining and forestry are Ukhrul and Chandel. However, the main economic activities are agriculture, and cottage industries to some extent. Similarly in the Western Region the main economic activities are agriculture, horticulture and forestry in all the sub-regions - Churachandpur, Tamenglong, Jiribam, and Senapati. The plantation farming in Jiribam and cattle farming in Senapati region are important economic activities besides agriculture.
Thus, a primary transport region generally includes one or more economic regions of different economic activities, which to much extent influence the development of transport network at closer spaces, transport nodes or foci.
REFERENCES

1. Singh, J., Transport Geography of South Bihar
   (Varanasi, National Geographical Society of
   India, 1964 ) p. 208.