CHAPTER IV

HINTERLAND OF INHAL
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4.1. MEANING AND USE OF HINTERLAND

'One of the most essential preoccupations of urban geography is to place towns in their setting and to relate them to that environment'.

A town has a region surrounding it, which is socially, economically and culturally linked to the former. The raison d'être of a city is normally its central functions and their intensified concentration.

It is pointed out that 'the city as a living organism depends for its vitality not only on its internal resources, but also on its capacity to tap the sap for its growth from a vast region surrounding it'. The interrelation of a city and its surrounding region is expressed by the flow of man and material. The interaction thus varies according to the distance from the city centre, producing a zone of direct daily contact in the immediate surrounding, and one of indirect contact covering the places.


Considered from the angle stated above, one finds that Imphal town, like Hyderabad, has three types of functional hierarchy. The first one is the highly specialised function, such as, medical, insurance, higher education, etc., which have command over a large area, even beyond the boundary of the state of Manipur. The second one is a distinctive function, like wholesale, banking, publication of dailies, etc., which radiate the city influence over an extensive region. And thirdly, the localised type of central functions, such as medical services, general education, etc., which draw people to the town.

The area peripheral to the urban centre, which serves the town or is served by it, goes by a variety of names, such as 'urban field', 'sphere of influence', 'catchment area', 'umland' and 'hinterland'. For the purpose of this study, the term 'hinterland' has been used, firstly, because Imphal, with its growing commercial importance, serves as a distributing and collecting centre, and secondly, because the term has a wider connotation. The hinterland of Imphal not only covers the whole state of Manipur, but also extends beyond the state boundary into the fringe of Burma in the east, Nagaland in the north and

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the Cachar District of Assam in the west. Thus, even the term 'Ausland' may be applied to its hinterland as it includes a part of a foreign country.

4.2. EXTENT OF URBAN HINTERLAND

The spatial concept of urban tutelage over the surrounding is undisputable, but the crux of the problem lies in its definition and delimitation. The complex influence of the town makes a precise delimitation of the boundary very difficult. Green, while demonstrating the difficulty of delimitation of urban hinterland, mentions that "the drawing of a single line as boundary may be criticised on the ground that the hinterlands normally overlap." 4

Stanley Dodge studied the linkages of the town of Howell in Central Michigan, U.S.A., by roads in detail, and suggested seven functional indications to decide upon a composite boundary. 5 Chauncy Harris who studied the tributary area of Salt Lake City selected about 12 services


5 ibid, p. 307.
to draw the boundary. R.L. Singh, in delimiting the Umland of 'Banaras' took vegetable, grain and agricultural supply, daily newspaper circulation and bus service. S.M. Alam defined the hinterland of 'Hyderabad and Secunderabad' on the basis of the zone of supply of vegetable, liquor, firewood, and milk, and the sphere of influence of such central functions, as of wholesale, circulation of papers and university catchment areas.

In case of Imphal, however, there are physiographic limitations. The oblong plain, at the northern central part of which lies the town, covers hardly 12 per cent of the total area of the state and is enclosed on all sides by ranges of hills. These thus create a communication gap with outside. Despite this, the sphere of influence of the town is well extended within the territorial limit of the state. The extent of boundaries of both direct and indirect services are discussed below in detail.

4.2.1. Urban Influence on the Agriculture of Surrounding Rural Areas:

From the viewpoint of land holding, the countryside around Imphal, by and large, remains a property of the


city. Such a situation has obtained because Imphal town, as the traditional political seat, has the legacy of the kings and the noblemen. 'The whole land system of the valley starts with the assumption that all the land belongs to the Raja, and is his, to give away and retain as he pleases'. The system of payment by cash having been absent and the king, being the 'Leimaba' or the master of the land, could give away land to his subjects as prize for outstanding services. Out of the total arable land in the valley, accounting about 26,500 hectares in 1891, some 21,500 hectares or 81.13 per cent were solely under the control of the urban elite who were related with the king or his administration. While in the remaining 18.17 per cent, there was also a substantial representation of urbanites, although the direct management was of rural residents. The owner-wise distribution of the arable land, in 1891, is demonstrated

8 Brown, R., Statistical Account of Manipur, Sankaran Prakashak, Delhi, 1975, p. 85.

by the table 4:1 below.

Table 4:1
Ownership of Arable Land in Manipur Valley, 1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Owner</th>
<th>Area (Hect.)</th>
<th>P.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Royal Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) King's Personal</td>
<td>3,700</td>
<td>13.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Queens'</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Other Members</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lugunlou of Brahmins</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>9.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Siphailou of Soldiers</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>33.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Manalou as Prize</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>11.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Lailou</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>1.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Phamlou</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>4.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tounalou</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>18.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>26,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It shows that a greater percentage of land was under the king and the noblemen who were residents of Imphal town.

An understanding of how the urbanites were well represented in the ownership of the rural arable land
calls for an investigation of the land management systems of the king in Manipur prior to 1891.

The arable land of the king, queen and their relatives covered about 3,700 hectares or 13.96 per cent, 600 hectares or 2.27 per cent and 1,000 hectares or 3.77 per cent respectively, and thus accounted for about one-fifth of the total arable land of the valley. The share of the king could be increased at any time with the return of land from the noblemen or others, in case of their death. The king even used to give away 25 hectares of land as dowry to a princess at the time of her marriage. Such land was known as 'kharpos land'. The king also granted about 1 hectare of land to each of his Brahmin religious preceptors, which altogether made up about 2,500 hectares or 9.43 per cent. The soldiers also, according to their rank, used to get grants of arable land from 1.25 hectares to 6 hectares. These accounted for about 9,000 hectares or 33.96 per cent.

Besides, the king used to give away land as prize in recognition of the distinguished services rendered by any subject to the king or the kingdom. Thus, 'Manalou' was the land granted for any kind of service, and 'Pangallou' was that related to war and game. Upto the year of the British occupation there were about 200
owners controlling Pangallou land. These two types of land accounted for about 3,000 hectares or 11.32 per cent. The land granted to the temples was called 'Lailou' and this accounted for about 500 hectares or 1.89 per cent. Of 'Lailou', the temple dedicated to the god 'Govinda' had the highest share. All these groups were revenue free land and were owned or controlled by the urban residents.

There was revenue 'Phamlou' land, granted to the noblemen which constituted 1,200 hectares or 4.53 per cent of the arable land of the valley. Even in the 'Tounalou' land, which was originally reclaimed by the tiller and which was about 5,000 hectares or 18.87 per cent, there was a good representation of the urban owners. This analysis reveals the control of the urbanites on the rural land-use and also the relationship of Imphal and its surrounding even in matters of agriculture.

The cultivators were the rural residents. The king's lands were cultivated by his permanent servants, called 'Kei', while other lands were leased out on annual rent. The rural land is sublet by Brahmins, persons belonging to the royal family, and other land
owners residing in Imphal town.\textsuperscript{10} The modified and improved revenue system introduced by the Britishers did not affect the ownership, but on the contrary, the improved economic condition in the town and the resultant higher per capita income of the urbanites, tended to increase their proportion among the land holders in the rural areas. This tendency became more prominent after the Second World War.

It is to be mentioned that World War II introduced an era of economic disparity between Imphal town and its rural surrounding. Moreover, the sudden growth of rural population by about 36.41 per cent during the decade, 1941-1951, (from 421,353 in 1941 to 574,773 in 1951) dealt a severe blow to the villages which were already overburdened with feeding the urbanites over and above the rural population. The economic dependence of the rural population upon the urbanites began to increase and the poor tillers began to seek help of the moneyed urban dwellers even for agricultural operations.

Meanwhile, the residents of Imphal in their craze for owning land, as was the practice of the bourgeoisie

in France after the Industrial Revolution, started purchasing land, thinking it as a sound investment. Ironically enough, the marginal cultural land reclaimed by the poor peasants during the early British period subsequently passed into the hands of the urban land owners. The 26th Round National Sample Survey, 1971-72, in Manipur points out that out of the total operated area of 1,15,556.18 hectares in the valley, about 8,676.08 hectares (7.51 per cent) were under urban owners distributed among 16,684 families in Imphal.

It is to be noted that out of 8,676.08 hectares of cultivable land owned by the Imphal urbanites, only 1,617.78 hectares or 18.65 per cent was within the I.M.A., while the remaining land was in the rural areas.

4.2.2. Food Supply:

Imphal, like any other town, depends upon the surrounding countryside for the supply of foodstuff, chiefly grains, vegetables, meat, fish, etc. All these are collected in the rural areas and brought to the markets of the town. A good transport system widens the

zone of supply and encourages crop specialisation. There develop both zonal and azonal arrangements of crops in relation to Imphal, depending upon the physical, economic and social properties of the surrounding region (Fig.14). The most perishable items, such as vegetables are produced in the immediate surrounding of the capital town. The leafy vegetables, which cannot withstand long hours of transportation, are grown in the immediate neighbourhood of Imphal. It is thus seen that vegetables with tender leaves dominate the suburbs near I.M.A. boundary, just as floriculture does in the West European cities like Paris, London and Copenhagen.\textsuperscript{12}

Delicate leaves of coriander, onion, and ginger come from Kongmapal area where it is cultivated with other vegetables through labour-intensive methods. Those male members who are not engaged in either agriculture or horticulture in this zone, form the city commuters, while the womenfolk are engaged in weaving and embroidery of various apparels which ultimately find their market in the town.

The suburban areas supply the town with cabbage, cauli-flower, beans, yam, taro, brinjal, sugar-cane and

\textsuperscript{12} ibid, p. 399.
many other food-stuffs. The zone of intensive supply includes Khombidok, Moirang Kampu, Bamon Kampu, Lillong, Mayang Imphal, Nambol, Konthoujam, Lamsang, etc., all lying within an average radius of about 15 km.

The far-off areas which cannot compete with the said zone, wait for the adverse season to come to the valley, and consequently, Ukhrul and Mao areas supply the winter vegetables, such as beans, squash, pumpkin, gourds, cabbage, etc., much earlier or later than the places in the valley, just as Meghalaya Plateau vis-a-vis Assam Valley does to Gauhati town in Assam. Over and above this, certain places are noted for supply of some specific vegetables which are not grown elsewhere: Nungba, Jiribam and Churachandpur send certain hill vegetables to Imphal all the year around.

The fruit supply zone of Imphal town is more extensive than the vegetable zone. It embraces almost the whole of the hill areas, though the main supply comes from the valley itself, because of the transport facilities. Thus, pine-apple comes from Khoirentak (west of Moirang) and Thoubal areas, orange, lemon and other citrus fruits from Khoupum, Nungba, Noneh, Tamenglong, Mao and Ukhrul areas and banana and
Milk is collected mainly from the foothill areas all around the valley. The Government Dairy Farm at Porompat and many other private organisations or individuals do the collection of milk to supply to the residents, hotels, and other food manufacturing units of the town. Sagolmang, Thanga Island and Churachandpur deserve special mention in this regard.

Fish comes from the lakes like Pumlen, Ikop, Lamjaokhong, Waithou, etc. The villages and towns at the periphery of these lakes are the suppliers of fish. They are Moirang, Thanga, Thoubal, Mayang Imphal, Sekmaijin, etc. The greatest quantity of fish for Imphal comes from Thanga Island, where about 13 per cent of the population (total 8,646 in 1971) are engaged in fishing. Meat comes from the Muslim and tribal villages like Lillong, Khergao, Keikhu, etc.

The arrival of the above mentioned items in the markets of the town is characterised with a rhythm in different hours of the day and in response to the festivals of the different communities in different seasons. In any day the arrival of these stuffs starts with the arrival of mini-buses to the town at about 6 a.m. from
the places around the town and is followed by a crescendo until midday, synchronising the arrival of the last buses from the rural areas.

It is to be noted that some of the vegetables plucked in the afternoon from the nearby areas arrive at the market even in the evening when the buyers are around at their maximum. The various social feasts and festivals held within Imphal and outside, in different seasons of the year, encourage market-gardening in some parts of Manipur. Cheiraoba in April, Ratha Jatra in July, Tarpan in October of the Meiteis, Idds of the Muslims, and Christmas of the Christians demand a huge supply of vegetables for mass consumption and thus encourage market-gardening in the hinterland of Imphal.

The entire fuel-wood consumption of the town is supplied by the surrounding hills. However, logs are not available in the nearby areas. As such, the fuel-wood, as also timber for construction of houses are procured from the far-off hill ranges. The zone of wood supply extends up to Chakpikarong in Tengnoupal District, Thanlon in South District, Khongsang in West District and Ukhrul in East District, all lying beyond the range of about 100 km from the town.
4.2.3. Industry:

The intimate relationship between Imphal and its rural surrounding is expressed by the flow of finished goods from the former and raw materials from the latter.

4.2.3.1. Urban Industry:

The reciprocity between the town and the industry is such that while the industries create towns, the towns create industries.\textsuperscript{13} It is in the interest of the towns that they manufacture commodities, establish various services for its own people and for those of its surrounding.

With the growth of Imphal, some of the old industries were transformed from their original traditional form and some new ones came to be established. The persistence of weaving, metal casting, blacksmithy, etc., proves that the old industries die hard in spite of the import of factory products and can limpingly carry on through the urban-rural attachment for an indefinite period of time. The new industries established within the town, further strengthen the rural-urban interdependence

\textsuperscript{13} ibid, p. 149.
and relationship. The industries like biscuit making, fruit processing, rice milling, oil processing, etc., are such that they require raw materials from the surrounding area, while their finished products are partly marketed back in the villages.

Out of the total of 319 industrial units (Appendix 3) in the I.M.A. (1970), as many as 18 units of carpentry, 2 soap makings, 1 saw milling, 25 hand pounding of rice, 1 wood slate making, 1 brush making, 1 doll making, etc., required and still require raw material from the rural surrounding. The largest industry, spreading over the residential areas of the I.M.A. and G.I.A. was weaving with about 67 units in the I.M.A. and many in the G.I.A. Previously, the industry of the locally manufactured cloths, was divided into three processes, namely, spinning, dyeing and weaving. Spinning has now been wiped out by the import of yarns, but previously yarn for the handloom industry was largely supplied from the rural surrounding.

Weaving and colouring of yarn and cloth, however, still remain as one of the dominating industries in the town (Fig. 15). This engages a large section of population about 19.49 per cent in I.M.A. and 22.86 per cent in the G.I.A. The main concentration of this industry is in Wangkheai area, although some amount of weaving is also done
in Thangmeiband and other wards of the town. In the suburbs also nearly 50 per cent of women are engaged in this industry. While it engages a large number of persons from the surrounding area, the bulk of its finished products are sold in the rural areas.

Similarly, other industries, such as soap making and oil pressing require procurement of oil seeds from the surrounding. Rice mills, saw mills, carpentry, cane works, etc., obviously depend on the rural areas around for supply of the necessary agricultural or forest products.

4.2.3.2. Rural Industries:

Some industries in the past were run in the rural areas to cater for the residents of Imphal alone (Fig 16). Of such industries salt making at Ningel, Shikhong, Chandrakhong, etc., and iron mining and blacksmithy at Kakching area, were the main. These industries have become extinct and there is practically no industry now that produces anything exclusively for urban market, although the influence of the latter is marked. The rural industries which are of household nature, fall into four categories, namely, (i) handloom, (ii) sericulture,
(iii) handicraft, and (iv) other small scale processing and production. With the dying of the spinning, the importance of Imphal as centre of distributing factory made, imported yarns has increased. Moreover; the town serves as a market for the finished handloom products and it extends financial assistance to the rural weavers. The town also supplies many essential components like implements, nails, hooks, varnishes, etc., for carpentry, thread, cloths, sewing machine and spare parts thereof for tailoring, paper, and other requirements for printing press, and many other ingredients for various other industries. Thus, the dependence of the rural areas on Imphal in respect of the industrial enterprises has been on the increase.

In addition to a Khandsari sugar mill at Khangabok and a spinning mill at Loitangkhunou, there is a proposal to establish a vacuum pan sugar mill and a distillery along with the Khandsari mill, a cement factory, a paper mill and an insulated paper mill at different locations in the state.

14 Ansari, S.A., Economic Geography of Manipur, Trio Book Store, Imphal, 1976, p. 80

Among the 969 small scale units registered upto 1973-74, the wooden furniture workshops accounted for 34.03 per cent, readymade garments factory 9.63 per cent, rice mills 14.14 per cent and flour mills 3.5 per cent.\(^\text{16}\) The former two employ about 4500 persons, of which 10 per cent are from rural areas who reside in the town.

Handloom is the most popular cottage industry in Manipur. Indigenous and picturesque design of the handloom produced in the state has made it famous throughout the country.\(^\text{17}\) It is estimated that there are more than 2 lakh looms in the state with 30 per cent having fly shuttles.\(^\text{18}\) The inadequate availability of yarn is a chronic problem of this industry, and as has been mentioned earlier, this situation has increased the dependence of the rural areas on the town.

The industrial prospects as indicated by the "Report on Industrial Development Potentialities in Manipur", lie in the production of roofing tiles, wooden electric accessories, pine-apple fibre cloth, pine oil, citronella

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16 ibid, p. 20.
17 Ansari, S.A., op. cit., p. 20.
18 Government of India, op. cit., p. 20.
oil, building hardwares, wire, nails, hand tools, G.I. buckets, paints, alluminium utensils, washing soaps, plastic moulded goods and a variety of other items and processing and canning fruits. The establishment of these industries will only further strengthen the rural-urban relationship as is seen so far.

4.2.4. Banking:

The financial agencies not only boost the city's commercial functions but also extend help to the rural economy. The spread of banking activities helps in delineating the sphere of influence of this town. As Manipur remained isolated from the rest of India physically, socially and economically, the state had to attain self sufficiency to a large measure in the past. Food was produced in the state in sufficient quantity, cloths were woven and construction of houses was done with the local materials. Manipur thus moulded its economy and culture in the long span of history and it was well expressed in this town. Consequently, there was hardly any large scale trade and commerce in the past.

The Second World War initiated a great change in the economy of the state. The roads, improved and extended during this period, brought about changes in such a way
that the factory produced goods began to flood the market at the peril of the local industry. Gradual death of some of the processes of the traditional household industries, pushed some ruralites into destitution. On the other hand, new industries, business enterprises and transport establishments began to come up in the town. All these needed money from the financial agencies, Thus, banking in the state received a fillip in the late nineteen-forties and the subsequent period. Following the War, there came up the Tripura Modern Bank and the Assam Bank\(^{19}\) to increase the financing activities. These banks were, however, soon liquidated, leaving a doubt about the credibility and efficacy of the banking systems among the inhabitants.

The Manipur State Bank was started in 1947 and about 10 years after that a branch of the United Bank of India Ltd. was established. The said State Bank was absorbed by the present State Bank of India in early 1959. By 1977 the total number of branches of the banks in Manipur rose to about 35, of which about 15 or 42.2 per cent were in this town (Fig 17). The number of banks per

100,000 population in the state rose from 0.2 in 1969 to 2.6 in 1977. The per capita deposits and advances rose from Rs. 40.00 to Rs. 62.00 in the said years respectively.

What is important in the rural-urban context is that most of these banks were first started in Imphal and hence almost all the well-to-do ruralites of the surrounding area of the town used to have their transactions with these banks inside the town. This situation has not substantially altered, although several banks have come up in the rural areas. Moreover, these banks extend both short and long term loans to the peasants and artisans for consolidating their agriculture, cottage industry, trade and commerce, etc. Over and above the cases of individual deposits or withdrawals, all the cash transactions of the government and semi-government organizations are done in the State Bank of India in Imphal while those of all the co-operative societies and banks are done in Manipur State Co-operative Bank in this town. Thus, banking brought about direct and indirect relationship between the town and its surrounding.

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4.2.5. Electric Supply:

Urban electrification is a recent phenomenon in Manipur. Street lighting with kerosene and acetylene ($C_2H_2$) gas lamps was started as early as in the 1880's. In fact street lighting with acetylene gas lamps, locally called 'Dewankri lamp', placed on bamboo poles about 3 metres high above the ground, on either side of the street in Kangla, was started in 1882.21

Shortly after the turn of the present century, an oil engine was used for generating electricity for lighting the capital. The palace and its surrounding was electrified by an oil engine even before 1922.22

Subsequently the Leimakhong Power House, about 22 km northwest of Imphal was constructed under the supervision of Mr. C.F. Jeffry, the State Engineer,23 in 1930 with an installed capacity of 56 kw. In 1954 another unit of 100 kw was added to it. The need of electric power for household lighting and industrial use necessitated the


23 ibid.
installation of two more diesel sets of 106 kw\textsuperscript{24} and those too confined their power distribution to Imphal town. Again, in the course of the First Five Year Plan, three new diesel sets of the capacity of 100 kw each were installed in the new power house to increase the total output to 564 kw. With the addition of another two sets of 50 kw each in 1959 the total power generated came to be 656 kw. Outside the I.M.A., one power house was located at Leimakhong with two sets of 56 kw and 100 kw. Within the I.M.A. there were five power houses at CBD, Singjamei, Kwakeithel, Terakeithel and Lamlung, each of which had a capacity of 100 kw. The generation was further augmented by installation of two diesel sets (100 kw each) at Keisampat power house. These sets were given to Manipur under the Canadian Aid Programme in 1959-60.

The growth of power generation in the town was 26.85 lakh kwh in 1967-68, 30.81 lakh kwh in 1968-69, 32.39 lakh kwh in 1969-70, and 46.18 lakh kwh in 1970-71. The nature of consumption in 1970-71 was 36.52 lakh kwh or 79.04 per cent in domestic uses while 1.14 lakh kwh or 2.47 per cent in commercial, 2.48 lakh kwh or 5.37 per cent in street

\textsuperscript{24} Bhattacharjee, op. cit., p. 241.
lighting, 0.23 lakh kwh or 0.50 per cent in Public Water Works and 5.81 lakh kwh or 12.58 per cent in other uses. The said uses are wholly in the town though the power was sent to the surrounding government offices outside the I.M.A. The per capita availability of power even upto 1977-78 is only 9 kwh as against national norm of 101 kwh.

Although supply of electricity, as such, has no direct bearing on the rural-urban relationship, yet its indirect influence is far reaching. While light, water, fan, refrigeration, telephone, cinema, air-conditioning and other amenities based on electricity supply, easily attract the ruralites, its abundant use in the industries throw many of them into unemployment. Electricity supply, thus catches the imagination of the rural youths and lure them to the town, and at the same time, turns many semi-skilled labourers jobless. Although it does not help creating a distinct urban hinterland zone its impact on mind and perception is great.

4.2.6. Trade and Commerce:

No other phenomenon establishes a more close urban-rural relationship than trade and commerce. In this sphere Imphal acts as a supermarket in Manipur without any equivalent. The bigger is the town, the greater is the variety of articles sold and the greater is the number of
non-endemic articles available. The relation between Imphal and rural areas as established through commercial activities can be seen to take place in two processes, namely, (i) retailing to the city commuters and (ii) wholesale to the rural agents and shopkeepers.

Retailing in the town involves a variety of essential commodities, such as, food, cloth, hardware and luxury goods. Depending upon the nature of the commodities sold through retail sale, the sphere of influence of Imphal varies. However, the rural area served by the mini-buses from the town, and that covered by the visitors to the town on bicycles, can be taken as the city retail zone (Fig 18). Trade on vegetables presents a dual relationship between Imphal and its surrounding area. Almost whole of the vegetables marketed in Imphal come from various parts of Manipur. Although mainly meant for the residents of Imphal itself, these sometimes find their way to the surrounding villages, if these are in short supply in the rural markets. However, the zone of trade on vegetables is very limited but that on items like potato, onion, chilli, edible oil, salt, flour, rice, pulses, etc. is fairly extensive. Such consumer goods as cosmetics, yarn, and stationeries, as are not locally produced, have the most extensive retail coverage
Percentage of transactions with the rural buyers in both food and other consumer goods is about 40.

The process of wholesale, however, involves a larger volume of merchandise and greater distances. The shops in both Imphal and the surrounding areas purchase merchandise in bulks from the wholesale establishments in the town. The valley, accommodating about 70 per cent of the total population on a less than 12 per cent of the area of the state, is the main region that generates an ever increasing demand of the goods on the wholesale stores of Imphal. About 60 per cent of goods in quantity are sold through wholesale in the hinterland. However, due to the Municipal Tax in the form of 'Octroi', imposed in the I.M.A. on the wholesale of goods, a new tendency seems to have arisen. Some of the dealers in various goods have started wholesale through mobile vans outside the I.M.A. boundary to the other small towns to avoid the 'Octroi' tax. However, the relationship between the city and surrounding has become very close through trade and commerce rather than any other services.

4.2.7. Administrative Services:

Imphal, as the traditional administrative centre, has been maintaining a close relationship with the rest of Manipur since the beginning of the Christian era. Even
now scores of buses, that ply to and from the town every-
day, carry at least half of its passengers who visit and
work in the administrative offices located inside the
I.M.A. It is to be noted that the functions discharged
by Imphal as capital cannot be surpassed by any other
town.

Out of the total estimated number of 30,000 pas-
gers (Fig. 19) bound daily to Imphal, nearly half are
released to activities in the District or State offices.
The distribution of the passenger-origins in terms of
their distances is shown in table 4:2 below

Table 4:2
Estimated Number of Passengers and Distances
of their Origin, 1979.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radius from Imphal</th>
<th>Number of Passengers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 10</td>
<td>4400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 20</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 - 30</td>
<td>6500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 - 40</td>
<td>1700</td>
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<tr>
<td>41 - 50</td>
<td>1500</td>
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<td>51 - 60</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<td>61 - 70</td>
<td>2800</td>
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<td>71 - 80</td>
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<td>350</td>
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<td>91 - 100</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 and above</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of passengers varies inversely with distances. The greatest contribution zone coincides the average outer limit+ of the valley i.e. about 56 km from Imphal town. Beyond the said limit, in the 61-70 km zone, the number of passengers increases due to existence of some hill stations like Churachandpur, Chandel, etc. The increase in the number of stations beyond 100 km radius makes the number in that category rise again.

The offices of the district administration attract the commuters in large number, while those of state administration attract mainly the officials and others from the more distant areas. Imphal thus, with its concentration of the district offices has a direct administrative hinterland, spread over the valley, and a wider, but functionally less involved hinterland, spread over the whole state.

4.2.8. Public Health:

The public health services of Imphal are one of the factors, that exercise an urban control on the surrounding

+ Aerial distance of the foothills is about 25 km from Imphal but road distance, because of topographic feature, is almost double.
The first dispensary in the town was established in 1891 in the compound of Wangkheirakpa (the present Women's Hospital site). It started treatment of patients through scientific and modern medical methods. The Manipuris in the past were treated in the indigenous ways by local physicians with herbal medicines. Thus, fighting of the diseases like cholera, small-pox, tuberculosis, typhoid, etc. which claimed many lives until recently, was started in the modern methods only since the last decade of the nineteenth century. Some epidemics used to break out in the summer months along with the onset of the rains. In a single instance cholera claimed about 6053 lives in the town in 1901. Other epidemics were also not infrequent in the area. Of these, measles and small-pox used to take a heavy toll of the children.

A leprosy hospital was opened at Kangookpi in 1923-24 and an anti-rabis treatment centre in Imphal in 1929-30. The number of hospitals, primary health centres, primary health sub-centres, dispensaries and other health institutions as also infrastructure for medical care of the people, began to increase thereafter. All these

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establishments were essentially controlled from Imphal. Moreover, the town had in it, in 1970-71 four hospitals, three dispensaries, one maternity and child centre, one family planning centre, three X-ray clinics, apart from many pharmacies. In addition to these, the Regional Medical College, staffed with efficient doctors, came into being in 1971 at Lamphel Pat within the I.M.A. All these exercise an important regional influence as every serious case even of the rural areas, is often referred to the college, hospitals and health centres of Imphal (Fig. 20) because of availability of experts and modern equipments there.

Apart from giving medical aid, the Regional Medical College enhances commercial activities as a number of pharmacies, medical stores, fruit shops and hotels and restaurants has come up along the roads leading to the college and also in the market.

4.2.9 Education:

Imphal today is one of the most important centres of education in the whole of the North East India. But the history of growth of the modern educational institutions is comparatively short. In the distant past, school education was not known at all but people educated themselves in
politics and some others learnt martial arts of using sword, spear and other war techniques.

Absence of school education does not, however, mean that there were no institutions of learning. Many people got their education from the professional teachers and scholars that is how the great books in Meitei script were written and the chronicles recorded.

The mass education was, however, encouraged for the first time by king Khagemba in 1606 A.D. but the response was very poor. However, subsequently formal education in the town started with the establishment of a vernacular school in 1872 by Major Nuthel in the campus of the British Political Agent. The textbooks were presented among the pupils by the Government of the then Bengal but the attendance was still poor.

An important landmark in the education of the state is the establishment of the Johnstone Middle School in 1885 and some primary vernacular schools (Pathsalas) about that time. The school education, however, received a temporary setback when Bengali was introduced as the medium of instruction between 1872 and 1909. Subsequently in 1909-1910, Manipuri was adopted as the medium, and enrolment in the schools began to rise. Meanwhile, Johnstone Middle School was accorded recognition by the Calcutta University

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in 1921-22, as a institution that could impart education upto the Matriculation level. The first centre of higher education, Dhanamanjuri college was established in 1948, facilitating the students of Manipur to pursue education upto B.A. and B.Sc. level. Following this, during the post-Independence period, many schools and colleges came up in the I.M.A. and its surrounding areas. There are today as many as 16 colleges in Imphal and its environ, apart from the University which has been set up in 1972.

The sphere of influence of the town has been widened by the schools, colleges and the University (Fig 20). Some of these institutions, such as, the Nirmalabas K.G. school, Little Flower school, Don Bosco school, Government Colleges, Industrial Training Institute, Adimjati Siksha Sadan, Post Graduate Training College, Basic Training College, Law College, Imphal Arts College, etc. attract students from even far off corners of the state.

There are about 161 institutions in 1970-71 with about 13.30 per cent students of the total 2,59,199 in the state. The higher threshold population in a small area is indicated by a huge enrolment in the educational institutions. The average enrolment in the institutions in Imphal town was more than double of that in the remaining
areas. The schools and colleges have effectively established contact between Imphal town and the rural surrounding. The contact is dual in nature. The students and employees commute to the town everyday if they are in the mini-bus zone around the town. The longest commutable distance, if on the highways, is about 40 km from the town. If the places of origin are away, they reside in the hostels and residential houses. In this case indirect contact is also established as the relatives visit them very often to supply them foodstuff and money. The most important effect of these institutions is that the students carry urban ideas, manners, and material culture to the villages.

4.2.10. Different Cultural Institutions

Culture does not stem from the Universities and colleges alone but also from other socio-cultural institutions, such as the social groups, political groups, clubs, cultural organisations, libraries, cinema and theatre houses, and dramatic and dance parties, which are built up through the joint sponsorship of both urbanites and the nearby ruralites.

The libraries located in the I.M.A. of the various institutions and organisations and the information centres are the main attractions of the students and the reading
public of the urban and rural areas. The central library is the leading reading place with 5228 memberships in and outside the town.

More than 24 Manipuri and 3 English dailies, 20 Manipuri and 1 English weeklies and some periodicals are circulated from Imphal. Their circulation is, however, limited mainly to the valley. Most of these newspapers are of regional nature and serve the population of the valley. They have helped establish a relationship and communication between the town and the rural areas.

Cinemas and theatres contribute much in strengthening the urban-rural relation. The good picture screened in the cinema halls (Fig.21) in the town attract rural cinema-goers in large numbers, especially in the matinee shows. It results in overcrowding in the Paona Road needing temporary diversion of traffic in the afternoon hours very often. The continuous but painful screening of some of the box-office hit films would not have been possible but for the rural threshold population. The ruralites make up about 60 per cent of the cinema goers and come usually from within a distance of 25 km, occasionally from 25 to 45 km and rarely from beyond 45 km. There are also many clubs like the Horse Race Club, Lion's Club, Rotary Club, etc.
which meet regularly and have delegates from the rural surrounding. These rather enhance the ties between the rural and urban areas. Even holding a foot-ball tournament can draw many people from the rural areas towards this town as do the celebration of the Republic Day, Martyr's Day and Fifteenth August in Imphal.

4.2.11. Religious Centres:

Imphal has been not only a traditional centre of Manipur, but also supports a number of very important religious centres of the Meiteis. The local people originally worshipped 'Pakhangba' and other 'Umang Lais' or forest gods. With the coming of Hinduism to Manipur in the sixteenth century A.D. following the presentation of the image of the Lord Vishnu to King Kyamba by the king of Pong (north Burma) and the conversion of King Pamheiba to the Ramandi Cult of the Hinduism, the tribal worship. The Vaishnavism made a rapid headway and by the third quarter of the seventeenth century A.D., many Hindu gods and goddesses like Hanuman, Rama, Govinda, Nityainanda, Bijoy-Govinda, Madan Mohan, etc. came to be worshipped widely (Fig. 21). However, side by side with these, the original tribal gods like Sanamahi (Apokpa) and other Umang Lais were also continued to be worshipped with equal importance.
Imphal has now many important temples, of which Govinda in the present palace compound, Vijoy-Govinda in Sagolband, Nityainanda in Nagamapal, Modan Mohan at Kangba and Apokpa in the compound of the First Battalion, Manipur Rifles, are the main. Each temple has a definite date for congregational worship associated with fairs and festivals. The festivals like Ratha Jatra, Jalkeli and Holi, although observed in the temples, thousands of people from far and near gather, processions are taken out and fairs held. The situation of the Govinda Temple in Wangkhei with sufficient vacant space allows the devotees to muster strong, just as in London a wide square allows space for processions of the Londoners on their way to the miraculous gratto. It is estimated that half of the devotees in such gatherings are from the rural areas and thus Imphal continues to wield a religious hinterland.

The religious fairs and festivals call for production of specialised articles and dresses like 'Potloi', 'Chura' and others for use in the festivals like 'Rasa Lila' or 'Lai Haraoba' and 'Umang Lais'. These special

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occasions require particular dresses to be made by certain artisans, weavers, etc. Many of these artisans, as also the materials used for special dresses come from the rural areas and thus a keen rural-urban relationship has grown up through the fairs and festivals.

4.2.12. Transport and Communication:

The relationship between the city and countryside is made closer mainly by means of good and effective transport and communication. The interrelation of road and city development is well expressed by Finch and Trewartha who mention that the city creates the roads, the roads in their turn create the city or recreate it. A three-tier system of road connections i.e. the internal links between the various parts of the urban habitat, inter-urban links and regional contacts, is seen to have developed in Imphal. With the increasing development of transport, the attachment of the settlements around Imphal with it, as also the development of the town have increased. Food, other commodities and passengers are moving in ever increasing quantity and number along these lines to and from Imphal.

+ City Transport in Chapter VIII.

The importance of the roads is so much that if they are blocked or traffic on them are diverted, as when the passenger buses were on strike in February and March, 1981, the link between Imphal and the rural areas is cut off and life in both the areas became dull. It has drastic impact especially on issues like price of the vegetables. The interdependence of Imphal and the surrounding areas has been strengthened more by easy transport and communication than by any other structural element, and this is evident from the scores of buses and trucks that ply every hour between the town and its rural surrounding.