Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Planning in India is largely concerned with the balanced development of areas and people. As such, since its inception, planning has been dynamic in its approach to develop regions and achieve social justice for the people. Over four decades of planned development has resulted in unequal development of regions and growing social tensions. As a remedial measure to this phenomenon, problem regions such as backward areas, hill areas, drought prone areas and flood affected areas were given special consideration in the successive Five Year Plans. Despite special plans and budgets, the problems faced by these regions remained partially unsolved. The recent trend observed therein is the faster rate of outward mobility of manpower and resources from these regions. Siphoning of natural resources, on the one hand, and of active working population, on the other, augments poverty and cements backwardness in these areas. Leakage of natural resources from the backward regions of the country leaves limited scope behind for regional development. It is in this context that a study relating to assessment of the role of various plans and their implementation becomes imperative and important.
Manipur (Area 23,327 km²/Population 18,37,149 in 1991), a small backward hill state in North East India, can broadly be divided into three natural regions - the Manipur hills, the Manipur valley and the Barak basin (Fig.1.1). The Manipur hills provide the geographic base to the state as they cover about 90 per cent of its area surrounding the tiny central valley and accommodate over one-third of the state population. The Manipur valley, on the other hand, shelters about two-thirds of the state population in about nine per cent of the area. The tiny Barak basin, a riverine plain on the western border of the state, has a moderate density of population. The hills comprise five tribal districts of Chandel, Churachandpur, Senapati, Tamenglong and Ukhrul; and the valley three plain districts of Bishnupur, Imphal and Thoubal. The Barak basin forms a sub-division of Imphal district. With predominantly tribal population, shifting agricultural economy, absence of industries and least of urbanization, the hill districts of Manipur present a scene of poverty, unemployment, economic exploitation, social deprivation, poor health, illiteracy and lack of infrastructure. As such, it is difficult to think of the balanced development of the state without improving the lot of the tribal people living in the hill districts.
Manipur does not have any water transport system. Recently it has been provided with a nominal railway link. The roads provide the basic routes of transportation in the state. The National Highway 39 connects the state capital Imphal and Moreh, a town on Indo-Myanmar (Burma) border, with rail head at Dimapur in Nagaland, while the National Highway 53 connects Imphal with Silchar in Assam.

The state by its topographical structure had problems of economic development and socio-economic transformation for a pretty long period. Manipur presents a true picture of the conditions prevailing in the scarcity pockets of the Indian economy. The low per capita income, a fast increasing population, absence of industries, huge but mostly unskilled manpower are the familiar contours of this economically backward and depressed region. The economic stagnation of the state has led a large proportion of her people, around 45 per cent, to live a life below the poverty line.

The strategic location of the state in a sensitive region adjoining the international boundary, the inequality of the living standards of the valley and hill people, the lack of employment opportunities, meagre transport facilities, all emphasise the need for a programme for the
balanced and integrated development of the state on a scale and pattern adequate for the purpose.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of integrated regional development in its true scientific meaning refers to two types of integration - functional and spatial, which are themselves interrelated. Functional integration refers to the integration of all social and economic activities like health, education, agriculture, industries, transport, etc., which influence the life of people and often overlap. A change in one sector almost invariably brings about the corresponding change in another. The community development programme in India tried to achieve functional integration by establishing an integrated staffing pattern. Specialists from different government departments representing health, education, agriculture, industry, etc. were brought together as a team at the block level and it was expected that daily interaction among them will also lead to an integrated development of the rural areas. However, this has not happened.

The spatial relationship among various socio-economic activities depend a great deal on where they are located.
It is seen that activities often cluster in hierarchical pattern in space. Their location depends on factors like level of development, demand for specific functions and their supply, their accessibility in terms of roads and transportation, time and distance of travel, level of income of the people, cost of these functions, etc. Large portions of our rural areas are deprived of many basic amenities, while there are areas with concentration of such functions.

Integrated regional development, thus, refers to the appropriate location of social and economic activities over a physical space for the balanced development of a region. The idea of an appropriate location is by definition selective. In other words, each and every settlement cannot have all kinds of functions. It has been observed by location theorists that there is a hierarchy of settlements based on the number of functions of different orders and specialisation, and also on the basis of the area served by a settlement. All functions of different orders, therefore, need to be located in the most appropriate places selected on the basis of their hierarchy and centrality.
Integrated regional development is also concerned with the development of backward areas. If the existing hierarchy of settlement in a particular region is utilised for formulating a development plan, then areas far away from the important centres of economic activity may remain permanently underdeveloped. Some inducement for growth is, therefore, necessary in backward areas in the form of overheads and infrastructures in decentralised but selective locations.

Integrated regional development is, thus, based on the principles of 'selectivity' on the one hand, and 'decentralisation' on the other. It suggests a framework for decentralising economic and social activities by locating specific functions in appropriate places. The network, thus created, provides a meaningful infrastructure which can attract and sustain a diversified and growing economy. The central place system and growth centre approach provide the most suitable methodology for a balanced policy between selectivity and decentralisation of economic activities for the integrated development of the state.

Thus, the integrated regional development programme is multi-level, multi-sector and multi-section concept. Obviously, it encompasses development of a region (i) at
various levels in spatial hierarchy, such as viable cluster of villages, block and district, (ii) at various sectors/sub-sectors of economy, such as agriculture, industry, transport, education and health, etc., and (iii) at various poorer sections/sub-sections of population, such as landless labourers, artisans, small and marginal farmers, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, etc. From an operational viewpoint, integrated regional development plan has got the thrust in the framework of block-level planning. But it should not be taken as an isolated exercise, instead it is to be fitted into a hierarchy of levels, both above and below.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows:

i. To make an appraisal of areal resources of the state in view of their availability, mode of utilisation, potentiality and prospects for their development;

ii. To identify and rank growth centres and central places of various orders and delineate their tributary areas or complementary zones;

iii. To prepare a plan based on growth centres for an integrated regional development of the state; and
iv. To identify the development schemes of local importance to benefit the society in general and the poor in particular.

1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Integrated regional development planning relates to the integrated development of various sectors of economy of a region, particularly a small state or an ecological region, as a unit of planning. Under the Five Year Plans efforts have been made to remove the regional disparities in economic development. The Ford Foundation and the National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad have made concerted efforts in formulating plans for regional development by taking district, sub-division and block as unit of planning. Different ecological zones and socio-economic settings were selected by the NIRD for choosing such areas. Later on, various other institutions, both private and public, utilised the concepts of regional development planning and growth centres for formulating plans at regional, district and block levels. The purpose was mainly to develop a methodology for preparing area development plans.

The publication of 'Planning Rural Growth Centres for Integrated Area Development: A Study in Miryalguda
Taluka' by Lalit K.Sen et al in 1971 marked the beginning of regional development studies in India. A host of similar studies were subsequently taken up by the NIRD, which include 'Regional Planning for Social Facilities – An Examination of Central Place Concepts and Their Application: A Case study of Eastern Maharashtra' by Sudhir Wanmali (1973), 'Growth Centres in Raichur – An Integrated Area Development Plan for a district in Karnataka' by Lalit K. Sen et al (1975), 'Integrated Area Development Plan for West District, Manipur' by Wahiduddin Khan and K.S. Ramesh (1976), 'Plan for Integrated Rural Development in Pauri Garhwal' by Wahiduddin Khan and R.N. Tripathi (1976), 'Block Plan in the District Frame: A Development Plan for Madakasira Block in Anantapur District, Andhra Pradesh' by R.N. Tripathi et al (1980), 'Planning for Integrated Rural Development Programme: Amalapuram Block' by R.N. Tripathi, B.K. Thapliyal and F.M. Pradhan (1981), etc. The Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi and the University Grants Commission (UGC) also sponsored a number of studies in the field of integrated regional development planning, such as 'Micro-level Planning: A Case Study of Karnal Area, Haryana, India' by L.S. Bhat et al (1976) and 'Central Places and spatial Organisation in a Backward Economy: Gorakhpur Region – A
Study in Integrated Regional Development' by Jagdish Singh (1979), which mark a pattern of development studies in the regional setting. 'Block Level Planning with Focus on Employment Generation' by Girish K. Misra et al (1987), 'Strategy for Integrated Area Development: Case Study of North Kanara District (Karnataka)' by L.S. Bhat (1988) and 'Integrated Area Development and Planning' by Surendra Singh (1990) are similar studies at the micro-level in which sophisticated tools and techniques have been utilised for developmental planning.

At the state level very few studies have so far been taken up for analysing the socio-economic parameters of development in Manipur. Besides 'Statistical Account of the Native State of Manipur and the Hill Territory under its Rule' by R. Brown (1873), the 'Gazetteer of Manipur' by E.W. Dun (1886), 'Techno-Economic Survey of Manipur' conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (1961) and 'Geography of Manipur' by R.P. Singh (1982), there are only the census reports and mimeographed reports of various departments of state government, which throw light on the development perspectives of the state as a whole. "Spatial Planning in Chandel District, Manipur" by R.P. Singh (1985) and 'Micro-level Planning: A
Case Study of Bishnupur District, Manipur' by H. Gitabali Devi (1990) deal with the planning requirements at the district level in two ecological zones—hills and valley, of the state, while the micro-level planning profile of the third ecological zone—the Barak basin, has been portrayed in "Rural Development and Micro-Level Planning: A Case study of Jiribam Block, Manipur" by R.P. Singh and Vedaja Sanjenbam (1991).

A large number of regional, rural and tribal development studies have been undertaken by various scholars, institutions and organisations since the Fourth Five Year Plan aiming at the alleviation of poverty of the rural and tribal poor living in the vast inhospitable terrain of the country. In the backdrop of the studies done so far, the present exercise is a modest attempt to formulate an integrated regional development plan for the state of Manipur following the central place concept and growth centre approach.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The model used in this study for preparing an integrated regional development plan for the state of Manipur is based on growth centre concept modelled very closely on
the postulates of the central place theory. Growth centres are central places which serve a hinterland consisting of a number of villages. They provide optimal locations for selective investments in agricultural and industrial infrastructure, and social facilities which can be used by the hinterland population.

1.5.1 Central Place Theory

The central place theory was propounded by Walter Christaller (1933), a German geographer and later developed by August Losch (1954) and others. The central place theory consists of following postulates:

(i) A central place (usually a city, a town or a large village depending on the specific area or region under study), which provides functions and services to its tributary area, is located at the centre of minimum aggregate travel providing minimum cost to the customers and maximum profit to the sellers.

(ii) There is a hierarchy of such central places. The higher order places provide more specialised functions which lower order places do not have. Besides, the higher order places also provide functions normally found in the lower order places.
(iii) The higher order places are fewer in number and more widely spaced than the lower order places. With wide range of functions they have a higher degree of centrality and command a larger tributary area than the lower order places.

(iv) In the hierarchy of central places, each order of place 'nesting' the next lower order places forms a hexagonal tributary area. The 'nesting pattern' or latticing of lower order places within such a command area is, by and large, determined by three principles: (a) marketing, (b) traffic, and (c) administrative. In the market optimising principle, there are two central places of the next lower order for each central place of immediate higher order \( K=3 \), while there are three central places of next lower order for each central place of immediate higher order \( K=4 \) in the traffic optimising principle. There are six central places of next lower order for each central place of immediate higher order \( K = 7 \), if the principle of optimum administration predominates (Fig.1.2).

According to Christaller, the centrality of a place is a measure of its importance. He recognises population size as an associative factor but places major emphasis on the functional importance of a place in terms of the nature and the range of services offered.
Fig. 12

Central Place System

(a) Market optimizing K=3

(b) Traffic optimizing K=4

(c) Administration optimizing K=7

- Central Place
- Dependent Place
- Boundary of Complementary Region
- Highways Between Central Places
- Other Roads
1.5.2 Growth Centre Concept

It is observed that a region does not grow economically at the same rate over all of its area but rather tends to grow most rapidly at a point or points while lagging or remaining stagnant elsewhere. These rapidly growing points (or poles) exert dominance over the entire region. The growth pole theory, originally put forth by the French economist Francois Perroux (1955) attempts to account for the reasons why growth is geographically imbalanced in this way.

Perroux conceived an abstract economic space as field of forces consisting of centres, poles or foci, from which centrifugal forces emanate and to which centripetal forces are attracted in terms of a leading or key industry characterised by high propulsive power, exerting considerable influence through inter-industry linkages. J.R. Boudville (1966) extended the concept to geographical space by defining a regional growth pole as a set of expanding industries located in an urban area and inducing further development of economic activity throughout its zone of influence. In order to avoid the persistent confusion between 'growth pole' related to economic space and that related to geographic space, D.F.Darwent (1969) suggested
the term 'growth centre' to denote the latter. The growth poles, according to A. Kuklinski (1972), have national significance while growth centres have just a regional character. Growth centres, thus conceived, provide necessary inputs for maximising economic and social benefits to all the people living within their hinterlands.

There can be several ranks of growth centres depending on their centrality, their degree of functional complexity or their population size. Planners have used several nomenclatures for indicating these ranks (Sen et al., 1971; Misra, 1974). The difference between one rank and the next higher or lower one is obvious. Each higher category provides more specialised services than the lower one. Thus, the growth centre concept closely follows the postulates of the central place theory.

1.5.3 Data Collection and Processing

Both primary and secondary data were collected during the period 1991-93 to work out a comprehensive resource inventory of the growth centres and their complementary zones to assess the pattern of resource utilisation and remedies encountering the constraints of resource development processes. While the data about demographic
variables including aspects of total, rural and urban population, workers and their categories, marginal workers and non-workers, literate, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population were collected from the Directorate of Census Operations, Manipur, the data regarding the economic development including agriculture, livestock, fisheries, urban - industrial and public services; assessment of assets and liabilities including land use, land holdings, pattern of cropping, livestock wealth and industrial pursuits; and assessment of various schemes of planning and gaps in planning including aspects of agricultural, industrial, manpower, educational and infrastructural planning have been collected from the concerned departments of the State Government.

The secondary data were also collected from the reports of the block, district and state level development authorities. The annual plans of the state, statistical handbooks, Economic Reviews and Tribal Bench Mark Survey reports have been utilised for gathering socio-economic data.

The data collected from the field surveys and secondary sources were tabulated and mapped, and analysed with help of appropriate statistical techniques and cartographic methods.
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The entire study has been divided into five chapters. The First Chapter, including this section, deals with the conceptual framework, objectives of the study, review of literature, methodology and significance of the work. Chapter Two presents a geographical profile of the study region - Manipur, interpreting its physical, economic and cultural characteristics in the regional setting. Methods of identification of the growth centres, demarcation of planning regions and their resource bases, and levels of development have been portrayed in the Third Chapter. Chapter Four reviews the process and performance of the Five Year Plans and presents an integrated approach to the developmental planning of the state in sectoral and spatial frames. The study concludes with Chapter Five summarising the observations and major findings.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The regional development studies have their own relevance to offer experiences and potentials for planning under different geographic and socio-economic conditions. Manipur, with its rich natural resources and high man-land ratio, continues to remain a backward and economically depressed region. The study of backwardness and the role
of planning agencies in its eradication, aimed at herein, will be useful in the identification of issues augmenting backwardness and providing suggestions for the balanced development of the state.