Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The concept of territoriality, originated initially in animal studies, refers generally to a higher order behavioural system which entails the acquisition, demarcation and defence of a spatial area. Territory is used in a legal sense to mean land belonging to a sovereign state. More specifically, it describes areas not yet granted full autonomous status in comparison with other parts of the state. For example, Alaska was a territory of the United States, with an appointed, not an elected governor, until it became the forty-ninth state in 1959.

Geographers, like biologists, use the term territory in a much more general sense to indicate an area over which rights of ownership are exercised and which can be delimited or bounded in some way. Sometimes ownership is formal and may be legally enforced. A house-holder may legally own the plot on which his house is built, and a nation-state may legally own its lands. At other times, ownership may be unstable and territories may be precariously held by displays of strength at the borders. Ornithologists, studying the robin singing on the garden post at the edge of its territory, and sociologists, noting the gang member painting obscenities on a wall at the boundary of his turf, are both recording displays of territorial ownership. Boundaries may be marked by things as temporary or trivial as bird songs or as fixed and patrolled as the former Berlin Wall.
Territoriality is not a purely human trait because it has originated from the vertebrate world of birds and animals kingdom. However, human beings, belonging to different ethnic groups in any locality, village and city, have their own territories. The territories in animals and birds, and now in human beings, are defended very aggressively against other birds, animals and human beings respectively. The territories also show spatial patterns and there may be over-lapping territories for different ethnic groups, which later become the root cause of ethnic clashes. Even those animals, which cannot secure a territory for themselves, are forced to migrate or starve. Similarly, the present day clashes in various regions, states and countries are quite common in order to save and protect their own territories.

Territoriality, both in space and through time, is one of the strongest expressions of human personality, and one to which man has applied all sorts of embellishments in the creation of his pattern of culture. The gregariousness of man, and the tendency to social grouping, probably made the basic territorial unit one occupied by a population of convenient size (Spencer and Thomas, 1969).

There appears to be a direct ecological relationship between the territory and the population right from the early times. Man, as such, has been directly dependent on his environment. Territoriality also connotes a geographic or topographic reference to boundaries demarcating various units. The importance of marking one's territory, both in human and animals, stems from the necessity to render the territory recognisable in order to occupy and defend it. Territoriality implies that some space is of more value for the occupant because of economic, biological and social reasons and that to give up the
particular space or area is to incur a meaningful loss. Hence, the territory, acquired and
distinguished, has a particular set of values for the occupant. It also meets three basic
human needs—need for security, need for identity and need for stimulation.

Segregation, based on economic, social and ethnic considerations, is a
characteristic feature of Imphal City. The segregation is generally measured in terms of
spatial distribution of individuals or households belonging to a particular economic,
social, ethnic or tribal group. Most commonly, the actual distribution of group numbers is
compared with the pattern that would exist if the group members were distributed evenly
throughout the area under study. The deviation between the actual and even distribution
measures the degree of segregation. This type of segregation is called residential
segregation. The present study has brought out the residential segregation in Imphal City
based on caste, religion and tribes. The second form of segregation is activity segregation,
where different groups though live in the same area but do not interact with each other.

The present study measures the levels and magnitudes of segregation of the various
groups in the city. An attempt has also been made to delineate the territorial boundaries
which follow some physical features as streams, or some cultural elements as the road or
have been based on ethnic and tribal considerations. The barriers may be physical or may
be imaginary according to some people’s perception. Such barriers restrict movement
across them and also restrict interaction. Detailed spatio-temporal situations of the
problem and their possible solutions, for various working class in general and youth in
particular, have been analysed in this investigation.
The area under study - Imphal City has a glorious historical past. According to legends, it is one of the ancient settlements in the Indian sub-continent and was in existence around 300 B.C. The historical and archaeological importance of Kangla, the ancient capital of Manipur and core section of Imphal City, is closely connected with the social evolution of this mosaic of people called the Manipuris.

Imphal City, the mini metropolis, lies in the centre of the oval-shaped Manipur valley (Fig. 1.1). Its diverse population comprises the Hindus, the Muslims and the tribal ethnic groups.

There are residential segregations in some pockets of Imphal City, e.g. Khwairamband Bazar area is inhabited by business community mainly from outside; Hatta and Minuthong are settled by the Muslims; Kakhulong, Deulahland, Nagaram and Keishamthong are inhabited mostly by the tribals, while rest of the city is peopled by the Meiteis-the Manipuri Hindus. The city, as such, has proved to be an ideal ground for testing the hypothesis of territoriality.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are as follows:

i. To demarcate the boundaries of various social, ethnic and tribal groups;

ii. To assess the site, population, ethnic, cultural and behavioural characteristics of various communities, religious and ethnic groups

iii. To identify the territorial units - their classification and characteristics;
iv. To find out the levels of interaction between the various social and ethnic groups;

v. To identify the barriers in interaction and social adaptation in various social and ethnic groups;

vi. To examine residential segregation and human territorial behaviour;

vii. To assess the role of youths and weaker sections of different groups in the inter-group relations;

viii. To suggest measures to develop harmonious relationship between the groups.

1.3 ASSUMPTIONS

The study has been conducted under the following assumptions:

a. Various social and ethnic groups have their own specific congnizance of themselves.

b. The groups have varying mental images of the other groups in the city.

c. The interaction of one group with the other depends on communality of caste, religion and ethnicity.

d. The interaction network of the groups is an extension of themselves and any threat to their neighbourhood is taken as a threat to their own being.

e. The neighbourhood loyalty is re-inforced by sense of religious or ethnic origin of their groups.
f. Lower the level of literacy higher is the reaction in ethnic terms of unfavourable interactions.

g. The frustration of youths is a major cause of violent interaction irrespective of any group affiliation.

h. Lack of general amenities results into frequent inter-religious or inter-ethnic conflicts.

i. Economically depressed class of people, irrespective of social or ethnic origin, are more prone to antagonist territorial behaviour, and

j. Higher the degree of concentration of a particular ethnic group, more is the claim for their territoriality.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Intensive field survey had been undertaken to collect first-hand information about the territorial outlook of the people. Primary data were collected by means of stratified random sampling from various parts of the city at regular intervals from social and ethnic perspective on the basis of a questionnaire covering various aspects.

Secondary data, used in analysing territoriality, were collected from various Government Departments and census publications.

The data have been collected on stratified random sample basis, evenly distributed in each ward and, processed with the help of various statistical techniques. Cartographic analysis has been employed to give a visual dimension of the problems. The questionnaire was administered to elicit information about the general household characteristics, site
about the general household characteristics, site characteristics, ethnic characteristics, cultural traditions and social organisations, and behavioral characteristics of the people.

About 10 youths per ward of Imphal Municipal area from different sections of the society were interviewed to find out their educational qualifications, future plans, utilizations of time, participation in cultural and sports activities and affiliations, views on territoriality, mental images about other religious groups, problems of inter-group harmony and its possible solution and suggestions.

1.5 SURVEY OF LITERATURE

This is perhaps the first exhaustive study of territoriality in India. Some of the studies conducted in the foreign countries on the theme, with their focus on macro and micro levels, are of Spencer and Thomas (1969) and David and Rise (1978).

Spencer and Thomas, in their book Cultural Geography, feel that territoriality in some form or the other is one of the strongest expressions of human personality, and one to which man has applied all sorts of embellishments in the creation of his pattern of culture. The term territoriality, which man inherited from animal background, has shown its development in varying degrees of completeness, both in space and time.

David and Rise, in their paper "Territoriality on the Shanhill Falls Divide, Belfast", have observed that residential segregation and activity segregation, later being relatively neglected field, have proved that different groups do not normally live in the same area and interact with each other.
1.6 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into six chapters. Chapter One, including this section, highlights the conceptual frame of territoriality in urban context, objectives and methodology of the study. In Chapter Two, an assessment of the study area - Imphal City, interpreting its socio-economic parameters, have been presented. Identification, classification and characteristics of the territorial units of the city have been discussed in Chapter Three. The problems of inter-group relations in the city have been dealt in Chapter Four. Suggestions and recommendations for improvements in inter-ethnic relations in Imphal City form parts of Chapter Five. Lastly, Chapter Six presents a summary of the observations and findings in the concluding part of the study.

1.7 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The territorial and human behavioural study of the various social and ethnic groups in Imphal City will not only help the administrators and town planners but also the academicians and scholars with interest in this field. The recognition of the barriers between the various groups and understanding of the group territorial behaviours will also help in formulation of policy for intergroup harmony.