CONCLUSION
The main conclusion which arises from the foregoing analysis is that:

- Manipur is an isolated, closed, underdeveloped, hill girt and geographically a distinct entity. It consists of an oval shaped beautiful valley in the centre which is surrounded on all the sides by hills. ‘In these hills nature's hospitality eclipses all man can ever do’ (Mahatma Gandhi).

- The state abounds in unrivalled natural scenic beauty of the landscape with the backdrop of blue hills, dales, alpine meadows, fascinating orchards, sylvan setting, cascading rapids, elegant waterfalls, pristine pastures, thick forests, magnificent wet land formation on lofty hills, white simmering lakes full of colourful lilies, lotus and isles, exotic orchids and to top it all, the state has salubrious climate.

- The state has a rich cultural heritage which manifests in the form of graceful dances, enchanting festivals, fairs, distinctive ritual functions, nuptial style, traditional songs, drama, indigenous forms of martial art, sports, games, handicrafts and handlooms.

- There are many places of tourist attractions like places of natural scenic beauty, wetlands, wild life sanctuary, bio-diversity reserve, religious centres, historical centres, commercial centres, hill stations etc.

- There is unlimited potential for the development of tourism in Manipur. If properly conceived and executed such a development will prove not only financially viable but also prove to be of immense benefit to the state because it will help in solving its problems of insurgency, political instability, economic bankruptcy etc. When people will get employment and money will flow in, the masses will forget insurgency in due course of time and they will be involved in the major turnaround of this neglected state.

- The need is to ‘open Manipur for tourism’. To put Manipur tourism on the tourist map, not only of our country but also of world tourism. Struggling of its neglected past, Manipur unveils tourism strategy that will put it on the fast track of prosperity.
Manipur (93°03' to 94°78' east longitude and 23°80' to 25°68' north latitude) is a tiny state located in north-eastern part of India. It lies in the extreme eastern border and is bounded on the north by Nagaland, on the east by Myanmar, on the west by Assam and on the south by Mizoram and Myanmar. It is an isolated, hill girt having a distinct geographical entity. It consists of an oval shaped beautiful central valley which is surrounded on all sides by Manipur hills. About 91 per cent of the state is hilly. The state spreads over an area of 22,327 sq.km. and has a population of 2.3 millions (Census of India, 2001). The state is further subdivided into 9 districts, of which five districts (Senapati, Ukhrul, Chandel, Churachandpur and Tamenglong) lies in the hilly area while four districts (Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal and Bishnupur) lies in the central valley.

Tourists will not only be fascinated by the state's rich culture but also by diversity of people. It is peopled by four major groups the hill tribes, the Meiteis, the Muslims and the non-Manipuris. The dominant ethnic group is the Meiteis who occupy the central valley. There are 44 tribal communities who occupy the hilly areas. Some of dominant ones are the Nagas, Kukis, Mizo, Mao, Thadou, Kabui Nagas, Thangkul Nagas etc.

The author selected Manipur as his study area because he is a Manipuri himself and he has a quest to see that his state progresses. He wants to turn his state into a tourist destination. Expansion generated by tourism on regional level is substantially higher than that of industrial development with the same investment possibilities and this expansion is considerably faster. It has wider scope for development of a backward area and has huge potential for economic development of the region. Every 17 domestic tourists or 1.2 foreign tourists are capable to render one employment and an investment of every one rupee in tourism would give a return of hundred rupees. So, through robust tourism employment opportunities will be generated and money will flow in.

The author has made extensive use of primary data. Assessment of the places of tourist attraction both in hilly and valley area was done with the help of field surveys. Eight tourist spots having different type of
tourist attractions were selected for indepth study. Information regarding its historical background, natural scenic beauty and cultural wealth was gathered through comprehensive survey of these sites with the help of questionnaire interviews. Tourists, local people, government officials, workers, hoteliers, bus owners etc. were interviewed. Field work was conducted during the years 2001 and 2003. Other relevant information was also gathered through secondary sources.

In the foregoing chapters, we were trying to analyse our data to test the hypothesis that we set before us while undertaking this work. The following general conclusions can be drawn from the study.

1. The state is characterised by rugged topography. About 91 per cent of the state is hilly and the rest is the plain valley area. The hilly area is unique full of majestic natural scenic beauty, kaleidoscopic landscape, blue mountains, wall to wall carpeted meadows dotted with flowers, its solitude, pouring rain, lovely dark deep woods and wild animals. The tribal population comprising of Nagas, Kukis, Mizos, Maos, Thadou etc. each having their own distinctive culture and traditions which is expressed in their dance, music, festivals, handlooms and handicrafts. Their beautiful customary colourful eye catching dresses, head dresses and weapons of the tribals are added attractions. Some of the important dances performed by the different tribes are the zeliangrong dance, lakshangainu, thadou, kabui, kom, anal, koda odo, ara ralii odo, bamboo dance etc. Innumerable festivals are observed all the year round. In which there is merry making, dance and music. Some of the important festivals celebrated are kut festival, luira festival, lakshangainu, yarra, chiru, Aimol festival etc. There are many cultural and historical places of attraction like the Kangkhui limestone caves, Kalamukhi caves, Tharon cave, Ukhrul town, Chandels, Tamenglong, Mao etc. These are all centres of tribal culture. Colourful handloom and handicraft products of the tribals are added attractions.

2. The Central valley is an almost plain area studded by small residual hills and decorated with innumerable lakes. The valley is surrounded
by the blue hills of Manipur. The valley is mainly occupied by the *Meiteis* or the Manipuris. This valley is also known as the 'Valley of festivals'. A number of festivals are observed all the year round like *chairaoba*, *rathyatra*, *janmastami*, *durga pooja*, *dolyatra* etc. In the festivals there is worshipping, offerings, merry making, dancing and music. Every household echoes with the sound of music and dance. Manipur dance forms part of the Indian classical dance. There are other dances also performed during festivals and rituals like the *rasleela*, *vasanta ras*, *kunja ras*, *nitya ras*, *lai haraoba* Khamba Thoibi *jagoi*, *maibi dance*, *nipa pala*, *pung cholom*, *pena ishei* etc. Martial art like *thangta*, *thanglon*, *ta chainaba* etc. are very popular. Games like *mukhna*, *mukhna kangjei*, *yubi lakpi*, *woolaobi*, *sagol kangjei*, *kang* etc. are also very popular. Towns of historical and cultural importance worth visiting are Imphal, Moirang, Phubala, Kangla, Langthabal, Khongjom, Bishnupur, Loikoipat, Kaina, Kongjom etc. Every household echoes with the clutter of handlooms in which lovely designs are woven. Embroidary work, metalware, cane and bamboo work, ornaments, doll making of souvenir also very popular.

3. The study shows that there has been tourist movements in Manipur in the ancient, medieval, British and post Independence period. First the travellers who came to Manipur were invaders and traders and they reached the valley via the hill routes which connected the Imphal valley with the Indian sub continent, Burma (now Myanmar) and China. Gradually people started coming here as preachers and missionaries. People started visiting holy places and this paved the way for pilgrimage tourism. With the development of roads, bridges, rest places, dance, drama and sports, there was further rapid growth in traders and travellers. People were attracted to Manipur. Picnic sites, shooting sites, game sites etc. were developed by Britishers. After Independence, the Manipur government realised the importance of tourism in the state and a separate Tourism Department was established in 1972. They started the work of discovering attractive
tourist sites, constructing roads, tourist homes etc. Both domestic and foreign tourists started visiting Manipur. In 1968 with the formation of a revolutionary government and the state being declared as a ‘disturbed area’ there was sudden fall in tourists. But creation of security check posts and construction of tourist amenities helped in conducting educational tours, excursions and picnics. These became very common and popular among students.

4. Results of field survey conducted at the eight selected tourist spots show that;

(i) **Loktak lake** is one of the most important wetland in the world. It is the largest, beautiful, oval shaped freshwater wetland surrounded by exotic landscapes consisting of blue mountains which surrounds the lake and numerous floating lands (*phumdi*) of different shapes and sizes. These floating lands are covered by wild vegetation, floating huts, migratory birds, reptiles, pythons etc. The author had identified some places of tourist attractions. Moirang town was identified as the main centre and from here other sites were selected and visited. These include Thanga island, Karang island, Sendra island, the Indian National Army Museum Complex, Phubala, Thangjing temple, and Thangjing hill. Added cultural attractions are Moirang *lai haraoba*, celebrated for one month. It is the biggest *lai haraoba* in Manipur, Laiching Ningthau *haraoba* is also celebrated for about a month, Karang *Khuman pokpa haraoba* is celebrated for 10 days, Loktak Day, Kamba-Thoibi dance which is one of best genre dances of Manipur, originated from here, Moirang *purva*, ballad of legendary hero and heroine, Kamba-Thoibi etc.

(ii) **Keibul Lamjao National park** is the only attractive floating national park in the world. It is located at the southern part of the Loktak lake. About 2/3 of the park is floating and is made up of rotting vegetation and humus known as *phumdi*. Sometimes it is as thick as 3 meters and it can easily sustain the weight of a matured cattle.

This is the home of a rare species, *Sangai* or the dancing deer. It is also the home of hog deer, wild boars, otter, golden cat, jungle cat,
squirrel, musk, shrew, ermine, bamboo rat, flying fox, snakes like cobra, python, viper, krait etc. This park is also the home of fascinating aquatic fauna, migratory birds (cormorant, gribe, egrot, duck, spoonbill duck, red crested ponchard etc.) etc.

The park area covers some hill portions where luxuriant lush pine forest is grown. The main park is marshy land covered by aquatic flora.

(iii) **Dzuko valley** is a gift of nature to mankind. Such a valley on lofty mountainous region is a rare occurrence on the Earth. It is expressed as ‘green carpet striped with white icy surface of the rivers’ during the winter season and as ‘the valley of flowers’ during the summer. The valley is fully blooming with exotic flowers mainly the Dzuko lily, iris, rhododendron etc. The nature and distribution of flowers is very interesting. On one side it is full of red colour and on the other side, it is decorated with white colour flowers. Amidst these flowers songs of colourful fascinating birds echoes in the valley and sometime rhythmic sound is interrupted by trumpet sounds of big birds. The different colours of flowers dance with the calm wind blowing from the green mountain slope.

The attractive white cascading rapids, projected peaks flanked with white clouds, two structure of valleys that is U-shaped valley followed by V-shaped valley, undulating plains, small smooth hummocks and wetland formation on top of the valley are just breathtaking. Added attractions are the thick forest, cold temperate climate with snow in winter.

Elephants occasionally visit the valley. It is the home of Himalayan black bear, lesser cats, *sambhar* deer, barking deer, wild dog, flying fox, hoolock gibbon, *langoor* etc. Birds like Himalayan barbet eagles, green pigeon etc. are also dwelled here. The valley is still in its natural form without external impact.

(iv) **Govindajee temple** is located at a distance of one km from Imphal. This is a historical *vaishnavite* temple. The presiding deity in the centre is flanked by the Shrines of Lord *Krishna* and *Balaram* on other side and
Jaganath on the other. Daily ritual programmes, day-night programmes with hymns and songs etc. are performed. All the seasonal programmes are very attractive like basanta ras, jalkeli, rathjatra, thulon hauba, shree Krishna, jarma, maha ras, doljatra, halangkar etc.

It is a religious destination and will attract both religious and secular visitors.

(v) **Imphal**, the capital city is situated in the centre of the beautiful oval shaped Manipur/central valley. The valley is generally flat elongated and tapering towards the south. This is why the expansion of the city is mostly taking on the southern side. The most beautiful hillock is Langol. Overall the climate is salubrious. Imphal is the nerve of all cultural, commercial and administrative activities.

The valley is covered by a carpet of flowers, exotic blooms and winding rivers.

The author has identified some places of tourist attractions so that package programmes could be made for the tourists to go around the town. The interesting places are Ima Keithel (unique market run by women), Kangla (old palace), Cemetery (dedicated to British and Indian soldiers), State Museum (displays tribal heritage also), Bir Trikandrajit Park, Nupi War Memorial Complex, Orchidarium, Sekta Kei Mounds, Sambal Lei Sekpil, Langthabal (old capital), Singda dam, Kangchup (health resort), Zoo etc.

(vi) **Kangla Fort** is the centre of polity, religion and ritual functions. It is situated in the mid of Imphal town enclosed by two rivers. It is the old palace and fortress of Manipur.

The author has identified some structures of tourist attractions like the ruins of Citadel, Uttra, two Kangla shas (mythical beasts), temple of old Shree Govindajee (Radha-Govinda), Bheithob, site of Rasmandal, temple of Brindabanchandra, Nunggoibi, Manglan, Nungjeng Pukhri etc.

Added attractions to this fort are, the ritual functions and festivals performed here like haochongba, Republic Day, cheiraoba, lai ikouba, anniversary of puya meithaba etc.
(vii) **Ukhrul Town** is one of the most beautiful, fascinating hill station located on the ridge of the hill. The environment is breathtaking and it would beckon many nature loving tourists. It takes three hours from Imphal to reach this town by the serpentine state highway.

The town is surrounded by the magnificent blue hills, green meadows and thick forest. On the peak of Siroy hill blooms the Siroy lily during the summer months. It is said to be 'a paradise on earth'. The salubrious climate and the majestic dance of the Siroy lily in perfect harmony with the monsoon breeze is breathtaking.

Added attractions are the inhabitants of this area, the *Tangkhul Nagas* and their customary hospitality, fascinating life style, festivals, dances etc. *lunguinai* and *luira* are very colourful festivals celebrated here.

The author has identified some places of tourist attractions like the Siroy lily hill, Hundung, Kangkhui caves, Khayang water fall (biggest waterfall of state) etc.

(viii) **Moreh town** is a border town situated on the Indo-Myanmar border. This town in about 108 kms from Imphal. It is situated on the broad flat end of a spur, surrounded by Myanmar boundary on the east, rugged forested green hills on the south-west and plains on the north. It is located above the Kabaw valley which is sloping toward the Myanmarese-Chindwin-Irrawaddy river system.

On the Indian side is the commercial town of Moreh while on the Myanmar side is the counterpart trade town of Tamu. The twin towns complement each other in trading and other commercial activities between the two countries. The location of the area has fascinated the visitors. The exotic wild stunted bamboo forests mixed with wild teak and other valuable trees, wild rivers gurgling down the hills, white simmering water passing through deep blue gorges, the pristine meadows bathing in the sun etc. The town and its surrounding has the wealth of natural beauty and the hub of commercial activities.
The author has identified places of tourist attractions like Kwatha villages, *Kondong Lairenbi* (known for its *lai haraoba* festival), Yangoupokpi Lokchao wild life sanctuary, Buddhist temple and Tamu. A sight seeing tour to Myanmar is also organised from this place.

5. There are many problems than beauty in Manipur. Its isolation from the outside world, insurgency, political instability which is being witnessed even today, ruggedness of the topography, inaccessibility, lack of transport facilities, infrastructural facilities and tribal population (for whom tribal loyalties are more dominant) are some of the impediments in the way of development. There is lack of intermingling not only with the rest of the country but also among the different tribal groups. This has led to the lack of national consciousness. Modernization is not easy in this traditional bound illiterate tribal societies. But once they realise the benefits which they will reap from the development of tourism there will be no looking back. All care has to be taken in this sensitive area that modern development are gradually assimilated by the people for their advantage without loosing their identity. Only the local people if they want social and economic growth, should come forward, co-operate with the authorities and help in tackling all the problems. During field surveys opinions and feedbacks were gathered from government officials, policy makers, environmental activists, academicians, social workers, tribals, local people etc. They were of the opinion that something should be ushered in the state which will bring development and solve the existing problems.

6. The untapped potentials of Manipur should be fully utilized and than only the state will sell as an attractive natural and cultural destination. The cultural angle will sell in the foreign markets while the natural beauty, salubrious climate and flora and fauna will attract both the domestic and international tourists.

Regarding this, a specific development strategy has to be evolved for the tourism industry of Manipur. The focus should be on:
development of connectivity (by roads, air and rail with different parts of the country and outside).

development of infrastructural facilities like transport (good motorable roads, vehicles, buses, luxury coaches, vans, jeeps etc.), accommodation (hotels, dormitories, youth hostels, tourist homes, camping sites, bed and breakfast etc.).

development of locale with its attraction and amenities. Every locale has its natural attraction. There is need to develop an added attraction also e.g. Loktak lake the natural attraction site but the added attractions should also be developed like water sports facilities, fishing, foeding, development of cafeteria, huts and cottages, floating restaurants etc. In the case of Ukhrul the added attractions will be trekking and visit to the ancient caves etc. Other sites could also be developed in the same way.

organization of daily cultural shows. This will give the tourists a chance to peep into the very rich art, culture, dance, drama etc.

development of package tours which will provide a lot of attraction to the tourist like:

(a). development of adventure tourism comprising of trekking, wild life safaries, visit to hills, forests, national park, wild life sanctuaries etc.

(b). natural tourism comprising of jungle trekking, wild life sanctuaries etc.

(c). cultural tourism comprising of visit to religious places, historical places, monasteries, tribal areas, peep into the very rich art, culture, dance, drama and festivals.

(d). sport tourism comprising of water sports, golf, polo, kang, martial art etc.

Providing all these will not be sufficient. Attempts should be made to upgrade the facilities already existing and of course, the publicity campaign has to be aggressive, whetting the appetite of even the most unwilling to travel.
So, where shall it be this year? Before you decide go through this thesis, look at the pictures, don’t they have misty mountain tops and salubriousness written all over them? So, where your hunt is on let me suggest a very fascinating place i.e. Manipur. The beautiful state of Manipur is more than a trekkers delight. With age old culture and history, rugged slopes, valleys offering splendid opportunities not only for mountaineering, rock climbing, but also for river rafting, trekking, golfing, fishing, riding etc. It is paradise for relaxation and recreation.

A magical change is sweeping the state. There is a quest like never before to turn the state into a tourist destination. Struggling off its neglected past, Manipur unviels a tourism strategy that will put it on the fast track to prosperity.

Should the Manipuris dream today for a better tomorrow through travel and tourism and start working for the realisation of this dream straight way?