1. Introduction

Understanding the structural relationships within urban economies has remained important to the geographers. The rapid increasing rates of growth of urban population and the uneven nature of this growth have played an important role in altering the nature of urban centres and their host societies. Growth in the size of towns and change in their structure signify many things, but perhaps the most essential feature is its role in bringing about economic development. Simultaneously, the latter engenders rapid urbanisation as well. Mizoram has maintained a high rate of population growth which could very well overtake the carrying capacity of its resources. The occupational shifted away from the primary sector has thus been opportune in mitigating such an eventuality. The state is primarily agricultural, though due to the very mountainous character of land, little farmland is available for gainful agricultural practices. And, nearly half of the population of the state live in urban settlements (22 in 2001), one quarter in one city, Aizawl.

2 Statement of the Problem:

Occupational structure refers to the types of economic activities, individuals in a society are engaged in as a vocation (or division of its population according to different occupations) and occupational shift refers to the changes occurring in proportion of population in different occupations over time in response to changes in the economic structure of the society, i.e., whether the society is moving away from primary activities towards secondary or tertiary pursuits. As compared to the rural occupations that are by and largely much more uniform (agriculture related), the urban occupations are highly diverse and dynamic, i.e., constantly changing in response to the changes the urban settlements themselves are undergoing.
Mizoram is a tiny and economically underdeveloped state with agriculture still the mainstay of the economy. It is by analysing and understanding the occupational structure within the (three) urban centres that one could discover the processes inherent in Mizoram that is leading to higher urbanisation levels. The study of occupations within the urban areas is likely to throw light on the dynamics of this urban system in a small state like Mizoram and make one understand the processes of economic change that makes these urban centres, though small to thrive on. The main focus of the study remains understanding the occupations, occupational diversity, dynamics of occupational changes and explanations in regards to the sustenance of the urban system as an integrated part of the regional economy.

3 Objectives of Study

The primary objectives of the present study are as follow:

(1) To study the nature of occupations in the small towns in one of the most backward districts of Mizoram on the basis of primary data.

(2) The second objective is to analyse the nature of occupational diversification within the small towns

(3) The third objective is to study the relationship of the regional and town economies with those of the occupational structure of these towns and possibly in the manner, the economy may be changing resulting in concurrent changes in the occupational structure.

(4) Finally, explanations are to be proposed on the basis of empirical evidences to the occupational characterisation of the towns as well as the changes possibly they are undergoing.
4 Research Issues

There are three major research issues here to be dealt with:

1. The understanding of occupational characterisation of the urban population in the small towns in light of understanding the dynamics of the relationship between occupation and the urban economy.

2. The second issue concerns the question of urbanisation in Mizoram itself. What then sustains this level of urbanisation? Is the urbanisation a product of economic changes reflected in occupational changes in towns and cities or is a product of political processes and even social processes.

3. The third issue relates the nature and dynamics of occupations in urban Mizoram. Are the occupations diversified enough? Is the process of diversification an on-going one? How is this process of diversification effected? What economic changes facilitate occupational changes? Without any worthwhile manufacturing base, the service sector, primarily public services and trade appear to be the prime-movers of these towns. How sustainable are they? Many of these issues need a closer look and adequate understanding.

5. **Data bases:** The principal source of data for the proposed study is through field surveys in the three towns. For the purpose of general uses, data from population censuses and other sources like the state directorate of economics and statistics etc. are also used.

6. **Methodology:** The primary survey is of two categories, (a) the establishment surveys and (b) the household surveys. The establishment survey aims at providing information regarding the nature of economic activities in the towns, including services that provide occupational
opportunities to the people of the towns. The sample design for establishments constitute of all public offices and 50% samples of the rest of the private establishments in all the three towns under study. The household sample was 10% of households in the three townships (combined population of over 25,878), samples drawn by a systematic random sampling system of 497 households. International Labour Organisation (ILO) occupational classification has been applied; and descriptive statistics and co-efficient of correlation methods are applied.

7. **Chapters Scheme**

Chapter I: Introduction, Review of Literature, Statement of the Problem, Objectives of the study and Hypotheses etc.

Chapter II: Database and Methodology

Chapter III: The general background to the Three Towns of Serchhip District of Mizoram.

Chapter IV: Nature and Capability of Public Establishments and Private Enterprises in the Three Towns of Serchhip District of Mizoram,

Chapter V: Occupations, types and compositions of the three towns

Chapter VI: Rural-urban relationships, urban economies and occupational nexus

Chapter VII: Economic dynamics and occupational changes

Chapter VIII: Summary, Finding and Conclusion
ANALYSIS CHAPTERS

CHAPTER III: GENERAL BACKGROUND OF SERCHHIP DISTRICT

This chapter is devoted for the illustration of general background of study area to provide understanding the past and present situations. It provides the information like locations, physical profiles and demographic conditions of the past and the present of the whole district of Serchhip and particular towns. It also emphasises the understanding of economy in three small towns. These three towns are generally lack in infrastructures of economic development like power generation, transportation and market facilities that lead the backwardness in economic developments. However, some of the public undertaking enterprises and establishments also act as a motivator of development such as Wildlife Sanctuary at Thenzawl town, Mini hydel electric generation at N.Vanlaiphai town. Besides these public undertaking establishments, small patches of lands, the depositional work of the stream also endeavour to agriculture development at these three towns.

CHAPTER IV: NATURE AND CAPABILITY OF PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENTS AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISES IN THE THREE TOWNS OF SERCHHIP DISTRICT

This deals with the capabilities of public and private establishments and enterprises in these three towns. It provides information for understanding such production facilities contribution in the field of development. This chapter also aims at to understand people participation in such production facilities and the capability of employment generation in public establishments and private enterprises.

The growth of urban population relates the expansion and the growth of public establishments. The expansion and growth of such public establishments and private enterprises generate occupational growth of professionals, technician and associate
professionals and clerical occupations. As far the employment generation concern, most of the occupations like senior officers, machine operators and clerical occupations are belong to public administrations whereas more than two-thirds of professionals' occupations are belong to educational institutions. The growth of private enterprise has significantly affected occupational changes among salespersons and shop-related work, vehicle drivers etc. While analysing capabilities of private enterprises, we find that only few of the private enterprises like educational institutions and undertaking employ hired-workers. The capacity of employment generation of private enterprises is limited because market size is small (because we deal with very small towns) and also, limited access to capital. The high cost of operation, lack of clients and inadequacy of governmental aid to private enterprises discourage the development of enterprises. An ideal enterprise in small towns is characterised by less capital deployed and low cost of operation, more numbers of clients with high amount of profit. Such kinds of enterprises are viable to sustain, like merchandise shops, animal farming, and household and cottage industries.

CHAPTER V: OCCUPATIONAL TYPES AND COMPOSITION

This Chapter deal with the analysis of occupational composition and types of occupations to analysis of occupational structures of the three towns. These three towns are the dominance of agriculture and allied occupations. Shifting cultivation, market oriented cultivation, subsistence agriculture and market gardening are the main activities of agriculture concern occupation, it consists nearly half of the total occupation in these three towns.

The occupational structures of these three towns are determined significantly by technical knowhow and accessibility of facilities like public establishments and other infrastructures. From the general distribution of occupations, larger towns have high
proportion of office work-based occupations (e.g. teachers, accountants, lawyers, salespersons, market-related workers, clerks etc) and market oriented occupations (shop sales and market sales persons, hawkers etc.). These occupations decline when the town is smaller. On the contrary, agriculture and allied occupations like market oriented and subsistence agriculture are more prevalent in smaller towns. It signifies, larger towns possess more facilities to change occupations, because larger towns are more diversified in terms of occupations like professionals, technical and associated professional and market-based occupations and other higher level occupations. Serchhip town is the most diversify occupation among these three towns; 100 percent diversification accounts 74.46 percent of the total households at Serchhip town, 59.81 percent at Thenzawl town and 55.38 percent at N.Vanlaiphei town.

CHAPTER VI: OCCUPATIONS AND THE URBAN ECONOMY OF THE THREE TOWNS OF SERCHHIP DISTRICT OF MIZORAM

This chapter contains the economic structures, the complex of urban economic and occupations nexus of the three small towns of Serchhip district of Mizoram. The main objectives of this chapter are to show urban economic structures and production systems that facilitate occupations in the town. Occupational structure of a town is one of the best indicators of urban economy indicating stagnancy or vibrancy of the economic life of the town—if less diversified, then the town’s economy is stagnant; conversely a greater occupational diversity indicates a growing city.

The study of urban economic system and growth of population exhibit that urban problems like scarcity of land, social and economic disparity and unemployment are high in these three towns, which have essentially agro-based economies. The average (agricultural)
land holding size is 3.18 acres per household. Nearly two-thirds of the total workers are engaged in agriculture and allied occupations (market-oriented cropping, fisheries, subsistence cropping, market gardening, cultivators etc.) with low income (due to low per capita productivity in agriculture, which is quite underdeveloped in Mizoram). Some workers holding high educational qualifications are involved in low income occupations due to lack of adequate work opportunities which small towns do not offer.

The sectoral distribution of workforce reveals that these three towns are dominated by primary sector, largely agriculture and allied activities. In the largest town, Serchhip, nearly half of the total workforces are engaged in primary activities. As it appears, the proportion of people engaged in primary occupations is increases with decrease in the size of the town. The diversified activities in the tertiary sector especially in businesses like shops, market, transport etc. increases the output, but the high productivity is observed by services like government services. Public establishments and private enterprises act as the principal mechanism of production, because the tertiary sector contributes more than two-thirds of the total output in these towns.

CHAPTER VII: ECONOMIC AND OCCUPATIONAL CHANGES OF THE TOWNS OF SERCHHIP DISTRICT OF MIZORAM

This chapter contains the dimension and pattern of changing economic systems of urban centres of Serchhip district. Such changes of production system and productivity from public establishments and private enterprises have significant implications to determine urban economic system since the capacity of employment generation influence urban economy. It also enclosed intra-generation occupational change and inter-generation occupational change.

¹ Most of the households in these small towns happen to own farm lands in surrounding areas.
These occupational changes were explained through aggregate change of occupational groups. This chapter aims at to understand occupational change in accordance with the change of economy. The study also aims to examine the relationship of the regional and town economies with those of the occupational structure of these towns.

The observation examines the economic change and occupational opportunities through establishment survey that reveals that the public and private establishments contribute significantly in changing occupations. Most of the public establishments and employees have a long path of origin; nearly half of them have origin before 1981. However, most of the private enterprises and the workers are recent origin that change occupation significantly especially on the shop sales and market work occupational group. This chapter analysed the changing pattern of occupations; most of the professional and senior officers and manager occupations were marginally involved in occupational change whereas elementary occupations and skilled agriculture and fisheries occupations shift into shop and market sales, technical and associate professional occupations. Inter-generation occupational change is observed to analyse the nature of occupational change among the head of the households of permanent residents of the towns; nearly three-fifth (59.45 percent) of the total permanent resident change occupation from the parent’s occupations at Serchhip town, nearly one-third (32.47 percent) at Thenzawl and nearly one-fifth (18.37 percent) at N.Vanlaiphai. More than half of the changes are incurred by capturing better income occupations; more or less one-fourth of the changes are incurred by education. Intra-generations occupational changes is the most important to manifest economic changes; more than one-third (34.77 percent) of the total households of the respondents change occupation during 20 years cycle at Serchhip, 39.25 percent at Thenzawl and 55.38 percent at N.Vanlaiphai. Within 20 years, among the
respondents who change occupation, percentage of occupational change is overstated among
elementary occupations and skilled agriculture and fisheries occupations.

CHAPTER VIII: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study of occupational structures of the three towns indicates that small towns in
Mizoram are dominated by agriculture and allied occupations and services. Overall, the study
brings to focus an entirely uncharted territory, i.e. the internal dynamics of the economy
small towns, with little growth momentum. The study of occupations and occupational
changes bring to focus how people negotiate their lives in the limited economies of small
towns with little propensity to expand, except the natural growth of population, since in-
migration stream is weak and often the expansion of the specific town merely incorporates
the rural habitations in the fringes of these towns without any change in the economic life of
the people. In the North East region the small towns (Class VI: population less than 5000)
abound; out of 245 towns enumerated during 2001 census in the 7 states of the region, 46
were Class VI towns, nearly 20% of all the towns. Similarly, the Class V towns (5001-
10,000) have little growth potential. In Mizoram of the 16 towns, 14 belong to class V or VI
towns, though notionally, Mizoram has one of the highest levels of urbanisation in the
country and nearly half of the population live in town and cities!