CHAPTER IV

POPULATION AND SETTLEMENT

I. MIGRATION

The total population of Manipur, according to A.D. 1971 census, is 1,072,753. There are people of diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious groups. This diversity is very striking in such an isolated state. This could be possible due to immigration of the people from different places. Notwithstanding their small number they add a cosmopolitan touch to the population composition of the state.

The present population of Manipur has descended from Mongoloid stock that once roamed in various parts of Indo-China and Burma. The central plain must have proved a source of attraction for the wandering groups, in the distant past. The people of the state, both in the central plain and the hill region, speak Kuki-Chin and Tibeto-Burman group of languages.

In subsequent years they came in contact with outsiders, especially the people from Bengal, and, to a limited extent, those from other parts of India. The state maintained a record of the arrival of the people from the west during the middle age. The immigrants were Brahmins, traders, and a few others belonging to various professions. They got absorbed in the local society, since their number was very small and their arrivals were few and far between.
However, as time passed, religious ties and trade links grew stronger. During the early seventeenth century a good number of Muslims came especially from Bengal and were allowed to settle. They were given freedom of religion. During the days of British overlordship, some Gurkha troops were stationed here and gradually Nepalis came and settled. These groups, however, were confined to the central plain. There are some Nepali villages in the Manipur North district. There are villages of sizeable Muslim population in different parts of the central plain.

In case of Jiribam area, the population is a composite one, as, there are Meiteis, hill people, and Bengalis in fair proportion. It is the only Meitei pocket outside the central plain. In the hills there are two groups of people namely the Nagas and the Kukis. The former lead a settled life, the latter a migratory one. But this migration is confined to the hills within the borders of the state.

II. DISTRIBUTION

The population of Manipur consists predominantly of two groups, i.e. those living in the central plain and those in the hills. This has been the habitation pattern since pre-historic times. In the early days they were divided into groups and subgroups and occupied various parts of the state. Those occupying the hills led a life of isolation. The environment provided very little mobility and consequently they developed into distinct ethnic groups.
Each group speaks a different language or dialect within the broad framework of Kuki-Chin or Tibeto-Burman group of languages, as already stated. They have distinctly varying cultures too. Their religious practices, dresses, customs and traditions are entirely different from those prevalent among the Aryans. Social organisations, mode of warfare, dancing, skull cult, placing of erect stones on graves and food habits make these people entirely distinct from the Aryans. These practices, however, are traced eastwards in the hills of Burma, Indo-China and Yuman, indicating their closer link with the Mongoloid stock.

Within the general matrix of Mongoloid stock, they are divided into various groups, subgroups and clans. People living together in a particular region for a long time, irrespective of their number, have formed a distinguished group. This is because of their isolation, inaccessibility and self-sufficient economy. They have a strong sense of group loyalty. Each group tries to maintain its individuality. Due to lack of regular contact and social mobility, each group has developed particular cultural traits different from the others.

Of late, many hill people have accepted Christianity but some others still hold on to their ancient faith. The inhabitants of the hill may be divided into two major groups, namely Naga and Kuki. However, there are some people who do not fit into either of the two, and may be called Marginal group. The major groups have their subgroups, occupying different parts of the hill region and as such it is worthwhile
to take into account their areal distribution. In the absence of up-to-date statistics, the numerical strength of each subgroup according to A.D. 1961 census, given within brackets, is as follows:

NAGA GROUP

1. Aimol (108) are scattered in Tamenglong, Churachandpur, Tengnoupal and in hills near Bishempur.
2. Anal (4868) inhabit Chakpikarong and Tengnoupal area.
3. Angami (632) are scattered over Kharasom, Jessami and Lai area.
4. Kabui (29218) are the dominant group in Tamenglong area. Some of them have also settled in the central plain.
5. Kacha Naga (9734) inhabit Tamenglong area.
6. Koireng (531) are seen scattered in the Sadar Hills.
7. Mao (28810) are concentrated in the Mao area.
8. Maram (4928) occupy the Maram area.
9. Tangkhul (43943) are the dominant group of Ukhrul and Phaisat area.
10. Monsang (1342) inhabit Tengnoupal area.
11. Maring (7745) are seen along Indo-Burma border.

KUKI GROUP

1. Chiru (1809) are seen scattered in Sadar Hills, in the hills near Mao and in the hills near Bishenpur.
2. Chothe (1035) occupy various parts of Churachandpur and Tengnoupal.
3. Gangte (4856) inhabit Churachandpur area.
4. Kom (5477) inhabit Sadar Hills and Tengnoupal area.
5. Lamgang (1866) are seen in Tengnoupal area.
6. Paite (17029) inhabit various parts of Churachandpur.
7. Purum (82) are found scattered in Tengnoupal and in hills near Bishenpur.
8. Ralte (80) are seen scattered in Churachandpur.
9. Sinte (2818) occupy various parts of Churachandpur and Tengnoupal.
10. Thadou (47994) inhabit various parts of Ukhrul and Churachandpur.
11. Vaiphui (8215) inhabit various parts of Churachandpur.

MARGINAL GROUP

1. Hmar (15365) are found in Churachandpur and Jiribam.
2. Koirao (406) are scattered in Sadar Hills and Tengnoupal.
3. Mizo (2746) inhabit Churachandpur area.
4. Zou (6761) are found scattered in Churachandpur area.
5. Moyon (647) occupy parts of Tengnoupal area.
The areal distribution of different tribes is presented in Map 7. However, the two broad groups of the people of the state i.e. the tribals and the non-tribals inhabit the hill and the plain respectively. Some tribal people, of course, inhabit the plain but the reverse is not true, except in case of Manipur North district where some Nepalis practise cattle rearing. The distribution of rural tribal and non-tribal population subdivision-wise is presented in Map 8.

The following features in the distribution of population are very striking: (1) the Meiteis are the most dominant single group, constituting about two-third of the population of the state, (2) they are entrenched in the central plain, (3) in the hills they are conspicuous by their absence, (4) the hill men are mostly scattered in the hills but they are not absent from the central plain, (5) the Muslims inhabit the central plain as well as the plain portion of Jiribam together with the Meiteis, and (6) the urban centre of Imphal has a small proportion of outsiders e.g. Punjabis, Marwaris, Bengalis, Nepalis etc. The distribution of population for the state as a whole religionwise in percentage is Hindus 58.97, Muslims 6.62, Christians 26.03, Sikhs 0.09, Jains 0.13, Buddhists 0.05 and others 8.11 (refer to Table XII).
INDEX:

AN ANAL
AM ANGAM
KA KABUI
KM KACHA NAGA
KO KOIRANG
MA MARAM
MO MARING
MO MOANG
MOI MONSANG
MOY MONYON
TA TANGKUL
AI AIMOL
CH CHIRU
CHOT CHOTHE
GA GANGTE
KO KOM
PA PAITE
PU PURUM
RA RALTE
SI SITTE
TH THADOU
VA VAIPHUI
HM HMAR
KO KIRAO
LM LHOENGANG
MI MIZO
ZO ZOUI
AI AIMOL

MANIPUR
AREAL DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBES
.LOCATIONS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE)
MANIPUR
DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBAL & NONTRIBAL POPULATION (RURAL)
1971
(SUB-DIVISION-WISE)
III. DENSITY GROUP

The density of population of the state as a whole, is 48 persons per square kilometre. This, however, does not give a clear picture. The density in the four hill districts of Manipur North, Manipur West, Manipur South and Manipur East is 30, 10, 21 and 14, persons per square kilometre respectively (refer to Table XIII).

Manipur Central district has a density of 136 persons to the square kilometre. This is an incomplete picture. This district covers the central plain plus Jiribam subdivision and the whole of Tengnoupal Autonomous district which itself is almost twice the size of the central plain.

The correct picture emerges if the density of population is considered block-wise. The density of the blocks of Chandel, Tengnoupal and Chakpikarong is 10, 17 and 8, persons per square kilometre respectively. In respect of Jiribam it is 84 persons to the square kilometre. The rural density of five blocks covering the central plain, namely Imphal East, Imphal West I, Imphal West II, Thoubal and Bishenpur is 413, 323, 534, 324 and 184, persons to the square kilometre respectively (refer to Table XIV). Imphal West II is the most densely populated block of the state (Map 9).

The central plain as a whole happens to be the densest rural population pocket, based primarily on agricultural economy. Geography has denied the hills the advantages that it has bestowed on the central plain for supporting a large population. Food production in the hills
MANIPUR
DENSITY OF RURAL POPULATION, 1971
(BLOCK-WISE)

INDEX:
PERSONS PER SQUARE KILOMETRE

- BELOW 10
- 10 - 20
- 20 - 30
- 30 - 40
- 40 - 50
- 50 - 100
- 100 - 200
- 200 - 400
- ABOVE 400

Scale: 20 40 80 160 240 MILES
20 40 80 160 240 KILOMETRES

MAP 9
is very limited. In spite of these handicaps, the population in the hills is increasing. But increase in population without a corresponding increase in food production is bound to lead to further deterioration in the standards of living which are already precarious.

IV. SEX AGE WORKING FORCE AND OCCUPATION STRUCTURE

Examination of the census data for sixty years, from A.D. 1901 to A.D. 1961, reveals that during this period females outnumbered males (refer to Table XV). This is an interesting thing. In A.D. 1961, there were 1015 females for 1000 males for the state. This ratio declined in A.D. 1971, as there are 980 females for 1000 males for the state as a whole.

According to latest statistics, if different administrative subdivisions are taken into account, females outnumber males in Chandel, Chakpikarong, Nungba, Tamenglong West, Mao East, Churachandpur North, Thanlon, Ukhrul North and Kamjong (Chassad), all in the hill region. In rest of the hill subdivisions males outnumber females (refer to Table XVI). In the central plain females outnumber males in Imphal East subdivision only (Map 10).

A scrutiny of the Sample Registration records has revealed that the mortality rate of males is higher than that of females. But the birth rate of male children during A.D. 1968-70 was higher than that of female children. This may partially explain the position of males outnumbering females. However, the fact of higher birth rate of
MANIPUR
SEX RATIO, 1971
(SUB-DIVISION-WISE)
male children is difficult to explain. Increase in male population is also associated with immigration. This brings predominantly males from other states.\textsuperscript{2} Maintenance of law and order also requires an increasing number of army personnel from outside which again adds only to the male population. In addition to this, organisations like Border Road Development and Loktak Project have good number of male workers from outside.

In the hill subdivisions, where the population is invariably very small, and males and females are very close to each other in numerical strength, a slight immigration of male population tilts the balance in favour of male. Females have still been outnumbering males in Manipur West district as a whole. In all other districts, females have been outnumbered by males.

The latest data of population on the basis of age are not available and the writer is obliged to use the A.D. 1961 statistics for a discussion on this point. The statistics, however, show that 43.84 per cent of males and 42.41 per cent of females belong to the age group 0 to 14 years (refer to Table XVII). It is to be noted that the population under this age group hardly makes any contribution in the economic pursuit of any kind.

The age group of 15 to 59 years is responsible for various economic activities and as such significant. There are 50.62 per cent

of males and 51.53 per cent of females belonging to this age group. And we may say that more than half the population of the state could be gainfully employed if avenues for employment were available.

There are very few persons in the age group of 60 years and above, therefore 5.35 per cent of males and 5.84 per cent of females are shown in this category. They could very well be treated as people virtually retired from active life. There is a category of persons whose age is not stated for reasons not known. Anyway, under this category a very small fraction of population is included i.e. C.21 per cent of males and C.22 per cent of females. The writer feels that even if the data of last census were available, the situation would not be very much different from that obtaining in A.D. 1961.

For Manipur as a whole, there has been a drop in the percentage of working population to total population in A.D. 1971, compared to that in A.D. 1961 (refer to Table XVIII). This holds good in case of each of the five Revenue districts of Manipur (Figure 3). In case of Manipur East district the fall in percentage is least; from 49.77 in A.D. 1961 to 48.65 in A.D. 1971. The fall in percentage, however, is most striking in case of Manipur Central district; from 44.05 in A.D. 1961 to 30.10 in A.D. 1971. The inclusion of Tengnoupal hill area in the Central district is one of the reasons for this drop in percentage. Besides, there are no adequate avenues of employment for the expanding population, consequently even the able-bodied persons remain unemployed.
MANIPUR
PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS TO TOTAL POPULATION
DISTRICT WISE
1961 & 1971

FIG. 3
In case the percentage of only male working force to total male population in A.D. 1961 and A.D. 1971 is compared; there is a fall of percentage in every district except Manipur East district in A.D. 1971, but it is marginal. In case of Manipur East district the position is otherwise, because the percentage of male included as workers is 44.66 and 45.87 for A.D. 1961 and A.D. 1971 respectively.

As regards the percentage of female workers to total female population for A.D. 1961 and A.D. 1971, it is noted that there has been invariably a fall in percentage in A.D. 1971 compared to that in A.D. 1961. This holds good in case of Manipur as a whole as well as every district of the state. In case of Manipur North, Manipur West and Manipur East districts the percentage has dropped from 55.45, 55.32 and 54.72 in A.D. 1961 to 48.44, 49.00 and 51.52 in A.D. 1971 respectively. This is very striking in case of Manipur South and Manipur Central districts, where the percentage has dropped from 44.26 and 41.47 in A.D. 1961 to 28.98 and 15.83 in A.D. 1971. For the state it has dropped from 44.48 in A.D. 1961 to 23.62 in A.D. 1971.

The state is faced with the problem of rising population, increasing percentage of non workers and by implication decreasing percentage of workers. The writer is of the opinion that this situation has come due to, among other causes, literacy explosion. This is reflected in two ways. Firstly those getting education seek for white-collar jobs. As jobs are not available in plenty, they remain unemployed. The present system of education does not train them for different vocations to enable them to stand on their own. Secondly, the avenues for employ-
ment in other pursuits for example industry, business, mining etc. are limited. The result is that the able-bodied persons are not in a position to join the mainstream of workers.

The data regarding workers and nonworkers derived from sample survey are presented in Table I. Out of a total of 906 persons, covered by the survey, males constitute 50.88 per cent and females 49.12 per cent of population. The non workers and workers constitute 51.43 and 48.57 per cent of the total population. Workers, therefore, are a little less than half of the total population under consideration. Of the 466 total non workers there are 226 males and 240 females. The number of workers is 440 out of which more than half i.e. 251 are males and 189 females. Female participation in working force is quite less.

TABLE I

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS AND NON-WORKERS OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS 1971-72

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>50.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>49.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non workers</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>51.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>24.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>26.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total worker</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>48.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>27.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>20.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sample survey by the writer 1971-72.
The population of the state, included as workers, belongs to the age group 15-59 years in general. The workers are engaged in various occupations. Of all the occupations, cultivation is by far the most important. This is the largest single sector of employment. The workers are called cultivators. The percentage of workers enlisted as cultivators is 65.45 and 67.00 for A.D. 1961 and A.D. 1971, respectively (refer to Table XIX). This is, however, the position of the state as a whole.

If different districts are considered a more clear picture emerges. In the hill districts the avenues for employment in occupations other than cultivation are quite negligible. Consequently there is concentration of working force in cultivation. In the districts of Manipur North, Manipur West, Manipur South and Manipur East 90 to 93 per cent of working force in A.D. 1961 was engaged in cultivation alone. If separate data for Tengnoupal Autonomous district were available, the position would have been similar to that obtaining in other hill districts.

There is, however, a slight shift in this situation in A.D. 1971. The percentage has fallen in case of the districts of Manipur North, Manipur West, Manipur South and Manipur East, being 89.28, 89.91, 85.29 and 85.41 respectively. Evidently some persons have taken to occupations other than cultivation.

In respect of Manipur Central district the percentage of cultivators to total workers in A.D. 1961 and A.D. 1971 is 53.45 and 54.40 respectively. The low percentage is due to the fact that this
district has bulk of its population in the central plain where there are other avenues of employment.

The next occupation listed in census statistics is 'agricultural labourer'. Very few persons, however, are engaged as agricultural labourer. The general practice is that the cultivators cultivate their own field. Less than four percent of workers are shown as agricultural labourer in A.D. 1971, for the state as a whole. In case of Manipur Central district 5.47 per cent of workers are in this category. In the central plain, there are persons who own land but do not cultivate themselves. They engage agricultural labourer. Elsewhere this occupation is insignificant.

The remaining workers are enlisted as 'other workers'. They may be engaged in any occupation except cultivation, for example mining, quarrying, livestock rearing, fishing, manufacture and household industry, construction, trade and commerce, transport and communication and other services.

In Manipur, however, a large number of persons are engaged in household industry, services and business and some in other occupations. The percentage of other workers to the total workers in the districts of Manipur North, Manipur West, Manipur South, Manipur Central and Manipur East in A.D. 1971 is 10.40, 1.00, 12.89, 40.13 and 14.23 respectively. The position in this regard for the state as a whole is 29.35 per cent. The percentage in case of Manipur Central district, being 40.13 is significant, since it reflects other avenues of gainful employment available in the central plain.
The data with regard to main occupations, obtained from sample survey, are presented in Table II. Out of 440 workers, 278 workers are engaged in cultivation alone, which amounts to 63.19 per cent of the total working force covered by the survey. The ratio of male to female participation is almost 2:1. Hardly 3 per cent of the working force is in the category of agricultural labourer. In industry, of course, nearly 21 per cent of working force is engaged. As an occupation, industry occupies a position next to cultivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>57.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>42.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>43.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>19.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labourers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sample survey by the writer 1971-72.
It is to be noted that the percentage of male workers in industry is 3.86, compared to this the percentage of female workers is as high as 17.05. This high participation of female workers in industry is quite significant. Then there are persons engaged in trade in which the percentage of workers to total workers is 4.77. But more workers are engaged in other services. The percentage of workers in this category is 8.18. It may be concluded that any future development programme of the state should aim at removing the concentration of working force from cultivation. It has to be diverted to other occupations.

V. POPULATION TREND

The population of Manipur has shown a steady rise since after the Burmese War in A.D. 1825-26. Regular census started in A.D. 1881. The population of Imphal in that year was 60,000, the rest of the valley had another 60,000, and the population of the hills was estimated to be 100,000, making a total of 2,20,000 persons.

Nearly half of the population in the valley, concentrated at Imphal, in an essentially agrarian economy, seems, rather unusual. But that would probably be due to security reasons. Imphal with the presence of Political Agent and some British troop, must have ensured safety and security to the ruler and the people.

It is also felt that the state had not fully recovered from the ravages of Burmese invasion. The population had started dispersing to the villages, forced by pressure on limited agricultural land in
the environs of Imphal. Imphal during those days must have looked to the villages for its food supply, as is the case at present.

The census papers of A.D. 1891 were destroyed in the Mutiny. Regular census data are, however, available from A.D. 1901 onwards. A close examination of the data reveals that the population from the beginning of the century has shown a steep upward trend, which has placed a heavy strain on the state’s resources and development.

The total population of Manipur in A.D. 1971, being 1,072,753, is nearly four times of that in A.D. 1901 (refer to Table XV). During the decade A.D. 1901-1911, the population increased by 21.71 per cent. The decades that followed, each marked a rise, varying between 10 and 16 per cent above its immediate previous census figure. The decades covering A.D. 1951-1961 and A.D. 1961-1971, registered spectacular growth rates of 35.04 and 37.12 per cent respectively. The growth of population has been most alarming during this period i.e. A.D. 1951 to A.D. 1971 (Figure 4).

The writer feels that living conditions in Manipur are much better than many other parts of India. The people of Manipur are neat and clean in their habits, live in healthy surroundings and food is available in plenty. This is the only part of India where one does not come across beggars. Medical care and maternity facilities attached to hospitals and dispensaries are almost adequate. All these have reduced infant mortality and encouraged longevity. This is reflected in the phenomenal growth of population during the period A.D. 1951 to A.D. 1971.
MANIPUR

GROWTH OF POPULATION
1901 - 1971

FIG. 4
But the fact remains that the state has to feed almost four times the number it used to do at the beginning of the century. In its agricultural economy there has been no remarkable increase in the cultivable land so as to keep pace with the growth of population. There is a visible gap between food production and population growth. The state, it is felt, has to make optimum use of the available resources, agricultural, forest, industrial etc. to attain self-sufficiency in its requirements.

VI. URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION

The percentage of urban population to the total population has shown a marked increase of 13.19 in A.D. 1971 from 8.68 in A.D. 1961. There was only one town in A.D. 1961, but 7 new small towns have been added in A.D. 1971. The population of Imphal Municipality is 1,00,366. Other towns are small in size (refer to Table XX). In respect of these small towns urbanisation has just started. Four of these are in the population block between 5000 and 9999. They are, Thoubal, Moirang, Kakching and Churachandpur, having population of 5682, 8378, 8611 and 8706 persons respectively; the last named is the headquarters of Manipur South district and is located in the hills, close to the central plain. There are three towns with population block of less than 5000. They are Lamlai, Nambol and Bishenpur with population of 2219, 3296 and 4254 respectively (Map II). The central plain has very dense rural population compared to this the hill region is most sparsely populated.
VII. SETTLEMENT PATTERN AND HOUSE TYPES

People, excepting the urban centres, live in villages. Each village is a distinct part of the landscape with its own individual life and personality. About 87 per cent of the people of the state live in villages.

The central plain is dotted with villages. They are located on suitable sites. As the valley is subject to occasional floods, elevated grounds are preferred, and thus micro relief gains importance. In the absence of elevated ground, the land above high flood level is selected for this purpose.

Villages are occasionally seen in the midst of paddy fields. Very often river levees are selected as they provide higher land compared to the surrounding plain. Such villages have the advantage of river water for domestic use. In the absence of levee, embankments are made along the river banks as a precaution against flood. They also serve as roads. Many villages have such embankments.

The lay-out of such villages is linear. In most cases, villages are situated along both the banks of the river. Sometimes the settlement continues for a few kilometres, the villages follow one after another. At places there are double villages separated by river. Some villages are situated on the edge of lakes or swamps. They too are linear in plan. There are also villages on both the sides of the road.
Occasionally the fan pattern of village is seen, where the village fans out in one direction and has a limited growth in the other. Limitation is often imposed by a sharp river bend or susceptibility of the area to floods. The shape or plan of the village is generally rectangular when adequate high ground is available. In this case the houses are constructed in rows. They are separated by village streets.

In the northern part of the central plain, around Imphal, villages give the impression of agglomerated settlements. In sharp contrast, are the settlements in the southern part of the plain, partly swampy, making it obligatory for the settlement to be dispersed. However, the present trend with regard to new settlements is to be well planned, compact, rectangular in layout, with adequate provision of straight roads and lanes.

The villages in the hills may be divided into two groups: (1) villages belonging to migratory people and (2) villages belonging to permanent inhabitants. The Kuki groups, clear a part of the forest, cultivate it and establish their settlements near the site of cultivation. When the soil loses fertility in a few years, both land and settlements are abandoned without a sense of loss.

The villages belonging to permanent population bear the impression of permanency. Most of the villages, however, are too small. They consist of a few dwellings and may be called hamlets. Geographical factors are not in favour of large villages. A hill man has to bear with steep slopes, lack of transport and communication facilities,
heavy rain, strong wind and cold winter. While selecting a site for a village these considerations receive due attention.

Preference is given to flat topped ridges. Higher ridges are usually selected on the ground of defense. These command a clear view of the surroundings and the enemy can be sighted easily. Besides, there is air drainage and little mosquito menace. It has, however, one disadvantage. The water point is invariably very far lower down, which is either a natural spring or a mountain brook. One is surprised to see women carrying water in bamboo containers on their back up the slope.

Some villages are situated at the intersection of different gradients. Some villages trail along the roads. In the hills many new roads have been constructed and there is a trend of newer settlements coming up by the side of the roads. Most of the villages, however, are seen in the vicinity of cultivable land and some near a permanent spring.

There are villages well fortified by wooden and bamboo pallisades to ensure safety against enemies and wild beasts. This is possible due to the availability of logs of wood and bamboo in plenty. The pattern of a village following a ridge or a road is linear; other villages are small crowded hamlets. In the hills, in general, one comes across a scattered type of settlement. This is to say that villages or hamlets are few and far between. They are identical in appearance because of similar conditions of soil, hydrography and climate.
There are, however, some villages in the hills, quite large in size such as Tamenglong, Mao, Maram, Tadubi, Ukhrul, Somdal etc. Such big villages consist of a few hundred houses and have quite a sizeable population. Large villages, however, are an exception, rather than the rule.

As regards urban settlement it may be said that Imphal is the only town worth the name. The word Imphal is derived from the Manipuri word 'Yumphal', meaning, a collection of houses. Modern houses here are built of brick, concrete, C.I. sheets, cement, lime etc. Due to non availability of land in the town area, double storeyed houses are gradually coming up with concrete reinforcement. The town is extending towards Lamphelpat, where modern buildings have been constructed.

There is a Municipal Board for the town whose jurisdiction extends over an area of 6.75 square miles (17.48 square kilometres). The larger part of the town lies between two rivers, namely Imphal and Nambul, which flow through it.

Imphal is the capital of the state. It is linked with the railhead at Dimapur, at a distance of about 215 kilometres by National Highway No.59. The newly constructed Cachar road links it with Silchar, another railhead, at a distance of about 260 kilometres. It enjoys a central position in the state. It is connected with other important places in the state by roads. It is the main collection and distribution centre in the state.

---

C.I. stands for corrugated iron.
The house types vary between the central plain and the hill. Also there is slight variation from place to place in the hill region itself. The houses in the central plain are located in spacious fields so as to include residence, cattle shed, kitchen, handloom shed, courtyard and a backyard for kitchen garden. All along the boundary bamboos are planted to serve as fence. Along with bamboo certain other trees are also planted. They are tall trees whose branches are annually pruned. Some decorative and medicinal plants are also grown along the boundary. From a distance the village gives an impression of woodland. In the courtyard or backyard there is invariably a small pond, not very deep. It is locally known as 'pukhri'. The water of this pond is used for domestic consumption (Figure 5).

The homestead is exposed to the purifying influence of the sun and air, and is quite a healthy place to live in. There is no congestion. They are generally not very close to one another and are spread over the entire village. This, almost a balanced and even spacing of houses, keeps living conditions healthy and clean.

There are groups of families united by a common descent. Their cultivable plots are in the same area. They cleave to one another impelled by the need to co-operate in cultivating the crops. The impulse for co-operation is buttressed by common religious rites, a respect for the past and a common heritage.

The building materials used are of mixed character. Some are locally available whereas others are brought from the hills. The houses of better sorts are made of improved building materials,
MANIPUR
HOUSE TYPES

Mao Type

Kabui Type

M. C.

Plainsman Type

Mizoram

Paite Type

Maring Type

Meitei Type

Manipur North

Manipur West

Manipur Central

Manipur South

Manipur East

Fig. 5
imported from outside like those used in urban centres. But for the masses, the materials are timber, bamboo, reeds, leaves and thatching grass.

The house is supported by wooden or bamboo frames. In damp land, houses stand on stilts. The walls are made of reed or bamboo mat or split bamboo, plastered with mud. The roof is simply thatched.

The Meitei houses have a rectangular plan, east-west long and north-south broad, with doors to the east and west. A small part of the house to the east is kept open to serve as verandah. It allows enough of sun for the inhabitants. The inside of the house is partitioned, if and when the need arises. There are few windows. In some houses, the open verandah to the east also serves to instal the handloom and for sitting and other household chores.

Every Meitei village in this plain provides a huge building, to serve as community forum. These houses are spacious enough to accommodate a large assembly, and suitable for meetings, religious ceremonies and dances.

The data with regard to distribution of sample households according to number of rooms are presented in Table III. One hundred households covered by sample survey have 298 rooms in total. There are only 8 households each consisting of one room. Evidently such houses are owned by poor people. In such houses different parts of the room are used for different purposes e.g. kitchen, sleeping, store etc. However, households with two, three and four rooms are more evenly distributed, being 26, 29 and 25 respectively. There are only
12 households, each consisting of 5 rooms or above. It is concluded that households with one room or five rooms and above, represent extreme cases and are not to be found in general. Most of the houses have two to four rooms.

TABLE III

DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF ROOMS 1971-72

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of households</th>
<th>Total number of rooms</th>
<th>Households with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sample survey by the writer 1971-72.

As regards households according to building material the sample survey revealed that out of 100 households 70 households are old thatch houses, 26 are improved thatch houses. The brick built houses are, however, rare being only 4. The present trend, is to make use of metal sheets for roofing purpose.

With regard to house types in the hills it can be said that they are very simple in plan, construction and appearance. The houses of the Kuki group are huts of very temporary nature. They provide just shelter to the inmates. The building materials collected from the locality are bamboo, reeds and thatching hay, abundantly available everywhere in the hills.
Houses to serve as permanent residence are carefully constructed. Wooden or bamboo poles are used to prepare the main frame of the house. This structure completed, walls are made of reed and plastered with mud. The roof is thatched with layer of hay which is placed on thin bamboo lining tapering on the wooden or bamboo frame. Layer after layer of thatching grass and foliage is used to make it leak proof.

The roof has a steep slope to allow for immediate drainage of rainwater. On steep slopes, houses stand on stilts, the floor of which is a few feet above the ground. In the front part of the houses, certain decorative designs, usually carved on wood are fixed. Each tribe has its own decorative design. The houses of better sorts look more presentable.

The Tangkhul Nagas use more timber in constructing house. The recent trend is to replace thatch roof by corrugated iron sheet roof. Wooden planks have long been used for making the floor. Those who can afford, are replacing the wooden plank floor by concrete cement floor. In the northern part of Ukhrul, owing to scarcity of thatching grass, roofs are planked with fur.

The houses of the Marings stand on stilts. They are not very strongly built. The thatching too is inferior. The first floor is sufficiently raised above the ground. It is floored by bamboo or planked by wood in the manner of Burmese houses.

In Jiribam area, the houses are invariably thatched with steep sloping roof. The houses are similar to those found in the adjoining Cachar district.