CHAPTER VII

PLANNING FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the preceding chapters we have attempted a survey of the patterns of rural settlements of the State and its several problems. The main object of the present geographical study of the region is to provide a detailed analysis of rural organism for future planning and improvement because regional planning is the art of which geography is the science \(^1\). The role of geographical approach is further emphasized from the fact that its procedure is very comprehensive. A geographer is concerned with “Physical planning” for which his approach may be long range-word wide or continental, medium range-national or regional, and short range-local \(^2\). Hence a co-ordinated approach by geographer and regional planner will bring out the real meaning of regional planning. In the western countries geographers are doing useful work in town and country planning but in India very little attention is being paid towards this discipline. At present it is being realised that the geographer has to contribute a lot towards the regional planning. Accordingly, in recent years, geographers are entrusted here and there with resource surveys for planning purposes.

After analysing the various aspects of rural settlement of the state, it is worthwhile to make a few remarks regarding the possibilities of planning and improvement. Being a border state, its planning will require a strategically comprehensive scheme, both for the town and country side. On account of the limited scope of the present work it is not possible to discuss extensively various aspects of regional planning. However, an attempt will be made to broadly outline the main features of the planning schemes for rural areas of the state under study.

\(^1\) Stamp, L.D., “Applied Geography,” Bungay, 1960, p.120.
7.1 Main Problems

From the previous discussion and analysis, it is quite clear that the patterns of rural settlement of the region awaits some concrete plan and suggestions for its future development. It also urgently needs some major and minor improvements and correcting its existing layout of village roads, location of service centres or growth centre and other problems. There are numerous problems of different magnitude in the forms of appalling congestion in the old settlement areas, undesirable misuses of excess land in the newly built up areas, acute shortage of houses, heavy traffic on the narrow and katcha roads, unsatisfactory health and medical services, old and inhuman means of transport, illiteracy and the lack of modern industrial development. The patient has reached a stage when pills and drugs will be of little help. It needs careful diagnosis by a board of experts and planned surgical treatment by the hands of efficient planners. Thus, these problems would be solved by the co-ordinated and co-operative efforts of geographers, rural sociologists and socio-economic planners.

7.2 Approach for Remodelling the Rural Areas

For a comprehensive planning of rural areas of the state, the following facts have to be borne in mind.

(i) For remodelling of a particular village or region a detailed topographical map with 15.2m. (50 feet) contour interval, the local body does not have any detailed information regarding the terrain. In the circumstance, the assessment will be incomplete.

(ii) Co-operation with the Manipur Town and Country Planning Board is essential. The property laws need be amended so that their acquisition for proper planning and development may be specially expedited. Many schemes for the rural development are lying in the files of various departments for several years without being suitably disposed of for some reason or the other.
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(iii) It is also necessary to point out that there is no co-ordination between the various departments of the Central, State and Local-Self Governments on the point of regional planning. This has created a serious problem for an integral planning for rural areas of the State.

(iv) It is a matter of some relief that the State Government have begun to realise the ills of their villages and there an awakening to the problem by establishing District Planning and Development Council (DPDC) with one District Planning Officer in all the districts of the State. It is also carried out an analysis of the performances of different departments and aimed at identifying the weak areas for taking remedial measures.

During the course of his extensive course of fieldwork the researcher has tried to analyse the present uses of the land and their historical aspects of fourteen selected villages which may be helpful in assessing the future patterns and needs. Some of the basic problems have also been identified, such as shortage of housing accommodation, problems of inter village road transport and other essential services, inadequate provision for social institutions, problems of misuses of lands etc. All these problems are, however, interrelated and need integrated programme planning.

In order to solve these shortcomings and the problems immediately, a project of reconstruction is essential, but it will require many years and will involve the expenditure of crores of rupees. Now an attempt is made to analyse the various schemes for the development of the rural areas of the state and a long-term scheme has been suggested and it is advisable that the surgical treatment of rebuilding should be applied in those areas where it is the only way for improvements. In other areas a scheme of minor corrections and improvement should be immediately launched.
The followings are the plans and schemes for various objectives for the development of the rural settlement areas of the state.

7.3 Planning for Infrastructural Development

Infrastructure is defined as the physical framework of facilities through which goods and services are provided to the public\(^1\). The development of such infrastructures are highly much for the development of rural settlement. It is an umbrella term for many activities referred to as "Social overhead Capital" which results in facilities and services and are usually provided free or at reduced charges. Such infrastructure can be planned in two ways, economic infrastructure and social infrastructure.

7.3.1 Economic Infrastructure

Economic infrastructure supports primarily the economic activities, transport and communication, power and irrigation are the main components which provide an active economic development to the public.

(i) Transport and Communication

Transport and Communication line is one of the most important infrastructure for the development and establishment of human settlement. Every function of development such as postal service, education, transportation, telecommunication, allied agricultural and industrial activities is quite dependent upon the transportation and communication. In settlement geography road network is known as circulatory part. Without this circulatory part every movement will fail and no development will be established. Thus the establishment of transportation network is the backbone for the development of human settlement and economy. But, unfortunately our state Manipur has a physiographic barrier for the development of roads and transportation as

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the 92% of its total geographical area is covered by hills. It is a very difficult task to construct roads in such a state having inconvenient barrier of geographical factor. Out of the 2182 inhabited villages of the state, only 455 villages in the four valley districts, the remaining 1727 villages i.e. 79.15% is in the hilly districts. Due to topographical disturbances there is scanty road network in the hill districts. Most of the settlement units in the hill districts are disconnected but in some areas they are connected by fool paths and Kutchja jeepable roads. In such status of road network in the hills it is a great difficulty to decentralise the public administration system and utilisation of various resources from the remote villages. In comparison with such poor road network in the hills, the valley districts have better network system. From the personal survey of the researcher it is noted that more than half of the total villages have their inter village roads of narrow and kutchja types. Such kutchja roads are dusty in the dry season while muddy in the wet season. Therefore, the people who settle along such roads are suffering frequently from bronchial diseases. The communication system comprises postal services, telegraph services, telephone services and other electronic media services etc. There has been a steady growth in the postal and telecommunication activities in the state mostly in the rural sector. There were 693 post offices, 2 telegraph offices, 25,494 telephone connection in the state at the end of March 2000. But more than 89% goes to the urban areas. It means that telecommunication is still poor in the rural areas of Manipur.

Thus from the above analysis, it is concluded that now the state keenly needs to strengthen the transport and communication services by increasing more fund in the state budget of five year plan. Recently, the scheme, “Pradhan Mantri Gram Sorok Yojana” launched by central government is the best scheme of our poor state for the betterment of such circulatory system of settlements.

Further it is proposed that the linkage of all settlement units with the nearby towns or growth centres, linkage of Barak Valley and Centrals valley by construction of new roads and
widening of old roads (N.H. 53), construction of one or two ring roads in and around the Imphal valley and connects with other villages in the radial form of network. More opportunity for telephone connection in the rural areas of the state should be given in cheaper price.

(ii) Rural Electrification

Power or electricity is the most convenient and versatile form of energy. It plays a key role in the industrials, agricultural and commercials sectors of the economy and is also the most crucial source of supplying domestic energy requirements. The demand has, therefore been growing at a rate faster than other form of energy. The power supply position in Manipur was shown a marked improvement with the recommissioning of the Loktak Hydro Electric Project in August, 1984. Out of the total of 2182 inhabited villages, 2001 were electrified and other 181 are also expected to be covered during the 10th Five Year Plan. Accordingly, the state has also made a good progress in rural electrification achieving 91.70% of the total villages upto the end of March, 2002.

Though the state has a rapid progress in rural electrification, the state had been facing inadequacy of power supply due to having a great deficit. Now the state is supplying power in a roster of load shedding. This inadequacy of power supply could be improved if the following measures be set up.

(a) Honesty and responsibility of official staffs

Due to lack of honesty and responsibility of official staffs, there creates the irregularity of power supply and increases unauthorised tapping. Therefore to avoid from such irregularity of power supply and deficit, they have to take care in their duties with full intention and integrity

(b) Awareness campaign to the public

Usually in the rural areas of valley districts and tribals of hill districts, people use electricity loosely like free gifts of nature being directly tapping from the line not through the consumer's
meter. They use to fail to light off during the day time also. It spoils large quantity of power. On the other hand electrical line staffs neglected to check up such unauthorised tappings. Electrical consumers are also irresponsible for the payment of the taxes. Therefore, large amount of dues are associated with them. This is the main factor of deficit in the state electrical pool. Therefore it is necessary to convince and sensitize the public that electricity is non renewable costly resources.

(c) Privatisation programme

It is hoped that if the electrification of the state is privatised through private farm under suitable plans and agreements, irregularity of power supply, unauthorised tapping, irregularity of tax payments and deficits of state electricity pool could be abolished.

(iii) Irrigations and Flood Control

Actually irrigation is the life of agriculture on the other hand agriculture is the source, of rural economy of the state. It is therefore needed to make developed irrigation network in the state to feed her population of 1837149(1991). The state, although small in geographical area; is comparatively rich in water resources specially in surface water. Barak river in the Barak Valley and Manipur river and its tributaries in the central valley are the main sources of irrigation. Loktak lift irrigation, Sekmai Multipurpose Project, Khuga Project, Singda Dam Project and Khoupum Dam Project are the seven important irrigation and multipurpose projects in the state. Such major and medium irrigation projects altogether with minor irrigation projects have given irrigation to 850 sq. km. It shows that, still our irrigation network is insufficient. Thus, it is required to take up many plans and schemes through state irrigation board, district irrigation council, river lift irrigation project etc. in collaboration with state minor irrigation department. Besides, our govt. have to install well irrigation for implementation of rabbi crop programme as well as rural water supply in the state.
Recently, floods have become a regular feature in the central valley causing heavy damages to standing crops, properties, loss of human lives and livestocks. Such floods are the resultant effect of heavy deforestation and excessive jhooming in the upper catchment areas of rivers. Such measures are therefore recommended to control floods and to make improvement of irrigation network that construction of dams and barrages, afforestation in upper regions of the rivers, effective diversion of river courses, strengthening the river embankments, environmental awareness campaign for better maintenance of our fragile ecology etc.

7.3.2 Social Infrastructure

For the betterment of our social life we need some basic components such as education, public health, sanitation, social organisation, integrity etc. such components are known as social infrastructures by social organisers. For the development of rural settlement in the state such infrastructures should be promoted and well planned.

(i) Planning for better education

Since Independence, education in Manipur has been receiving tremendous attention. As such literacy of less than 1% in 1901 has gone to 59.89% in 1991 as against all India average of 52.24%.

As per National Policy on Education, priority has been accorded to the universalisation of primary education for children in the age-group of 6 to 14 years. There has been a great deal to accomplishment in the field of education since 1950-51. The number of educational institutions has increased from 538 in 1950-51 to over 3792 by the end of 1997-98. Out of the 3792 institutions, 3737 are schools, 53, colleges (including private colleges) and two universities. Through there is rapid progress in the field of education in the state, it is still unsatisfactory mostly in the rural areas. It is therefore needed to take up many plans and policies. Among those plans, increasing the number of educational institutions and privatisation, to make limitation
in the establishment of private educational institutions, to check up the quality of students, opening of vocational education from the primary stage, establishment of district model schools, to propose higher secondary schools or junior colleges for all growth centres, conversion of aided schools and colleges through privatisation, to improve the educational infrastructure and establishment of vocational training centres etc. are remarkable plans which may be taken up.

(ii) Planning for Development of Rural Health Services

In the qualitative improvement of rural settlements medical and health facilities are of vital importance. The state does not lack in the number of health care units - primary health centres (PHC) and sub-centres (PHSC), community health centres (CHC), hospitals, dispensaries and health care units. Besides, numerous programmes like state health and family welfare programme, rural health scheme, national malaria eradication programme, leprosy control programme, national T.B. Control programme, National programme for control of blindness, Maternal child health-cum-expanded programme on immunisation and national aids control programme have been adopted in the state. Health and family welfare department of the state is providing services for the control of communicable diseases and the above programmes but the state suffers from the lack of inputs - medical and health service personnel, medicines and equipments in those units. It is therefore, recommended to promote the existing health care units by equipping them with adequate staff, equipments and medicines. It is further proposed that PHCs at the growth points be upgraded into CHCs and PHSCs at service centres in the PHCs. Particularly for the settlements in the hill districts of Manipur health services and accommodation is very poor. It is therefore needed to establish more number of health centres and hospitals. Subordinate medical staffs to look after the medical and health services are also required for such remote areas.
(iii) Rural Sanitation Improvement Planning

Sanitation is one of the most important infrastructure to promote the public health and decide the standard of living. It covers arrangements for drainage of rain water and effusion, collection and disposal of garbage and removal of human excreta. For better and improved sanitation in the state specially in the rural areas many plans may be proposed. According to the revised guidelines of government of India, the facility for rural sanitation programme (construction of low cost latrine) has to be extended to the people below the poverty line (BPL) with equal contribution from the state government and the central government. So far about 17795 low cost latrines have been constructed in different rural areas of Manipur, but it is still insufficient. Therefore it is proposed to make such latrines increased in the rural areas. Farther, construction of public toilets for each village having 500 population, launching of public awareness programme for the improvement of sanitation, construction of crematoriums for each of the hindu villages, to improve the village drains, to make safe drinking water available etc. are the some of the plans to be extended in the rural settlement of the state.

7.4 Planning for New Settlement Areas

As already mentioned in the earlier chapter, the total geographical area of the state is 22,327 sq. km. but only 1843 sq. km. i.e. 8.25 percent is valley inhabited by two-thirds of its population while 20,484 sq. km. i.e. 91.75 percent of the total area is hilly covering only one third of the total population. It shows that settlements are congested in the valley areas. With the increase of population, it is probable to have a maximum concentration of settlements in the valley areas. It is therefore needed to make a plan for new settlements in future. For suitable plans the following points are proposed.
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(i) Extension of Settlements Along the Food Hills of Central Valley

There are many hillocks like Gwarok hills, Waithou hills, Langol hills, Waikhong hills, Khunuching, Thanga Karang etc. in the central valley of Manipur. The foot hills of such hills have space of gentle slope. If there is developed communication network and water availability along such foothills, it will become a suitable place for settlements.

(ii) Expansion Along the Roads of Hill Districts

The prospect for future expansion of settlement is in the hill districts. The density of settlement in the hills is very low in comparison with that of the valley. It is therefore, that settlement with future expansion must be firstly along the road sides of hills and then it may gradually take dispersion. Thus it is proposed to make good communication and road network in the hill districts for the prospect of settlement expansion in future.

(iii) Expansion on Unculturable Land

The central valley of Manipur has 940 hectares of unculturable barren land. In course of time this barren land will become gold for new settlement in future. It is therefore recommended to make suitable plans for shifting government offices and industrial estates in such lands. Such plans will save our limited culturable lands.

(iv) Vertical Expansion

Our earth has a limited landscape, on the other hand our population has no limitation. It causes congestion of settlement in particular areas or elsewhere. Due to unavailability of land for settlement in big cities, vertical expansion of settlement had been taken up. Most probably, such type of expansion may be extended very soon in the rural areas also because of limited population services with corresponding culturable lands. It means that people should never
exhaust culturable lands for settlement though its number increases at any extend. Thus it is proposed for the rural people to have sound economy so that they are able to build their houses for double or triple storeyes.

7.5 Planning for Better Housing Design

Keeping in mind the architectural objectives i.e. convenience and comfortability in design, local material based design, economy in design and shape of the plot in design, the houses of rural settlement are to be designed. Usually checking their future prospects and convenience people design their houses. For example in the low lying areas which are frequently flooded areas it is recommended to make the plots higher than that of the probable flooded water level or to construct half brick wall. In the region where rainfall is low the slope of road is gentle or almost flat while it is very steep in the region of heavy rainfall. In the rural areas settlements require spacious courtyard, cattleshed together with fodder store, grain store and store of other articles like fuel etc. It is therefore recommended preparation of design of making cheap good houses in rural areas. Prefabricated cheap materials will go a long way to help in the economy of rural settlement. However, care must be taken up of different ecological-geographical setting, size of family, cost, locally available raw materials and the comfort and economic and social needs of the people. On the other hand such rooms as grain, storage, storages of other goods like fuel, animal feed stuff etc. should also be taken care of in planning. Further, with the gradual improvement of rural economy, it is proposed to construct modern house design in order to take care their health and sanitation. In the old traditional houses it is found that nonventilated windows and doors, accommodations of kitchen and cowshed in one room, accommodation of bedroom and fire place producing smoke through the day and night, construction of kutcha latrine near the house, disposing of garbage carelessly just near the kitchen etc. Such design and habits should have to be given up because it affects our health and sanitation.
7.6 Proposed Service Centres

There are number of settlement points in the study area. For the development of such point it is required to set up more service centres and growth centres. The modernisation of space economy leading to the desired regional development cannot be achieved without a proper spatial sectoral integration, which implies the suitable location of economic activities, services and facilities as an integral element of the entire space economy in a hierarchical dimension from the growth centre down to the village level. It is important to note that the concentration of service centres in particular region could not developed the whole rural settlements of the state. Therefore it may be proposed more service centres in different parts of the state both, valley and hills being based upon their population and natural resources. In the hill districts of Manipur service centres can be concentrated on primary activities agriculture and forestry in the process of economic development and development of forest and agro-based industries. For example Tamenglong growth centre may be planned to develop by establishing many service centres with its large scale production of oranges while Ukhrul growth centre is well suited for mineral based industries for the rich limestones and chromite. Thus Churachandpur Senapati and Chandel districts also have full prospect for pineapple cultivation and its allied industries.

The four valley district, Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Bishnupur have the prospect of development of tertiary activities. Such Growth centres can be expanded on the industrial establishments using the raw materials from the neighbouring hills. Jiribam an isolated growth centre in the Barak Valley also has prospect of industrial establishments through its rail head and vast forest resources.

With the above plans and proposals, it is concluded that the development of the rural settlements of the State will be based upon the resource mobilisation and establishment of good
infrastructure. As well as proper imllementation of the suggested plans would undoubtedly improve the resource utilisation of the area further the State and Union Governments should render proper assistance to such pressing needs of rural folk of the study area. Such assistance will necessarily involve the people in a much bigger way in self improvement schemes and their “participation ration” of work will naturally go-up. Further, the author holds a considerable opinion that if participation ratio of work increases with the modern scientific technological institutional facilities, there would appear a dynamic rural area in the state.