

**RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES AND  
INTERACTIONS**  
A CASE STUDY OF SHILLONG AND ITS  
HINTERLAND.

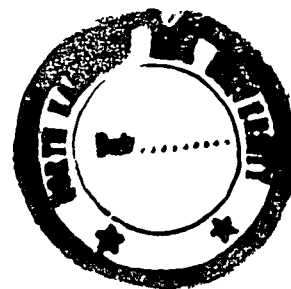
ABSTRACT

**NANDINI CHAKRAVARTY.**

*Dissertation*

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

**Master of Philosophy**



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES.  
NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY  
SHILLONG ( MEGHALAYA ).

**1991**

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## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Available studies on rural-urban interaction by and large confine themselves to a narrow space in the immediate neighbourhood of the city, such as the urban fringe on the study of the Suburbs. A few studies do relate rural areas to the cities in terms of slum development and migrant population within the city. The analysis undertaken in such studies provide valuable insights into the extent of impact of the urbanization in the immediate neighbourhood. However, little effort has been made to study the macro processes which define the nature of interaction between the city and rural hinterland. Hardly any study emphasises the politico-economic context of development of cities and their inter-action within the rural hinterland.

The present study attempts to fill this gap by analysing the politico-economic context, in which the interaction between the city and the hinterland takes place.

1.2. The present study is an attempt to understand the process of urbanisation in a region which has little agrarian development and characterised by the subsistence economic organisation of a tribal social order. The emphasis is on the major urban area i.e., Shillong and its linkages to the rural areas. The study tries to explore the unequal relationship that exists, between the massive urban growth of Shillong on the one hand and the near subsistence economy of the rural hinterland on the other.

STUDY AREA:

The hilly region of Meghalaya has been selected for the present study. Characterised by a topography and economic level, generally considered negative to development of large centres, the presence of a huge city i.e., Shillong is a geographical puzzle. The nature of relationship between the city and its rural hinterland is studied in the present research.

OBJECTIVES:

The study has the following broad objectives:

- i) To understand the nature of Regional economy and its resource base with a view of assessing its capacity to sustain the scale of urbanisation experienced.
- ii) To get an insight into the nature of urban development in Meghalaya with reference to its evolution in the historical past and to examine the factors associated with its growth.
- iii) To analyse the economic structure of Shillong urban agglomeration in order to scrutinize the links it has with the rural areas, and
- iv) To develop a model of rural urban linkages with a view to attempting an explanation of the nature of relationship that exists between the dependent urban areas and the subsistence oriented rural hinterland.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following research questions are set before the study

- i) Does the rural economy of Meghalaya characterised by subsistence production and production techniques as well as tribal mode of living pursuit the development of a huge urban area ? How does it relate to urban set-up ?
- ii) What historical factors were responsible for the transformation of Shillong into a major urban centre in the North Eastern region ? To what extent the growth of Shillong is linked with structural changes in the economy of its rural hinterland.
- iii) Given that the city has little industrial base, what is the nature of interaction it has with the hinterland ?
- iv) How do the politico-economic processes manifest themselves in linking the rural with the urban set-up ?

SOURCES OF DATA:

The Study is mainly based on data collected from the Secondary Sources.

The informations pertaining to the evolution and growth of Shillong City have been collected from, published books, research papers, gazetteers and other relevant sources. The data regarding demographic and economic structure of rural and urban areas have been gathered from Census records, 1971 and 1981.

The data regarding financial allocation, forest revenue, mineral resource and urban layout have been collected from various departments directly concerned with there.

An attempt is made to trace the evolution of the city of Shillong, in order to understand the growth of the city in the historical past. This analysis is based on historical records and patterns of population growth in inter-Censal periods.

#### METHODOLOGY:

The methodology adopted for the present study is outlined below:

The regional economy of rural Mechalaya has been studied with reference to its general pattern of landuse, pattern of cropping intensity, extent of dependence on Jhum etc. The ecological basis of the regional economy has been analysed with the help of physiography and other climatic data.

The extent of forest cover and its composition as well as location and production of mineral resources provide valuable insights into the quantum of natural resources available in the region. The Human resources of the region is analysed with special reference to the structure of the working force structure in the year 1981.

The urban economic base has been analysed by scrutinizing the nature of industrial units and its employment, potential structure etc.

The study of rural-urban interaction is primarily based on a model dependency developed by a synthesis of findings in earlier chapters. Empirical references to the model has been made with special reference to the outflow of natural and financial resources and transport linkages.

CHAPTER SCHEME:

The manuscript is organised as follows:

- i) The first chapter deals with the research setting which includes statement of the problem, objectives, source of data, methodology adopted in the study.
- ii) The second chapter examines the nature of rural economy and provides a broad assessment of the ecological setting, resource potential and workforce structure, the rural hinterland.
- iii) The chapter traces the historical factors associated with the growth and development of Shillong.
- iv) In the fourth chapter the urban functions of the City and its economic base has been interpreted to get an insight into the possible linkages it has with the hinterland.
- v) The fifth chapter attempts a synthesis of the findings in the earlier chapters and blends them to develop a model of rural-urban interaction in a traditional milieus.
- vi) The last chapter provides a brief summary of the findings of the research.

FINDINGS:

The main findings of the present research is outlined below.

1. Available data on the ecological setting and the pattern of landuse indicate that the region is characterised by poor agrarian base, by and large unsuitable for intensive cultivation and generation of agrarian surplus. The available area, for cultivation and the actually cultivated area constitute a negligible proportion of the total Geographical area. The methods of cultivation are highly traditional, which ranges from Jhum to settled terrace cultivation in a large part of the state. The cropping pattern is largely loaded in favour of food crops, with low intensity of cropping. The agrarian economy is thus highly subsistence or below subsistence level.

The region however has some important natural resources, the forest resources being most significant; some amount of coal, limestone, silliminate and clay is also available in few areas.

The Structure of workforce shows little diversification, with more than 80 per cent of the workforce engaged in cultivation. Landlessness is much less pronounced with only 11 per cent of the workforce working as wage earners in the agrarian sector of the economy. Broadly speaking, the rural space is characterised by pre-capitalist relations in production, typical of hill and tribal areas. The rural economy is most unsuitable to sustain the scale of urbanisation experienced in the region.

2.1 Though subsistence economy is considered as a severe discouragement to development of towns and cities, colonialism experienced in the peripheral economies have been responsible in the growth of cities, irrespective of the needs of the regional economy. A clear division between the rural space and the urban set up characterised by contradictory interests in the hallmark of colonial urbanisation. Available historical regarding the growth of Shillong indicate that the city had its origin in the colonial set up, and Colonial needs for the exploitation of natural resources in the region. The Regional structure of the region at the time of the establishment of the city, shows a highly fragmented space. The city of Shillong emerges as an island in the Khasi Hills under the administration of Local Chiefs. The immediate compulsion for the British Colonial power was for an effective administrative control over the natural resources quelling of Local revolts and easy transportation of the raw-materials (particularly forest) from the region. The establishment of the city facilitated the colonial interests.

Thus it is clear that the emergence of the city had no relationship with the economic transformation of the region. However, once the city established itself it seemed to grow in response to the tertiary demands, such as Construction of trade administrative institutions, Educational facilities, transport network and other related functions.

All these resulted in the concentration of people, in tertiary occupations. It is no wonder therefore to find the

economy of the urban area highly tertiarised in the midst of a rural set up, characterised by subsistence mode of production. Part of the increase in population may be attributed to an accelerated migration into the city from outside the region. While the rate of urbanisation is slow, the tertiary sector has grown disproportionately relative to other two sectors. The tertiary sector alone accounts for about 87 per cent of the total work force, while the manufacturing and industrial sector accounts for meagre 9 per cent or so; within the tertiary sector, the trade and commerce, constitutes significant segment of the working force; a little less than one fifth of the total working force is engaged in this sector. Other services too account for a whopping 54 per cent of the working population. The growth of organised banking, trade, administration and defence services, which help the centralised gathering of surplus from the economy, have contributed significantly to the tertiarisation of Shillong's economy.

The nature of industrial sector too, indicates very little interaction with hinterland. Most of the industries are related to motor repairing, bakery, printing, Saw-mills etc. which are essentially oriented to the urban consumption. They do not bear any relationship to the requirements of the rural hinterland.

A study of the revenue receipts also shows that the city is precariously dependent upon the grants from the Centre.

The lack of interdependence in the economic organisation of the rural and the urban space is evident from the data avail-

lable for the city and its hinterland. The development of the city took place under the conditions of depended urbanisation in the colonial past, when the countries became incorporated into an international division of labour through their role as suppliers of primary commodities for production and consumption in the core and as markets for manufacturing goods. Developments after the colonial period doesn't show a marked departure from this tendency, though the economy is delinked from the metropolis. Thus in the context of the present study it is possible to understand the linkages between the city and its hinterland in the dependency model in which the city space forms an island in the subsistence enclave characterised by largely subsistence modes of production such as subsistence agriculture, share cropping, and remnants of earlier communal modes of production. On the other hand the city space is characterised by hegemonic function in terms of administration, trade and concentration of financial institutions. In the model it is referred to as the Created Space. This process of spatial differentiation is based on the principles of certain social and politico-economic purposes which is implicit in the model. In the absence of large scale social surplus in the hinterland, the city seems to sustain itself by mobilising the natural resources outflow, creating market areas and trading regions united through an effective transport network. Another factor which helps in the growth of the city is by its effective financial network in order to appropriate for itself the financial outflow from the hinterland as evident from a wide gap between the amount of credit and deposit.

Thus one can sum up the nature of the Created space (the City i.e., Shillong) as that of hegemonic which is based on profits of trade-relationship exploitation of the hinterland by the city; an agent in the outflow of natural resources particularly forest and minerals; and by accelerating the outflow of financial resources through the system of banking. All these are facilitated by the administrative and transport functions. This process of spatial differentiation under administrative and commercial domination, does not lead to spatial integration and becomes an instrument in establishing and accentuating the processes of underdevelopment

In conclusion it may be suggested that there is a need to break the accelerated spatial fragmentation between the city and its hinterland by encouraging and mobilising productive resources of the hinterland as an input for the growth of the city. This is possible by orienting production in the city, which has direct link with the available resources in the hinterland.

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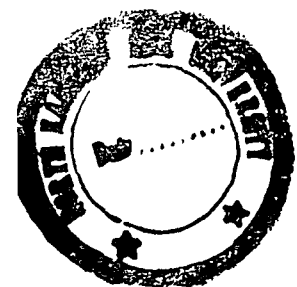
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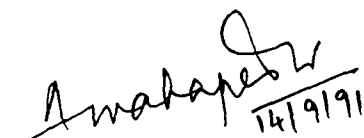
## C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the dissertation submitted by Miss Nandini Chakravarty for the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) to the Department of Geography, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya, entitled, "Rural - urban linkages and Interactions - A case study of Shillong and its Hinterland" is a bona-fied study of the author to the best of my knowledge and belief.

It may be placed before the examiners for due evaluation.

Dated the 14<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1991

Shillong.

  
( A.C. MOHAPATRA )

Supervisor

## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

I owe a debt of gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr A.C. Mahapatra Professor, Department of Geography, N.E.H.U., Shillong for his help in formulating the problem and the design of the research, critical outlook and valuable suggestions throughout the course of the research programme. Working under his supervision has been a rewarding experience.

At various stages of the writing of the dissertation, I had approached Mr Debendra Kumar Nayak, Lecturer, Deptt. of Geography, N.E.H.U., for assistance. Without his co-operation and ungrudging help, it would have been far too long to complete the work.

I am grateful to the other faculty members and non-teaching staff in the department for their encouragement and support throughout the most difficult phases of writing the report.

My friends Subrata, Wanri, Pallav, Paul, Gita and Sharmi came forward to help me whenever they felt I was in need of it. I am grateful to each one of them.

I am obliged to the authorities of various Government/ Non-Government departments, namely, the office of the District Council, Town Planning Office, State Secretariate and Office of Directorate of Statistics and Economics for giving me access to their records and unpublished data needed for this research.

During the long and tedious journey to the conclusion of the present study, I have received constant encouragement and affectionate guidance from my mother while she shouldered her duties single handedly. She not only accepted the burden ungrudgingly, but also proved to be an excellent friend in my academic pursuit. My father who silently wished me all success, was a great source of emotional support.

Lastly, Mr Zothana & Mr H.Pde eminently deserve my thanks for their patience and care in typing the manuscript.

*Ms. Vandini Chakravarty*  
(Vandini Chakravarty)

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In the long history of human civilization, the history of urbanisation is fairly recent, perhaps, not more than 5000 to 6000 years. The process of modern development and urbanisation have gone hand in hand.

The urban phenomenon has not only played an important role in shaping the economic and social process, but also has left distinct imprints on space and the human environment. Generally speaking, higher is the level of development greater is the level of urbanisation. A greater level of development enables the society to generate larger surplus, which in turn supports a substantial segment of urban population who are essentially engaged in non-agrarian activities.

The progress of urbanisation has been shaped by the undercurrents of economic and social relationship, i.e., the mode of production in the society. A larger surplus is key to urbanisation. This surplus is either generated by greater effective use of the 'forces of production' or is extracted as primitive accumulation through feudal modes of production or through means of transfer in a capitalist market mechanism.

Traditional societies which are largely undifferentiated and are based on subsistence production are unlikely to

sustain a modern urban system. However, urbanisation as a form of modern economic relation through colonialism could produce far reaching debilitating effects on such societies. It is not uncommon to find large urban settlements as islands in areas of subsistence production.

While industrial revolution in the Western World necessitated urban revolution, the transport revolution added a completely new character to the urban centres. For the first time the urban centres became primarily centres of production of goods and services. The new role of production created opportunities for various kinds of occupations in the urban areas. Occupational diversification in these centres attracted migrants from other areas leading to a large scale population concentration. Population of these urban centres increased by the twin processes of migration and natural increase. In due course of time, high population concentration, industrial development, development in transport and communication, forced urbanisation process to expand 'horizontally and vertically' leading to the present-day urban system. With rapid urbanising process involving the multiplication of points of concentration and increase in size of individual clusters, dynamic changes have taken place in the socio-cultural and economic domain of the rural areas surrounding the urban centres.

The changes have their roots in the increased rural-urban interactions which has resulted from the development

of urban transport facilities into the rural areas as also the insatiable thrust of the city for space resulting in expansion of urban built-up areas along transport arteries. "The rapid sprawl of the modern city outside its political boundaries and beyond its real physical-cultural domain poses several attended problems<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The present study is an attempt to understand the process of urbanisation in a region which has experienced little agrarian development and is characterised by subsistence economic organisation of a tribal social order. The emphasis is on the major urban area i.e., Shillong and its linkages to the rural areas. The study tries to explore the unequal relationship that exists between the massive urban growth of Shillong on the one hand and the near subsistence economy of the rural hinterland on the other.

The main assumption of the study area :-

1. The development of the city is independent of the structural transformation of the Region.
2. The city sustains largely through a hegemonic relationship over the hinterland.

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1. W.Christaller. (1939), "Die zentralen Orte in Jena" Quoted from R.L.Singh (1967) "The Rural urban Fringe Studies", The Geographer, Vol.XIV No.14, p.11.

Based on these assumptions the study intends to examine the economic structure of the region, the growth of Shillong city and its economic organisation and finally develop a model of rural-urban interaction in Meghalaya based on 'dependent' relationship.

The case in point in the present study is the Khasi Society, which was essentially non-monetised or quasi-monetised and is at a subsistence level. The region and the society was exposed for the first time to colonial economic relations in 1830s. The process of urbanization in the region was a response more to the economic compulsion of the Raj, and was an 'autochthonous' urban growth, rather than a response to structural changes in the regional economy.

A city needs a large hinterland with primary production to cater to the needs of its population engaged in non-primary occupations. In return the city provides impulses of modernisation, means of technological development, industrial products, administrative services and a market for the produce of the rural hinterland. Thus, a mutual interdependence emerges out of 'city hinterland relationship'.

The city hinterland relationship is viewed from two angles : one, through an understanding of the distinction between urban and rural settlements as 'rural-urban dichotomy'. This view has been put forward mainly by the sociologist,

notably Lampared<sup>2</sup>, Writh<sup>3</sup> who saw differences in terms of sociological variations, structural and demographic characteristics between the rural and the urban space, and emphasised that the process of modernisation in these two areas gets highly polarized.

Geographers understand the urban problem in the regional context. According to Dickinson,

"this relationship (between Urban & Rural) varies with varying socio-economic conditions and historical development of cities. At the initial stage the influence is from the hinterland, by means of flow of labour, capital to the industrial complex and at later stage, follows the reverse direction of flow, that is from the city to the hinterland by means of income savings and innovations"<sup>4</sup>.

He emphasised that the process of 'urban invasion' was started by introduction of rail roads. Rail Roads in the western countries worked as the first 'decentralizer' and the metalled roads and automobiles operated as the 'stimulator' of rapid urban invasion.

The present study is an attempt to incorporate the above stated aspects to build a frame work, in order to identify the 'dominance - dependence' relationship articulated by not only polarisation in the cities but also to understand the reflected dysfunctionality and distortions which impede overall regional development.

- 
2. J.Lampared, (1965) - Sociological Impact of Metropolitan City on the Fringe Areas : A case study of Detroit. Routledge and Kegan, London, p.230
  3. D.Writh, (1979) "Rural-urban Interaction" Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol.XI
  4. R.E.Dickinson(1960) The City Region and Regionalism: A Geographical Contribution to Human Ecology Routledge and Kegan, London p.120.

The main purpose of the study is to unravel the process which operated and still operate in manifestation of urban development in a region which is not really suited to such developments. The question that arises therefore is, "What is the nature of relationship and linkages an urban area develops vis-a-vis its hinterland". Moreover, what are the implications of urban development on the regional economy and society ?

### 1.3 OBJECTIVES

The study sets before itself the following objectives:-

- i) to understand the nature of Regional economy and its resource base with a view to assessing its capacity to sustain the scale of urbanisation experienced;
- ii) to get an insight into the nature of urban development in Meghalaya with reference to its evolution in the historical past and to examine the factors associated with its growth;
- iii) to analyse the economic structure of Shillong Urban Agglomeration in order to scrutinize the links it has with the rural areas; and
- iv) to develop a model of rural-urban linkages in Meghalaya in the politico-economic context taking Shillong as a case of study.

### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions are set before the study :-

- i) Does the rural economy of Meghalaya, characterised by subsistence production and production techniques as well as tribal mode of living, permit the development of a huge urban concentration. How does it relate to the rural economy ?
- ii) What historical conditions were responsible the transformation of Shillong into major urban centre in the North Eastern region ? To what extent the growth of Shillong is linked with structural changes in the economy of its rural hinterland.

#### 1.5 SOURCES OF DATA

The study is mainly based on data collected from various primary and secondary sources.

Secondary Sources : The informations pertaining to the evolution and growth of Shillong city have been collected from published books, research papers, gazetters and other relevant sources.

- i) Gazetteer of India - North East Frontier Province Vol.II.
- ii) Gazetteer of India - Assam - Vol.I.

The data regarding the demographic and economic structure of rural and urban areas have been gathered from the census of India, 1971 and 1981. The following volumes have been consulted :-

- i) (District Census Hand book) - East Khasi Hills, Census of India, Series 14, Meghalaya, Parts XIII - A and B (1971).

- ii) Census of India, Series 14, Meghalaya, Part X - A and B (1981).
- iii) Census of India, Meghalaya, Series 13, Part II A. General population Tables.

Primary Sources: The data regarding financial allocation, forest revenue, mineral resources and urban layout, have been collected from the following Government and non-Government agencies:

- i) District Council Office - Shillong.
- ii) Department of Finance - Meghalaya Secretariat.
- iii) Directorate of Statistics and Economics - Shillong
- iv) Directorate of Mineral Resources - Shillong
- v) Town and Country planning - Urban Development Office, Shillong.
- vi) North-Eastern Council - Shillong.

#### 1.6 METHODOLOGY

Since one of the objectives of the study is to understand the resources base of the hinterland, the following methodology has been adopted for the study of the economy of the state of Meghalaya.

The regional economy of rural Meghalaya has been studied with reference to its pattern of landuse, cropping pattern and intensity, extent of dependence on 'Jhum' etc. The ecological basis of the regional economy has been analysed with the help of physiography and other climatic data. The

ecological factors provide valuable insights into the subsistence nature of the hinterland and its inability for generation of large scale agrarian surplus.

The evolution of the city of Shillong has been traced with a historical method. The administrative structure of the region during British ascendancy has been analysed in order to examine the nature of linkages the city had with its immediate hinterland. The growth of the city has been analysed with reference to its increase in spatial extent as well as in terms of changes in population size over inter-censal periods.

The extent of forest cover and its composition as well as location and production of mineral resources provide valuable insights into the quantum of natural resources available in the region.

The human resources of the region is analysed with special reference to the structure of workforce in the year 1981.

The urban economic base has been analysed by scrutinizing the nature of industrial units and its employment patterns.

Since the emphasis is on exploring the dynamics of urban development within an essentially subsistence oriented rural hinterland, the study concentrates on the process underlying such a development. This has been attempted through

an effort to integrate the analysis to a dependency model. The model has been based on characterisation of both urban and rural space according to the dominant processes of economic organization and linkages and the intervening processes which integrate the two spaces.

Empirical references to the model have been made with special reference to the outflow of natural and financial resources, budgetary provisions and transport linkages, etc.

#### 1.7 ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

The manuscript is organised as follows:-

The first chapter broadly deals with the research setting which includes statement of the problem, objectives, source of data, methodology adopted in the study.

The second chapter examines the nature of rural economy and provides a broad assessment of the resource potential of the region, which provides the basis for the sustenance of the city, with the assumption that the city is inextricably linked with its rural hinterland.

The third chapter is an endeavour to trace the nature of development into the changing relationship of an area dominantly inhabited by the tribal groups throughout the historical past, coinciding with three broad periods of pre-colonial, colonial and post-Independence phase.

In the fourth chapter, the urban functions of the city and its economic base has been interpreted to get an insight into the degree of urban influence and the pattern of interaction between the urban centre and its hinterland.

In the fifth chapter, a synthesis of the relationship emerging between the urban centre and rural hinterland has been attempted with the help of a model, showing the extent of interaction between the urban and the rural and vice-versa at various levels by means of resources outflow and inflow from both the ends.

The concluding chapter summarises the basic trends emerging out of the analysis and provides a brief summary of the findings of the study.

#### 1.8 STUDY AREA

The state of Meghalaya has been chosen for the present study. Dominated by numerous hills and valleys, this plateau supports a very high proportion of tribal population, forming an important part of the tribal enclave in the North East.

Characterised by rugged topography and an economic level generally considered negative for the development of large urban centres, the presence of a huge city i.e., Shillong is a geographical puzzle.

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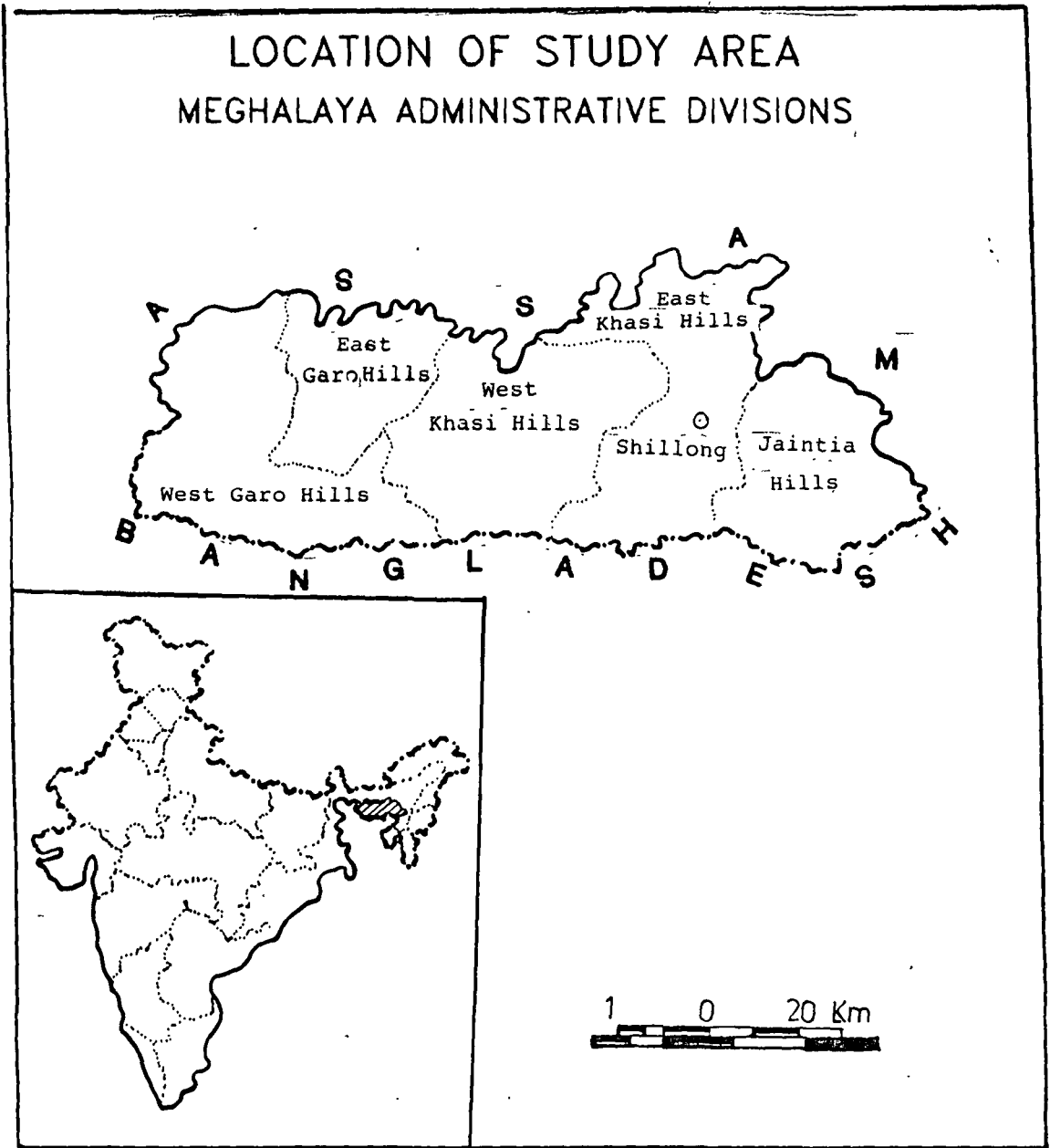


Fig.1.

Meghalaya came into existence as a full-fledged State in 1971, prior to which it was the capital of erst-while state of Assam and Bengal in the colonial period<sup>6</sup>. The State as a whole, particularly the Khasi and Jaintia hills, is a picturesque landscape containing plateaus, ravines and often has inspired visitors to call it "Scotland of the East"<sup>7</sup>.

It is bounded in the North and East by Assam and in the south by Bangladesh. The state has a total geographical area of 22,429 Sq.Km. and supports 13,35,819 persons as per 1981 census. The density is 59 persons per square kilometre. The state is divided into five administrative districts viz. East and West Khasi Hills, East and West Garo Hills and Jaintia Hills.

Physiographically the whole state of Meghalaya is said to represent a remnant of an ancient plateau of pre-cambrian age, uplifted to its present height of about 600 to 1800 meters above the mean sea level. The dominant rock type is Archean with undulating topography of rolling hills almost throughout the region. The region has been variously described as an 'irregular parallelogram' 'a table-land' etc.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Hamlet Bareh (1974) MEGHALAYA North Eastern India, News and Feature services. A vivid description has been attempted in the third chapter about the growth and development of the city under colonial influence.

7. Ibid

8. Geological survey of India, (1974) Miscellaneous Publications No.30.

Shillong is one of the largest towns in the North East. It is the only Class I city after Guwahati and is the headquarter of many state and Central Government offices. Situated at a distance of 103 Kms, south of Guwahati popularly known as the gateway of the North East, Shillong urban agglomeration is one of the most important cities for its commerce, transport and educational functions.

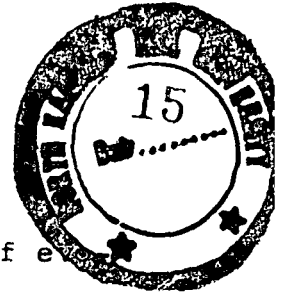
The hinterland of Shillong urban area consists of many villages around it. The occupational structure shows a near complete concentration in agricultural activities alone. But Agriculture is of highly subsistence nature. Defying all attempts to the contrary, shifting cultivation is practised by a large segment of the population. The pace of industrialization is very slow in comparison, though a steady rise like small scale and service industry is noticed.

The process of urbanisation has been rather slow over the past years. The capital city of Shillong alone contributed a major share to the growth of urban population in the State's total accounting for nearly three fourths (74.92 per cent) of the total urban population. Thus the study area i.e., Shillong is an administrative town, with a 'Bonanza' culture and characteristic of a satellite centre<sup>8</sup>.

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8. A.C.Mohapatra(1984) - "Infrastructural constraints on urban development in Hill and tribal Areas of North East India". Paper presented in the 16th Annual Conference of Regional Science Association of India, Department of Economics, Jadavpur University, Calcutta - April 26-28th.

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## 1.9 URBANIZATION - AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Cities of present day carry the imprints of evolutionary past. Growth of cities is an important phenomenon in the evolution of whole human society. Transformation of organization of human societies from primitive hunting and gathering economies to settled cultivation has been accompanied by increased availability of social surplus cities are the spatial manifestation of these changes in the economy.

The history of urbanization shows that the need of decision making system and use of surplus led to the evolution of administrative system. Thus cities grew around these seats of power and fortresses. Thus more often small settlements grew into large towns or even Metropolises. "The forces of change were generated by technological progress, which inevitably brought in transformation in the economy and accelerated the growth of urbanisation process"<sup>9</sup>.

Archaeological research has shown that the first settled urban areas with a high density of population (Mesopotamia about 3500 B.C., Egypt 3000 B.C., China, India 2500 B.C.) appeared at the end of neolithic age, where the state of technology and the social and natural conditions enabled cultivators to produce more than they needed to

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9. Y.B. Damle - "Communication of Modern Ideas and Knowledge in Indian villages". National Geographical Journal Vol. XIII.

subsist. From that time onwards, a system of division and distribution of the product developed as the expression and improvement of a technical capacity and of a level of social organisation.

The observation of Mumford with regard to evolution of early towns is worth quoting:

"The cities were residential form adopted by those members of society, whose direct presence at the place of agricultural production was not necessary. That is to say, these cities could exist only on the basis of the surplus produced by working in the land. They were religious, political and administrative centres, the spatial expression of a social complexity, determined by the process of appropriation and reinvestment of product of Labour"<sup>10</sup>.

The city may thus be visualized as a new settlement form. In the first step towards attaining this new form, the old components of the village were incorporated into a new urban unit. The new settlement form was based on mobilisation of manpower, development of long distance transport and communication, a burst of new inventions and considerable increase in agricultural productivity.

This process continued throughout the medieval period till the time of Industrial Revolution which brought in a major breakthrough in technological development; Industrial Revolution brought in significant changes to the functions of the towns with greater emphasis on production and consumption which got superimposed over the existing medieval towns.

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10. L.Mumford (1966) 'The City in History'. Secker and Warburg, London.

The observations of Labase and Durkheim are significant in this context:

"the urbanisation bound up with the industrial revolution and accompanying development of capitalist mode of production is a process of organising space based on fundamental facts. The town attracted industry (because of availability of manpower and market) and industry in its turn developed new kinds of employment and thereby entirely organised the urban landscape"<sup>11</sup>.

While the medieval cities represented the emancipation of the mercantile class, the modern city system, in their concrete social and spatial forms depended on conjuncture of the new social relations that appeared as a result of transformation in distribution of production system. Hence the present day cities became significant, providing the organisational expression for functional economic interests<sup>12</sup>, urbanisation in today's developed and industrialised countries of the world is largely the manifestation of industrial and technical path of development, though not a locus of production, but of administration, bound up with the social primacy, of the political administrative apparatus.

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11. Peter Saunders (1981) The Social theory and urban Question, Hutchinson, London.

12. Manuel Castell (1972) - The Urban Question : A Marxist Approach Edward Arnold, London.

## 1.10 RECENT TRENDS

The process of urbanisation and their consequences assume spectacular differences in different Socio- Economic set-up. Their differences are explained by history as well as factors operating at present. Urbanisation in today's developed and industrialised countries of the world is the product of technological and industrial path of development. On the other hand, in most of the developing countries, the pattern and process of urbanisation is linked with their colonial history.

Colonialism had its impact in most of the developing countries in the form of new nodal points which were established for administrative gains by the colonial rulers. The process created a dysfunctionality in the city system where the urban system got dominated by one or two primate cities. Since urbanisation is not accompanied by industrial development and increase in employment opportunities, the economy remains stagnant and at subsistence level in most of the cases. Sharp contrasts have developed in the process of urbanisation between and within developed and developing countries. While in the case of the former, urbanisation is a spontaneous process of social evolution towards a developed level of technology and consequently a better standard of living, in the latter the process of urbanisation is the aftermath of colonialism resulting in economic decadence,

dependence under development and spatial transformation of regional economics. In the developed countries, different urban settlements are found in a functional hiarchical system. The complex industrial economic structure has provided a functionally interdependent urban system.

But in the developing countries the colonial legacy is manifest in their urbanisation process. Most of the primate cities in these countries have developed as enclaves without strong linkages with their rural hinterland and reflect dysfunctionality in the urban hierarchy<sup>13</sup>.

#### 1.11 TRENDS IN INDIA

For a better understanding of the situation the big Metropolises of India can be taken into account.

The gigantic metropolises are the living examples of colonial influence, which though serve the purpose of a selected few, creates an uneven polarised effect on the development or urbanisation process as a whole in the country.

Colonisation in India resulted in decline of old traditional centres of production which had a history of its own and gave rise to new centres which were established with the primary purpose of extracting surplus from the

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13. S.M.Alam (1975) A Study of Urban Geography : A Case Study of Hyderabad - Secunderabad, Asia, Bombay.

hinterland. The urban hierarchy was linked to the metropolitan economy and was subservient to it politically, economically and socially.

The medieval towns were based on royal patronages and thus were mainly consumption oriented. But introduction of new centres and port towns during the colonial era, brought in tremendous change in city functions. The cities started becoming production centres and attracted large migrant groups for new occupational opportunities. Thus these cities experienced higher urban growth. This happened as a result of breaking down of the old urban functions and increasing pressure on the rural agricultural land.

These cities became centres of administration or garrison towns, which were superimposed upon hinterlands which continued to reel under the feudal extorism and hence remained backward and at subsistence level. Urbanisation in India thus became a polarised process. While existing colonial port cities started engulfing the countryside and grew rapidly in response to massive immigration, the countryside continued with a harsh life of object poverty and backwardness

#### 1.12 AN OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

Available studies on rural-urban interaction by and large confine themselves to a narrow space in the immediate neighbourhood of the city, such as the urban fringe or the study of the suburbs. A few studies do relate to

rural areas in terms of slum development and migrant population within the cities. At a theoretical level, Raza and Chattopadhyaya<sup>14</sup> have tried to develop an analytical model of the spatial organization during colonial period and its modification after Independence. But most such studies deal with the major colonial towns as examples and generally neglect process of urbanization and rural urban linkages in peripheral regions of the country. Study devoted particularly to this is scanty though rural-urban interactions has been a much studied theme and many national and global studies have been carried out.

Perhaps, the study in this trend had its origin from the time of Von Thunnen, Christaller and Perruoux, in their studies on the growth of urban centres<sup>15</sup>. In other words it can be said that these scholars had provided the base for the later works; e.g., Von Thunnen's study of the relationship between primary production and markets working on the pattern of farming in West Germany and adjacent region in early 20th Century has provided important bases for rural urban relationship studies.

The main thrust of the rural-urban linkage study came during the second quarter of the present century, specially between 1940s and 1960s.

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14. B.Chattopadhyaya and Moonis Raza (1975) " Regional Development - The Analytical Frame" Indian Journal of Regional Science, Vol.7, no.1
15. H.B. Mahanta (1986) - 'Continuity and change' unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Dept.of Geography, N.E.H.U., Shillong.

Galpin in 1915 recognised the process in his study of agricultural community of Eastern America<sup>16</sup> Wherweins (1942)<sup>17</sup> after analysing Von Thunnen's isolated state and Christaller's central place evaluated different factors which were responsible for what he termed as urban invasion.

More recently social scientists such as R.A.Ellefson<sup>18</sup>, R.E. Dickinson<sup>19</sup>, Y.B.Damle<sup>20</sup>, Hemlata Acharya<sup>21</sup> and many others have dealt with rural-urban relationship and have made indepth studies in this direction. Critical contribution of Manuel Castel<sup>22</sup>, Peter Saunders<sup>23</sup> in dealing with the urban problems and the social framework in a continuum of rural hinterland providing the base for the urban sustainance, from the early period to the present day, and the exhibited dichotomy of the developed and developing countries of the world, provide most significant base, for understanding the historical contours of the age old rural urban dependency and increased links.

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16. C.J.Galpin (1915) - The Social Anatomy of an Agricultural Community - University of Wisconsin, Research Bulletin No. 34.
  17. G.S.Wherwein(1969) - "The Rural-Urban Fringe" in H.M.Mayor and C.F.Kohn(ed.) Readings in urban Geography.
  18. R.A.Ellefson(1968) - "Urban Fringe Management Problem" The Planner Vol.65, No.2
  19. R.E.Dickinson(1944) - City and Region, A Geographical Interpretation" Routlege & Paul, London.
  20. Y.B.Damle - op.cit
  21. Hemlata Acharya(1979) - "Urbanising Role of one lakh City" The Geographer Vol.VIII
  22. Mannuel Castell(1972) - op.cit
  23. P.Saunder (1981) - op.cit

**CHAPTER II**  
**RESOURCE BASE OF THE**  
**HINTERLAND**

CHAPTER - IIRESOURCE BASE OF THE HINTERLAND

2.1 Mark Jefferson remarked that cities do not grow up themselves; the countryside set them up to do tasks that must be performed in central place<sup>1</sup>. Subsistence economy is therefore, considered to be a severe discouragement to development of towns and cities. This may be true if urbanisation is a response to structural changes in the regional economy. But, with the crystallization of the process of colonization and the integration of varied regions through the nexus of the market forces, development of towns and cities need not only be viewed as a response to the regional economy, but also as a reflection of the constraints of the national or even global economy. It is not infrequent therefore, to find large towns in areas characterised by subsistence economy endowed with resources which can be extracted for the benefit of region outside it cities, through their controls over administration, transport linkages and other forces can play a very effective role in the process of dominance over the countryside. Studies of urbanisation in colonised countries invariably show this unequal relationship.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to examine the nature of rural economy of Meghalaya and its capacity to sustain

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1. Cf. G. S. Gosal (1982) "Agricultural Development and the process of urbanization with special reference to Punjab". Paper presented in the seminar on Urbanisation and Planned Development - Present and Future Perspectives. 20-21 Sept., CSRD/SSS/JNU, New Delhi.

urban development at the present scale. The main objective here is to assess the resource potential of the region which provides the basis for the development of cities with the assumption that existence of a city is inextricably linked with the surplus generated in the rural areas. If the rural economic base is inadequate for sustaining urban development, existence of large cities can only be viewed as extraneous to the structural requirements of the region. Its functions become increasingly unrelated to the needs of the hinterland and often play an extractive role through hegemonic relationship. It is in this context, a proper understanding of the natural resource base seems inescapable.

## 2.2 ECOLOGICAL SETTING

Land use is largely the reflection of the Ecological conditions of any region and the human response in utilising this basic resource in an optimal fashion. The topography, climate, resultant vegetation and soil cover provide the extent of available land for cultivation of crops, and for other associated uses relating to the nature of the economy. In spite of technological advances, physical constraints do greatly influence the nature of land utilisation.

The general topography of the plateau of Meghalaya is greatly affected by the structural links with the peninsular India - i.e., rugged, undulating and therefore, generally unsuitable for extensive cultivation. It has geological for-

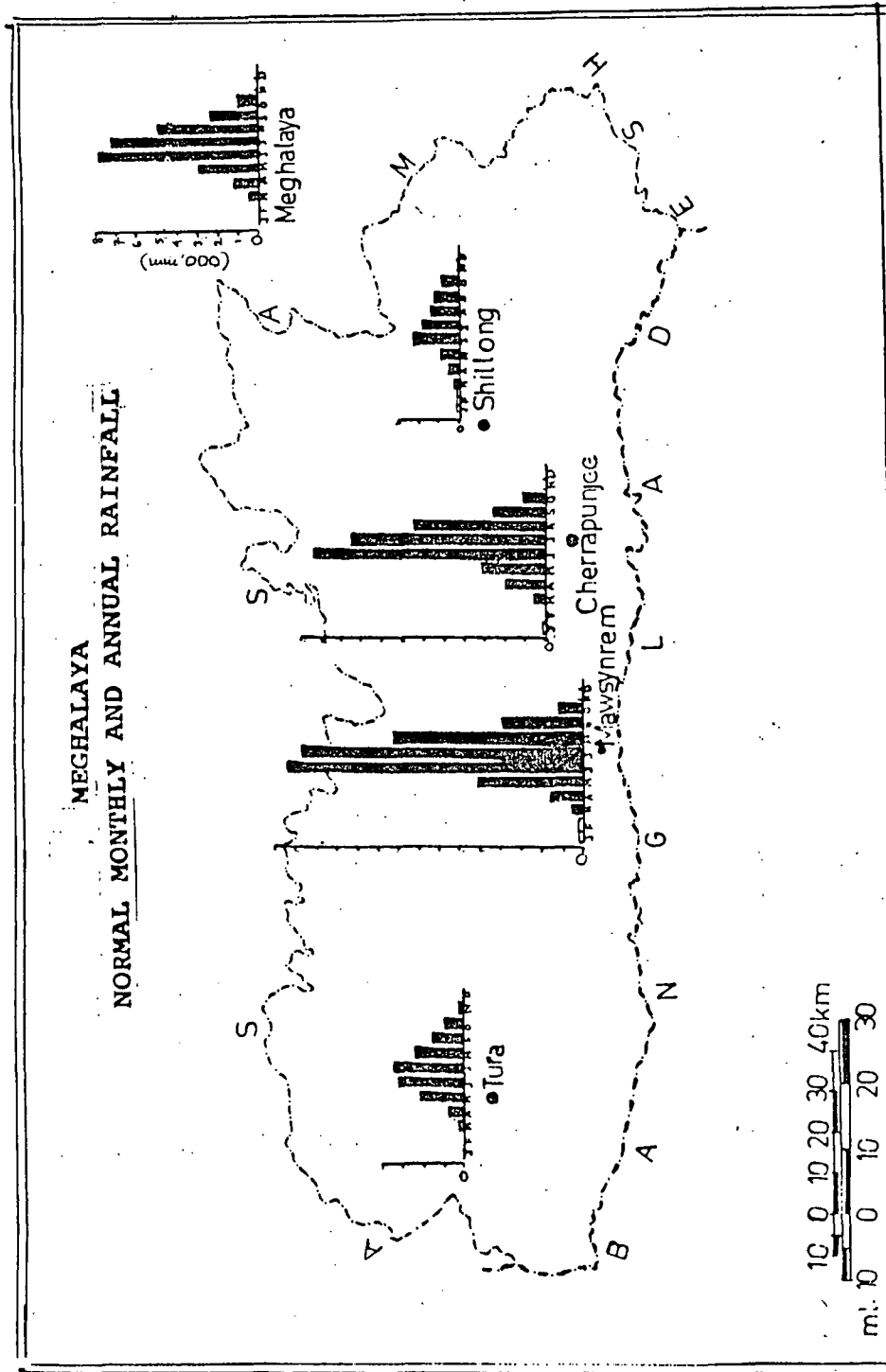


Fig. 2.1

mation of Archean and Pre-Cambrian rocks. The average altitude of the State is about 600 to 1800 mt. Though there are numerous streams and rivers, most of them are not perennial and flow in narrow valleys proving highly restrictive for intensive cultivation. However, most of the region is characterised by low gradient which provide

Table - 2.1  
MEGHALAYA: RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY, 1984

Months	Rainfall (in mm)	Temperature (in Centigrade)		Humidity (%)	
		Maximum	Minimum	(A) Maximum (8.30 AM)	(B) Manimum ( At 5.30 PM)
JAN.	20	13.4	4.5	61	67
FEB.	3	17.2	7.6	48	78
MARCH	18	22.1	11.3	44	61
APRIL	86	24.7	14.6	49	69
MAY	138	22.7	15.6	79	83
JUNE	287	23.2	17.8	83	86
JULY	955	23.0	17.5	88	86
AUG.	281	23.9	17.7	82	87
SEPT.	366	21.8	15.9	82	82
OCT.	122	21.4	14.4	74	79
NOV.	3	18.8	9.4	52	86
DEC.	37	15.5	6.7	55	83
TOTAL	2,316				

Source : STATISTICAL HAND BOOK (Meghalaya) 1987.

ideal conditions for terrace cultivation. The region receives very high rainfall, about 2316 mm annually, (Meghalaya has some of the rainiest places in the inhabited world, Cherrapunji, Mawsynram with an annual average of 1816 and 14220 mm respectively for the year 1985) indicating wet sub-tropical climate. The winters are rainfree and cool restricting growing season to 9 - 10 month at higher elevations of the plateau.

The given table of temperature and rainfall, shows the typical wet climatic condition throughout the year in the State.

As the table 2.1 reveals, the region receives at least some rainfall throughout the year though much of it is confined to six months, beginning with May. It proves destructive as rugged terrain and hill slopes lead to heavy runoff, extensive soil erosion which further restricts the agrarian potential of the region.

The Ecological conditions, hence, do not seem much in favour of positive agricultural condition. The nature of the topography and the wet climatic conditions restricts the possibilities of agricultural development, more so, because of lack of technological package and pre-dominance of traditional practices of cultivation by the tribal groups. An insight into the general pattern of land use in the region, gives a better understanding of the existing situation.

### 2.3 GENERAL LAND USE

Excessive rainfall and wet climate had endowed the Meghalaya State with thick cover of sub-tropical rain-forest, rich in species diversity.

The forest in Meghalaya covers an area of 8510 Km<sup>2</sup> i.e., about 40.6 per cent of the total geographical area of the State. The area under reserve forests, protected forests and unclassed forests is 750 Km<sup>2</sup>, 15 Km<sup>2</sup> and 1049 Km<sup>2</sup> respectively<sup>2</sup>. The following table gives an idea about the rich varieties of vegetation found in the region. The figure 2.2 shows the distribution of forest in the region.

TABLE-2.2

MEGHALAYA : FOREST TYPE - 1987.

Categories	Specific types.
Class I	- Sal, Titasopa, Bonsum, Gamari, Bola, Nahor.
Class II	- Red pine, Hallock, Patami, Sansuri.
Class III	- White Pine, Birch, Hingri, Khokhan, Champa, etc.
Class IV	- Ahi, Sida, Jarul, Halden, Naksaisal, Rongipoma.
Class V	- Bhelu, Pichhola, Bespal, Bajrang, Choraneem, Jhingan.
Others	- Tezpatta, Wild Pepper, Broomstick etc.

Source : District Council, Meghalaya.

2. Census of India, General Reports, Series IX 1971, Meghalaya Part I-A.

# LAND UTILISATION IN MEGHALAYA 1987-88

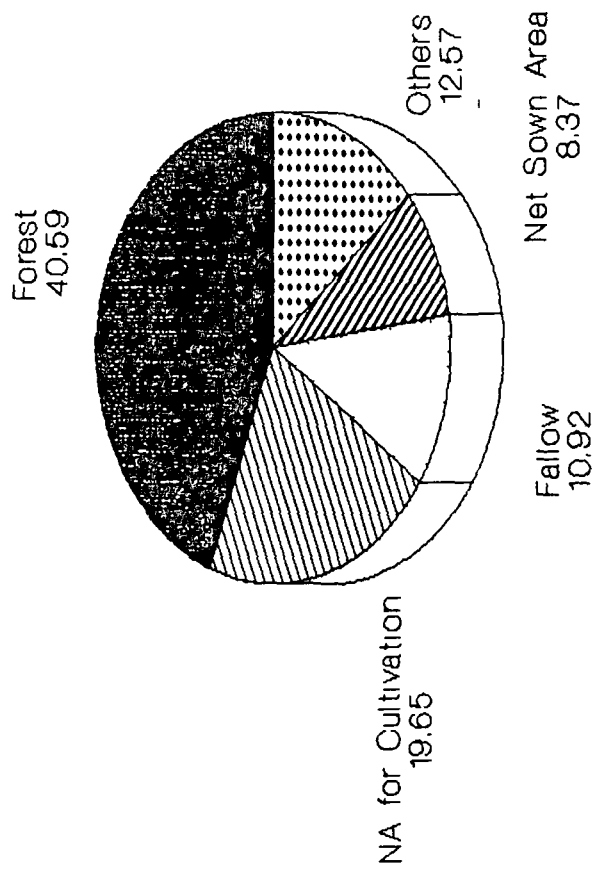


Fig. 2.2a

Of these, category I and II comprises of the most important forest resources of high economic value, and is used as building materials and furnitures. In general, a major portion of the total geographical area of the State is occupied by the extensive forest cover; this is evident from the following table :

TABLE-2.3  
MEGHALAYA : LAND UTILISATION - 1987-88.

Districts	Area under Forest (in percent)	Area not Available for Cultivation	Follow land in percent	Net Sown area in percent	Others
East Khasi Hills	36.64	14.85	5.38	7.72	35.41
West Khasi Hills	41.16	18.35	13.44	4.56	22.84
Jaintia Hills	40.30	18.09	7.76	4.56	29.29
East Garo Hills	47.23	23.96	12.76	10.01	6.04
West Garo Hills	48.22	26.82	12.83	11.21	0.92
Meghalaya (Total)	40.59	19.65	10.92	8.37	12.57

Source : Directorate of Statistics and Economics-Meghalaya.

# LAND UTILISATION IN MEGHALAYA 1987-88

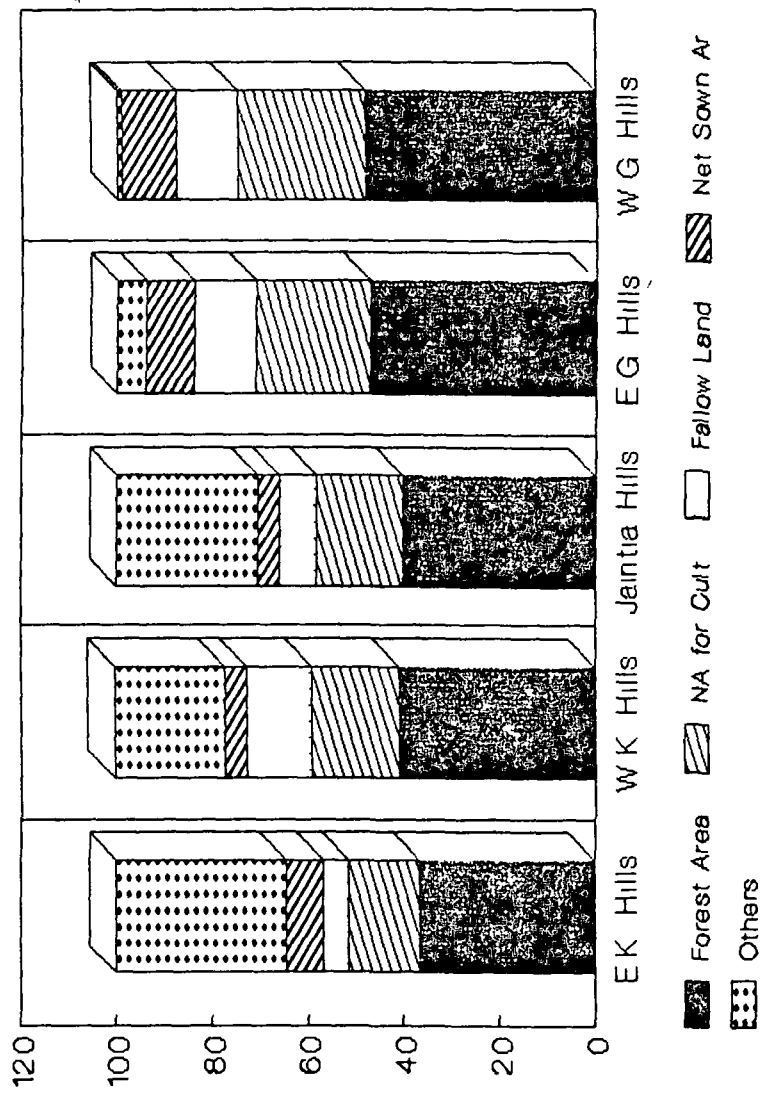


FIG 2.2(b)

Table 2.3 shows that about two fifth of the reported area is under forest. Forest-cover accounts for nearly half of the reported area in the two districts of Garo Hills. About 30 per cent of the reported area is covered under forest in the East and West Khasi Hills.

Besides forest, inaccessible terrain and infertile conditions renders vast areas unsuitable for agricultural practices.

It is evident from the table 2.3 that as much as 19.65 per cent of the geographical area is not available for cultivation. Nearly 11 per cent of the land is left as fallow. The proportion is as high as 13.44 per cent in West Khasi Hills and about 13 per cent in the Garo Hills. In the remaining four districts, the percentage of fallow land varies between 20 and 30 per cent.

Practice of shifting cultivation contributes to the process of deforestation, and creates barren lands, leading to a small proportion of available land under net sown category; Table 2.3 reveals that the share of net sown area (NSA) is only 8.37 per cent of the geographical area in the State. The proportion of net sown area is as low as 4.56 per cent in West Khasi Hills and only 7.7 per cent in East Khasi Hills District. The latter has the highest share of Urban Population. Despite large area under forest, the net sown area in the Garo Hills is relatively larger,

i.e., over 10 per cent of the total geographical area.

The ecological conditions in the region is largely unfavourable for intensive agricultural usage due primarily to unavailability of suitable agricultural land. Moreover, much of the agricultural land is under Jhum, or terrace cultivation - all of which indicate subsistence nature of agricultural production.

#### 2.4 JHUM

The subsistence nature of agricultural production is indicated by a reference to the extent of dependence of population on Jhum Cultivation. According to 1981 census, nearly a fifth (19.23 per cent) of the total population of Meghalaya is dependent on Jhum. Table 2.4 reveals that the dependence on Jhum is much higher in certain areas of rural Meghalaya.

The general practice in jhum or shifting cultivation is to clear a piece of forest land each year, cultivate it continuously for two to three years and after exhausting the soil fertility leave it idle for 6 to 10 years before a second cultivation. The estimated area cleared in Meghalaya varies from 40 to 50 thousand hectares, with some 60 to 70 thousand families dependent on it and with an average one hectare area per family<sup>3</sup>.

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3. Report on agricultural practices (1984) - Directorate of statistics and economics, Meghalaya.

A cursory look at the table 2.4 reveals the extent of concentration of Jhum dependent population. More than 50 per cent of the total population in East and West Garo Hills practice jhum. The extent of dependence in all the blocks of Jaintia Hills as well as East and West Khasi Hills is less than 25 per cent

TABLE - 2.4

MEGHALAYA - PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION DEPENDENT ON JHUM  
CULTIVATION 1987.

Frequency and per- centage category	D i s t r i c t s					
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	Jaintia Hills	Meghalaya
0-15%	12 (80)	4 (80)	-	-	4 (80)	20 (50)
15-30%	2 (13.3)	-	2 (50)	3 (27.7)	1 (20)	8 (20)
30-45%	1 (6.0)	1 (20)	1 (25)	4 (36.6)	-	7 (17.5)
45-60%	-	-	1 (25)	2 (18.18)	-	3 (7.5)
60%&	-	-	-	2 (18.18)	-	2 (5)
Total	15	5	3	11	5	40

Source : North Eastern Geographer, Vol. 19, No. 1 & 2.

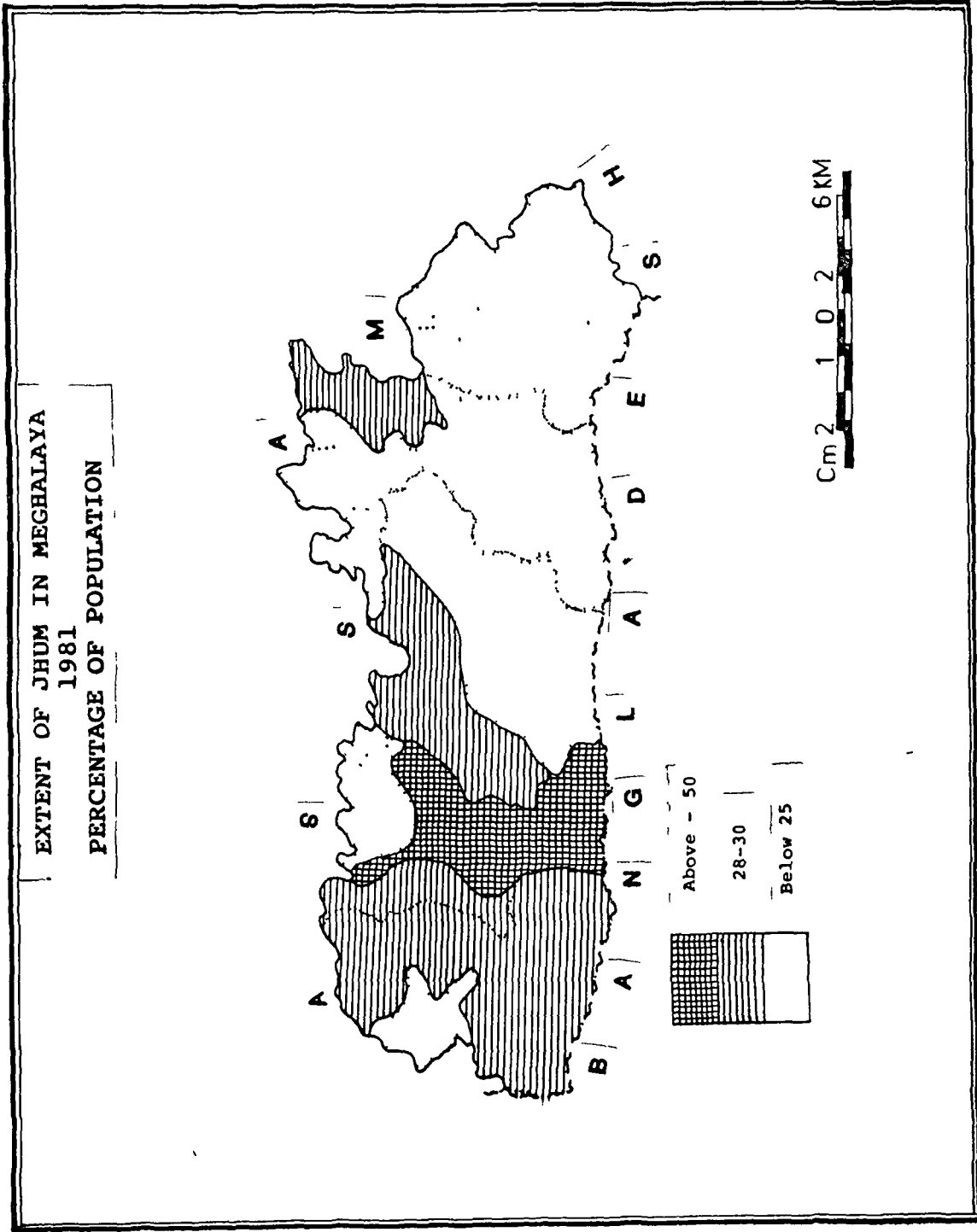


Fig 2.3

At the district level, the extent of variation in jhum-dependence is not clearly brought out, but at the block level, the pattern shows considerable areal variation. In Khasi Hills, the share of population engaged in Jhum is only 15 per cent. However in at least one block, 30 to 45 per cent population practises jhum as the dominant agricultural method.

The pattern in East and West Garo Hills is more revealing. A very large section of the population (about 50 to 60 per cent) is engaged in Jhum (table 2.4). This is indicative of a highly subsistence nature of production. In general, the spatial pattern of jhum dependence in Meghalaya leads to the following broad conclusions :-

- i) The dependence on jhum increases with distance away from the urban areas (fig.2.3). This is probably due to requirements of the city to which the neighbouring rural areas have responded by a relatively more intense cultivation of land and changes in the cropping pattern.
- ii) The percentage of jhumias is low in the East and West Khasi Hills in comparison to the other three districts. It may be due to urban influence, particularly so in the East Khasi Hills, where the urban Agglomeration of Shillong accounts for nearly half of the Urban population in the State.

A large percentage of population continues to pursue shifting cultivation which not only yields very low output, it also limits cultivable land to a further extent. Fig.2.3 reveals the spatial extent of concentration of population dependent on Jhum<sup>4</sup>.

## 2.5 CROPPING PATTERN AND INTENSITY

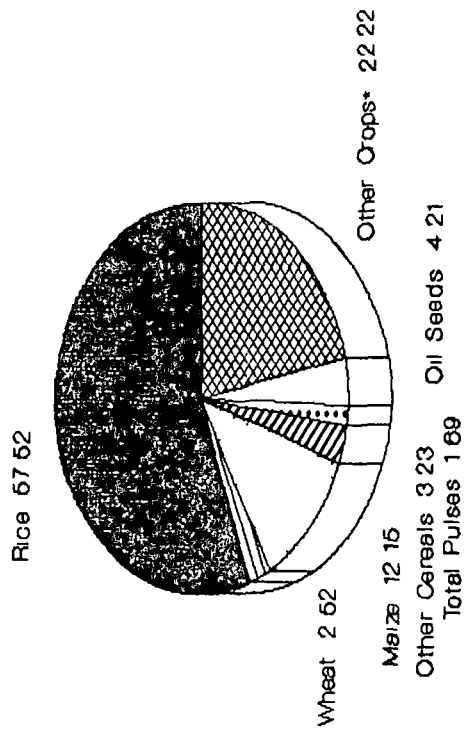
Apart from jhum, cropping pattern in the state too provides insight into the subsistence nature of agricultural production, which is heavily loaded in favour of foodgrains. Agriculture in Meghalaya consists of individual farmers producing usually subsistence crops for the family, occasionally together with supplementary cash crops. The small community in which a farmer is weeded into, demands nominal market orientation. Traditional agricultural practices dominate the agricultural scene. It is clear from table 2.3 that limited area is available for agricultural use out of which cereals like rice, wheat and maize occupy most of the crop-land. Together, cereals account for a little less than 72 per cent of the cropped area. Due to favourable agro-climatic conditions, rice constitutes the single most important crop claiming a little less than three fifths of the total acreage under different

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4. Available data on jhum and population dependent on it is rather sketchy and unreliable. Absence of cadastral survey in the entire state is the major cause of this unreliability.

# MEGHALAYA

## Percentage Area of Principal Crops 1986-87



\* Potato, Ginger, Turmeric etc

Fig 2.4.

TABLE - 2.5  
MEGHALAYA : PERCENTAGE OF AREA UNDER PRINCIPAL CROPS

Crops	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
Total Area under difficult crops (in hectares)	194364	193238	188672
Total Rice	57.29	57.23	57.52
Wheat	1.87	2.39	2.52
Maize	9.06	9.15	10.15
Other Cereals	1.38	1.36	1.69
Total Pulses	1.68	1.38	1.69
Total Oil seeds	3.80	4.11	4.21
Other crops <sup>5</sup>	24.88	24.29	22.22

Source : Directorate of statistics and Economics Meghalaya.

crops (fig.2.4). Cultivation of pulses is negligible, though oilseeds of different kinds constitute a significant 4.21 per cent of the total cropped land. The agro-climatic conditions are suitable for growing a variety of winter vegetables. The farmers are responding to the growing of vegetable recently which explains a fairly large area under other crops (about 22 per cent) which includes cultivation of potato, turmeric and tropical fruits such as pineapple. However, cultivation of winter vegetable seems more a response to the growth of urban population. This is evident from the fact that

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5. Includes potato, ginger, turmeric and tropical fruits etc.

potato is the first ranking crop in Khasi Hills where Shillong is located.

Table 2.6  
MEGHALAYA INDEX OF CROPPING INTENSITY (1980-1988)

District	1980-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	84-85	85-86	86-87	87-88
East Khasi Hills	124.18	126.28	133.37	126.24	125.48	126.99	124.36	126.82
West Khasi Hills	114.18	115.33	112.33	114.77	114.62	115.34	112.95	114.26
Jaintia Hills	100.38	100.38	100.36	100.41	100.41	100.48	100.50	103.29
East Garo Hills	142.47	122.27	120.45	121.98	121.29	121.59	117.69	119.36
West Garo Hills	125.203	129.3	127.40	127.85	126.91	127.66	124.92	126.0
Meghalaya	639.195	121.01	119.125	120.33	119.79	120.61	118.28	119.65

Source-Directorate of statistics and Economics.  
Meghalaya.

But the intensity of cropping is rather low. For the state as a whole, the index is as low as 119.65 in the year 1987-88 (Table 2.6). Nearly the entire net sown area produces just one crop in Jaintia hills. The intensity is slightly better in East Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills districts. Incidentally, these two districts have experienced significant urban development. Table 2.6 reveals little change in cropping intensity during the period 1980-1988.

Thus, the overall agricultural scenerio indicates by and large a stagnant and subsistence level of production. Practice of Jhum and near absence of modern inputs precludes the possibility of substantial agrarian surplus in this hilly state. The only changes in agricultural production indicated by cropping pattern and intensity of cropping, seems to have been confined to areas close to the towns. This is more as a response to the demands of the consumers in the city than any structural adjustments in the rural areas. This impact of the city too is highly spatially restricted.

## 2.6 FOREST RESOURCES

A very large percentage of the state's total geographical area is under forest cover constituting the most important resource base of the region. The area under reserve forest, protected forests and unclassed forest is 750 Km<sup>2</sup>, 15 Km<sup>2</sup> and 1049 Km<sup>2</sup> respectively<sup>6</sup>. Only reserved forest are being managed by the state forest department, while rest are managed by district council authorities. The state is very rich in its floristic composition and offers an excellent natural resource base. The vegetation can be broadly classified into the following types<sup>7</sup>.

- 
6. Most of the forests are privately owned for which no reliable data is not available.
  7. D.Roy - (1986) Economic Development, Consumption Patterns and Their Impact on Ecological Balance with Special Reference to Forest-Based Industries, unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Department of Economics, N.E.H.U., Shillong.

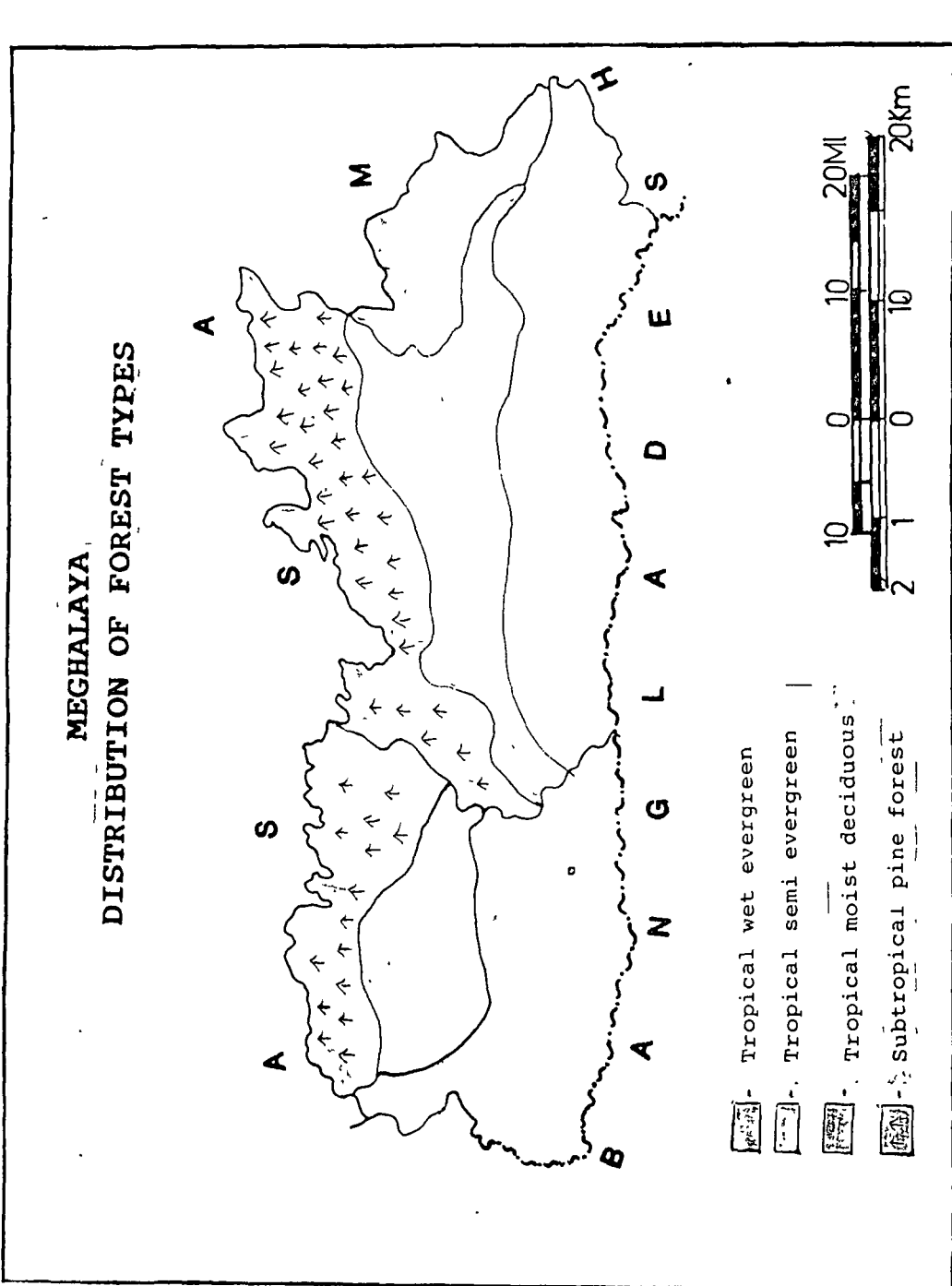


Fig 25

Tropical mixed evergreen forests: This is confined to the northern and southern parts of Khasi and Jaintia Hills up to an elevation of 3,000 ft. The vegetation includes trees like *Shorea assamica* (sal) *vatica lanceafolia* (Tita Sopa) *Terameles nudiflofa* (choraneem) *Terminalia-bellerica* (champa) *Exbucklandia* (Sesak) etc. Bamboo forests covering a considerable areas are also common in Northern parts of Khasi Hills and in several parts of Garo Hills.

Tropical deciduous forest: This predominant type of Forests is commonly met within Garo Hills. This constitutes *shorea* (sal) as the single dominant species in several places. The forest is characterised by trees like *Shorea*, *Gunelina arborea* (Bonsum) *Anto carpera chaplasa* (a variety of titasopa) etc. Several other dominant trees and shrubs are also quite abundant.

Sub-tropical pine forest : The pine forest is spread all over the Shillong plateau and in upper Khasi and Jaintia Hills from an elevation of about 3000 ft. It is dominated by single tree (pine) *pinus insertain* with several other plants such as *Rhododendron*, and *Ebeocarous* (*Eucaliptus*) etc.

Besides, abundant grassland is also found which is a biotic climax from the age-old practice of shifting cultivation. This extends over miles in all directions and usually covers the bare rounded tops of low hills and vales interspread here and there by small pockets of mixed forests<sup>8</sup>.

8. Department of Forestry, Government of Meghalaya, Directorate of Statistics and Economics.

The given figure 2.5 depicts the distribution.

The percentage of forest cover is as high as 48 per cent and 47 per cent in East and West Garo Hills, covering almost half the area of the respective districts. In the other three districts, an average of 40 per cent area is under forest cover.

These rich forest areas with wide range of species like the sal, sesam, Teak, Titasopa, champa, Redpine etc. (table 2.2) are of enormous economic value. The high quality wood, found in the areas of sonapahar, Bhoi region and Jowai provide the main timber sources to cater to the needs of wooden furnitures and building materials and industry. Also a rich variety of orchids and other forest products, like ferns and shrubs contribute to urban demands within the state and across the border further east and south.

## 2.7 MINERAL RESOURCES

The geological setting of Meghalaya, comprising of sand and shalestone of late tertiary period, thrown in long folds, suggest a large mineral potential. The stratigraphic swquence is represented by a relative succession of Archean and pre-cambrian sediments forming plunging anticlines and synelines, surrounding the Shillong plateau, which represent the oldest geological formation in the state, being a part of the Indian peninsula.

Unlike the economically more advanced areas of the country, mineral investigations in the State have been rather sketchy and have ended only with reported occurrences. The difficult hilly terrain and high inaccessibility have stood in the way of a proper exploitation and better utilization of mineral resources.

Of the many economic minerals reported in the State, coal, limestone, silliminate and clays are perhaps the most well known.

Coal : The reserves of coal in the state based on preliminary surveys comprise a little over 500 million tonnes, forming only 3 per cent of the total coal reserves of the country. The estimated present production is about 1.5 lakh tonnes annually; some of it is consumed locally in Cherrapunji cement factory, while a major part goes down to the plains of Assam and beyond.

Limestone : The whole of Bangladesh border, with Meghalaya provides thick walls of limestone deposit, with a total inferred reserves of 3000 million tonnes. The present annual production of limestone available in the State is of very high grade, and runs even into metallurgical and chemical grades. A large quantity of limestone is exported out from the state catering to the national and international needs, to country like Bangladesh etc.

Silliminate : One of the best silliminate deposits in the world is found around Sonapahar in Western Khasi Hills. The high alumina and silica contents of these deposits make this mineral a natural re-factory material of great Commercial value. About 95 per cent of India's total reserve of silliminate are found in the state; with an annual production of 3000 tonnes. Thus the State has one of the largest silliminate deposits in the country but for the preservation policy of the Government exports were banned in the 60s.

Clay : Extensive deposits of good clays totalling over 80 million tonnes is inferred category, occur in various parts of the State, the major occurrence being in Garo Hills.

Besides these, Meghalaya also bounds in building materials such as granite, quartzite, hard sandstone and basic rocks, like Khasi greenstone and dolorite granite etc.

However, most of these resources are only estimates and are yet to be exploited. However, attainment of statehood and the consequent opening up of more roads and with availability of technical skill hopes have been raised about increased mineral production. The overall production and output at present remains at a very nominal level as evident from the table 2.7.

Table - 2.7  
MEGHALAYA PRODUCTION OF MINERALS (1987)

Districts	M I N E R A L (in 000 tonnes)			
	Coal	Limestone	Silliminate	Clay
Jaintia Hills	1321 (91.2)	-	-	-
East Khasi Hills	8 (.55%)	244 (100.0)	-	-
West Khasi Hills	35 (2.41%)	-	3.9 (100.0)	-
East Garo Hills	-	-	-	-
West Garo Hills	4 (0.27)	-	-	1.2(100.
Meghalaya	1448	224	3.9	1.2

Source : Directorate of Minerals, Meghalaya.

Coal comprises the most important resource of the region. Out of the five districts, Jaintia Hills contributes a major share of 91.2 per cent of the total output. The remaining four districts together contribute only 8 per cent of the output.

The limestone mines are mainly concentrated in the north and north-east section of the East Khasi Hills district. Of the total output, the entire reserve is found in East Khasi Hills.

Mineral output of the State of Meghalaya do not contribute to basic requirements like that of natural gas or petroleum etc. and the demands are met with imports from other states, to cater to the urban and rural needs.

Thus, despite being endowed with rich potential resources, because of low level of output, the basic question that emerges is whether the state can support a greater outward thrust of population. The situation can be best explained by an understanding of the nature of economic orientation in the rural areas of the State, through an analysis of structure of workforce.

## 2.8 STRUCTURE OF WORKFORCE

Despite poor agrarian base and low productivity of land, agriculture provides the main source of work to more than 80 per cent of the total working population in the rural areas. Table 2.8 shows that about 46 per cent of rural population is engaged in work. The main workers constitute half of the total population in West Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills. The proportion of workers in the Garo Hills, however, is very small, i.e., 39 per cent in East Garo Hills and 45 per cent in West Garo Hills. About 45 per cent of the population is returned as main workers in East Khasi Hills district.

TABLE - 2.8

MEGHALAYA : STRUCTURE OF RURAL WORKFORCE-1981

Districts	% of workers to total population	Cultivators	Agri-cultu-ral La-bourers	House-hold Indus-try.	Other workers <sup>9</sup>
East Khasi Hills	45.1	49.2	15.7	1.30	33.6
West Khasi Hills	50.3	90.1	5.22	0.09	4.60
East Garo Hills	39.0	83.4	6.8	0.5	9.3
West Garo Hills	45.0	81.0	10.7	0.7	7.7
Jaintia Hills	50.0	70.5	12.1	0.45	16.9
Meghalaya	45.9	71.8	11.1	0.78	16.40

Source : Census of India, General Population table, Meghalaya Series II A.

At the district level, the structure of workforce shows a high degree of spatial variation. Almost the entire workforce in West Khasi Hills district is concentrated in the agrarian sector, mainly in the cultivators category. In the Garo Hills too, agriculture accounts for a disproportionate share of the working population (i.e., nearly 90 per cent). Surprisingly, agricultural work is

9. Includes non-household industries, mining quarrying etc. construction, trade and commerce, transport and communication and other services.

# MEGHALAYA

## Structure of Work Force (Rural)

### 1981

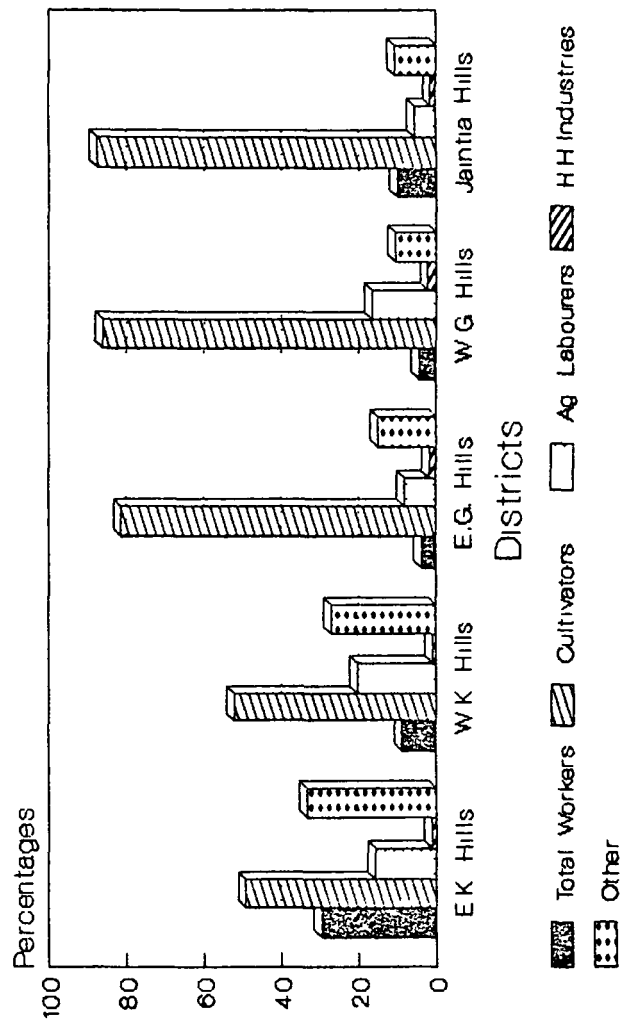


Fig 2.6.

performed by a relatively less proportion of the main workers in Jaintia Hills. Owner cultivators constitute nearly half of the workforce in East Khasi Hills.

Agricultural wage earners are few in Meghalaya. This is understandable as landlessness is not common among the tribes of the North-East. However, a significant proportion of the rural workforce (i.e., 11.1 per cent) in Meghalaya is returned as agricultural labourers. Their share is as high as 15.7 per cent in East Khasi Hills, 12.1 per cent in Jaintia Hills and 10.7 per cent in West Garo Hills district indicating landlessness among a significant segment of the population. However, rural Meghalaya has a sizeable segment of migrants from Nepal, Bangladesh and Bihar who work for a wage in the agrarian sector. A large number of agricultural labourers in East Khasi Hills district is largely due to the concentration of migrant labourers near Shillong. Development of wage labour market in agriculture is rather incipient, except in East Khasi Hills district due to transformation of the rural economy adjacent to Shillong.

Location of Shillong also explains a higher proportion of rural workforce in East Khasi Hills in the category of 'other workers'. This category generally refers to the non-agrarian sphere of work, particularly services. Surprisingly, Jaintia Hills too shows a relatively large share of the rural workforce (i.e., 16.9 per cent) in 'other workers' category.

Broadly, the workforce structure is highly diversified only in the rural areas of East Khasi Hills district. This seems to be a response to the growth of urban centre in the district. The agricultural wage market too is more developed due to changes in the cropping pattern and more intensive use of land in this district. Agrarian dependence is more complete in the remaining districts.

## 2.9 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The foregoing analysis of the ecological setting and pattern of land use structure of workforce etc. in the study area leads to the following broad conclusion.

Firstly; the ecological conditions are not very favourable for generation of agrarian surplus. The area available for cultivation and the actually cultivated area constitutes only a negligible proportion of the total geographical area. The techniques of cultivation as well as the cropping pattern indicate a highly subsistence nature of agricultural production barring a few areas of notable exceptions, particularly the areas adjacent to the township.

Secondly; the region has some important natural resources, the forest resource being the most significant.

Some amount of coal, limestone, silliminate and clay is also available in few areas. But there is hardly any evidence of industries linked to such resources.

Thirdly; the structure of workforce too shows little diversification except in areas in close proximity to Shillong with more than 80 per cent of the workforce engaged in cultivation.

Broadly speaking, the region by and large is characterised by traditional agricultural practices. There is very little evidence of any structural transformation leading to the development of a large city with a symbiotic relationship with the rural areas. It may be summarized that the city continues to maintain its 'enclave' character so common to most cities developed in the hands of colonial administration. Shillong is one of the best examples of a city which sustains without having to depend on the structural requirements of the region. The city may thus be visualized as a 'dependent' one having a 'hegemonic' relationship with its hinterland, particularly in its functions as a centre of extraction of natural resources.

It may be worthwhile to examine this role of the city in greater detail by exploring the historical factors of its development and growth.

**CHAPTER III  
SHILLONG CITY  
AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE**

CHAPTER - IIISHILLONG CITY : AN HISTORICAL OUTLINE.

## 3.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

In this chapter, an attempt is made to get an insight into the causes and historical conditions that led to the growth of Shillong to a preeminent urban centre of the North East Region. This inevitably leads to the domain of history, particularly the colonial period in India's past. The process of urban development in Meghalaya is traced from the colonial to the post- Independence era. The purpose of the analysis is to highlight the slow but steady change of a tribal society in response to the colonial compulsions and to changes brought about by Independence. Information regarding the history of Meghalaya is rather sketchy prior to the colonial take-over. However, the later phases provide sustainable information from various census reports and gazetteers, as well as from autobiographies and published books.

## 3.2 PRE COLONIAL ERA

Tribal population in India is largely concentrated in those areas which are hilly, forested and dry; generally negative from the point of view of settled agriculture.

North-East provides one such cul-de-sac or blind alley and is believed to have enjoyed varying degrees of

isolation, both physical and social, giving rise to their own cultural contours. Evidences indicate existence of a traditional kingship/tribal chieftainship in these parts around 12th century A.D. Jaintia tribes ruling over the Jaintia Hills and adjacent plains in 13th century A.D. and that of Khasi chiefs over the Meghalaya region around 16th century A.D. were the prominent tribal kingdoms in the region<sup>1</sup>.

Often these tribal groups remained immuned to changes around them and had little or no exchange between one group and the other, except in the periodic markets<sup>2</sup>.

The isolation, both geographical and social, has been a major cause for economic arrest and slower pace of development of the region leading to stagnation in the economy.

This isolation was violated only in the colonial period, when the alien power made deep inroads into these areas in search of mineral wealth, timber and other resources as well as for the plantation economy.

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1. In the early period, the tribal groups in this region did not have any interactions amongst, either in trade or in social practice due to geographical heterogeneity and different language. In the later period i.e., around 10th century A.D., tribal areas were penetrated by trading groups between Bengal, Assam and Burma. As a consequence of this, periodic markets started emerging and trade between various group in the form of barter exchange came into being. These markets functioned under the protection of tribal chiefs or the Kings. G.W.Khon(1981) The Origin and Early History of the Khasi Synteng People. Firma KLM,Pvt.Ltd.,Calcutta.
  2. B.P.Misra (1979) "Agrarian Relations in Khasi State". Economic and Political Weekly Vol.XIV pp.88-92.

### 3.3 COLONIAL PENETRATION

The expansion of British colonial empire and the demands of industrialisation in Britain gradually engulfed these territories which were rich in natural resource endowments. By 18th century Northern Europe had exhausted their forest resources and there was a growing demand for timber to run the ship-building, iron-smelting and tanning industries in England and thus control of resources elsewhere was crucial for the expansion of British industries<sup>3</sup>.

The colonial interest in the North-East, particularly Assam and Meghalaya<sup>4</sup> was probably with the aim of exploiting the rich forest resources which the British wanted so desperately.

With the treaty of Yandaboo<sup>5</sup> in 1826 British acquired land and established a base in present Cherrapunjee. But due

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3. While in the early period of the British rule, timber extraction was mainly towards supplying the needs of British Navy, the years following the Indian Mutiny saw the exploitation of forest throughout the country for supplying large quantities of timber for railway construction in different parts of the country" V.P. Agarwala (1985) Forest in India's Environmental and Protection Frontier, Oxford, New Delhi. Also see I.Wallerstein(1979) The Capitalist World Economy, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.281.
  4. The preference of these two states were mainly for comparative easy accessibility and nearer to Bengal (present Bangladesh) through Sylhet, which served as the main connecting route for trade.
  5. With acquisition of Dewani of Bengal in 1765 by East India Company, administrative power passed on to the company and most of the independent rulers were provided protectorate status. In 1826 with Yandaboo treaty, Princely States of Ahom (Assam) became British protectorate and in 1833, a unit of the Sylhet light intantary was moved up the Meghalaya region, forming a base in Cherrapunjee. D.Syiemleh (1987) OUR CITY - NEIHA DECENNIAL, Department of History, N.E.H.U.

to unsuitable weather conditions, particularly excessive rainfall and above all the outbreak of Jaintia rebellion in the 1860s resisting the British entry into their territory hastened the process of selection of a new and more strategically located centre. Shillong was eventually chosen which satisfied both the conditions, i.e., it was less rainy<sup>6</sup> and easily approachable from and to Jaintia hills.

Fig.3(a) shows that at the time of its establishment as a small British township an island Shillong was surrounded by numerous Khasi princely states ruled by Khasi chieftains.

Cherrapunjee was much too far as a base for Jaintia campaign. Moreover, there was scarcely a decent market from where its residents (mostly British) could procure common articles of consumption. Central location of Shillong help easy accessibility for the British compared to the existing base at Cherrapunjee. The district headquarter was shifted to Shillong in 1866. The area of the station then covered the base of the Shillong Peak, Skirted Sadew village, Nongkseh village, Mawkhar, Laban and Laitumkhrah village<sup>7</sup>.

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6. Though Shillong is only 65 Km north of Cherrapunjee, the amount of rainfall is substantially less due to the location of the former in a rain-shadow zone.

7. In March 1866 Melay Singh Syiem (King) of Myllem in whose State the proposed site was located agreed to give rent free land for Shillong station and 1626 acres of land was ceded under the agreement. The Syiem accepting Rupees Two thousand as a token payment. A money payment was also made for the purchase of 759 acres from the individual proprietors. The site was named Shillong after the name of the Peak that looms over the South East. The site was planned and constructed under supervision of Captain Kelsall.

1. Gazetteer Report - Dr James Howard Thornton.

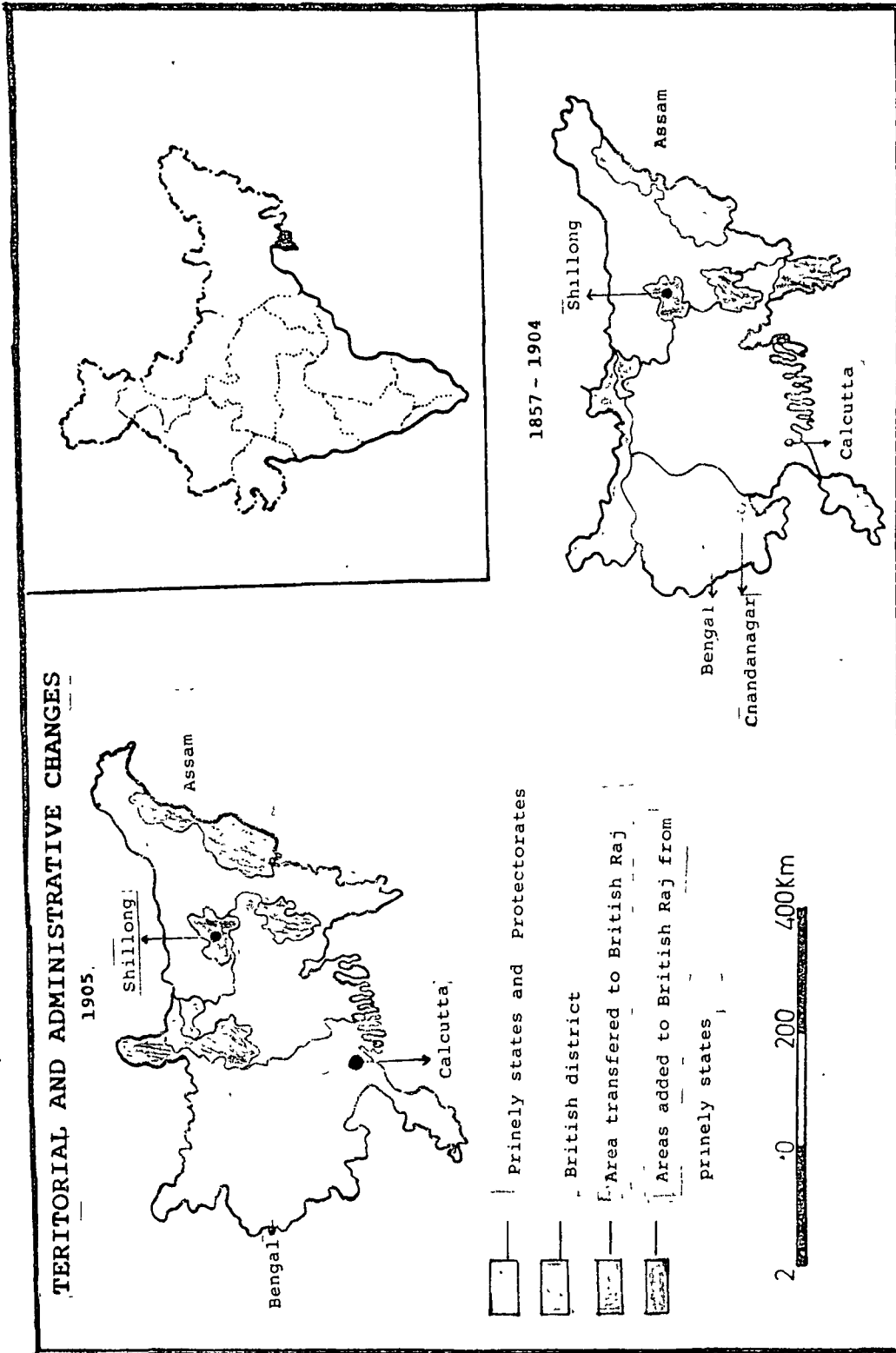


Fig 31

Shillong's importance grew, as it started serving as the nodal point of transport, mainly towards the South Bengal. A reasonably well laidout road connected Cherrapunjee with Shillong. This was much frequented road for economic ties were stronger still with Sylhet, as this was the main trading route.

In 1874, Shillong was made the capital of the province of Assam, and in 1877, a cart-road was opened between Shillong and Guwahati with the Syiem's permission<sup>8</sup>.

By 1878, Shillong was formally declared a station under the Bengal Municipal Act, 1876. The British over the years also acquired large pieces of land adjoining the ceded territory, which were gradually classified into cantonment lands, while the acquired land passed into twilight zones with the British Government recognising them as part of Myllem State, but exercising sovereign right. The boundaries of Shillong station were notified in 1896. Around 1904, the town was divided into five wards.

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8. To get to Shillong in early days was indeed a trying experience. On arrival at the Southern foothills below Cherrapunjee, one could take chance to walk up the steps or walk along Scot road. The other option was to be carried in a 'thapa' a long cane basket. There was no other road to reach Shillong. In 1877, a cart-road to Guwahati was opened, after the Syiem of Myllem had given permission for its construction. In 1888 horsedrawn tangas began plying between the two towns. Stables were placed at intervals along the road. Much to the delight of travelers, the journey could be accomplished in one day for fare of Rs.3/- per person. This account is left by St. Clair Grinwood, wife of Frank Grinwood, Political agent of Manipur in her autobiography, 'In my three years in Manipur'.

As the district and provincial headquarters of the town expanded to accommodate the increase in population. The census of 1881<sup>9</sup> recorded the number of non-Khasis in the district at 2225 persons. This number was almost all accounted for by the presence of a regiment, by the Police force and establishment attached to the headquarters of Government<sup>10</sup>. By 1897, Shillong had started becoming important as an education centre. The first high School was set up by the Welsh Missionaries in 1891, along with a Church at Mawkhar, marking the social breakthrough in the traditional society. By the turn of the century, Shillong became one of the important centres for education with its boarding Schools catering to the migrant groups.

The importance of Shillong grew with the partition of Bengal. When political instability broke the economic ties with the Sylhet plains, Shillong became the important commercial centre connecting the resource base of the interiors of North East to that of Assam<sup>11</sup>, through which, the ports of

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9. Gazetteer Report - Ibid - page.5.

10. Before the turn of the century, Shillong could claim to have had quite a mixture of peoples. Khasis from the neighbouring villages and further into the hills had started migrating into the capital in search of education, employment in Government and trade. There was a fairly large European population of administrators, tea planters and others who settled here after retirement and missionaries from Wales and Germany. There was a large number of Bengalis who staffed the offices, Nepali crafters and enterprising Marwari merchants had entered into these hills relatively late.- Ibid - Page-4.

11. N.C. Shadep Sen (1981) The History of Khasi People Prakash Publication, Calcutta.

Dacca and Calcutta could be easily approached. By 1910, Shillong station was declared a Municipality with ten wards. The inroads into the forest- rich areas continued with the expansion of railways in Assam and Shillong continued to thrive as a superimposed urban centre. This situation continued more or less unhindered till the two World Wars when exploitation of resources improved the road linkages mainly between Shillong and the other border states and a huge inflow of capital gave a sudden boost to the spread of urbanisation to the city, with an estimated 43.93 per cent rise in the urban population.

#### 3.4 POST INDEPENDENCE SITUATION

A new thrust of horizontal and vertical expansion was experienced by Shillong after Independence. Due to large immigration, expansion of residential buildings, vacant lands in Laitumkhrah, Laban, Malki were occupied. In 1951, Shillong agglomeration had only two townships: the municipality and the cantonment<sup>12</sup>. By 1961, Nongthymmai and Mawlai Townships had developed and formed two census towns.

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12 In 1951, Shillong consisting of the municipality and cantonment had an area of 12 sq.km. The Municipality did not provide enough scope for residential colonies and the town began to grow outside the Municipal limits. In fact this expansion started even before the partition, but gathered momentum after Independence.

The table 3.1 provides an idea of the area wise population growth in Shillong.

Table - 3.1

Shillong : Population Growth

Areas	Growth rates(1961-71)
1. Laitumkhrach	21.5
2. Malki	42.8
3. Lumparing & Madan Laban	29.7
4. Laban	18.7
5. Kench's Trace & Rilbong	1.38
6. European ward	20.8
7. Police Bazar	3.8
8. Jail Road	1.62
9. Mawkhar	15.9
10. Mission Compound & Jaiaw	29.4
11. S.E. Mawkhar	7.3
12. Mawprem	54.9
13. Cantonment	29.8
14. Nongthymmai	59.6
15. Mawlai	67.7
Shillong U.A.	19.87

Source : Census of India, Meghalaya General Report, Series 13, Vol.IX.

In 1970, when the new State of Meghalaya was created and Assam's Capital was shifted to Dispur, Shillong remained as the capital of Meghalaya only. In 1981, Madanrting and Pynthorumkhrah were included under Shillong Urban Agglomeration. Thus, Shillong urban Agglomeration consisted of Shillong Municipality, Cantonment, Mawlai, Nongthymmai, Pynthorumkhrah and Madanrting. The fig. 3.2 shows the different units of Agglomeration according to census of India 1981.

Shillong was established mainly for administrative purposes. Through the history of its evolution, it has ascribed certain degree of specialization to its functions. The population has increased at varying pace leading to acquisition of new settlement under urban areas. An analysis of its demographic and economic characteristics would be meaningful in this context.

The urban segment constituted less than one fifths (18.07 per cent) of the total population of Meghalaya according to 1981 census records. However, a disproportionately large proportion of it is claimed by the only one city i.e., Shillong Urban Agglomeration which alone accounts for about 72 per cent of the total urban population of the state<sup>13</sup>.

The share of urban population and its rising trends can be clearly understood from the table 3.2 which indicates a marked rise in the concentration of urban population in the city.

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13. National Institute of Urban Affairs (1987) Research Studies Series 39, A.N.E.C. Publication.

Table - 3.2

Urban Units	Total Populations			Decemal Growth	
	1961	1971	1981	1961-71	1971-81
Shillong Municipality	72439	87659	107673	+ 21.01	+ 22.85
Cantonment	2988	4730	6653	+ 58.32	+ 40.66
Mawlai	8528	14260	2080	+ 67.21	+ 42.22
Nongthymmai	10084	16103	21563	+ 59.69	+ 33.91
Pythorunkhaah	-	-	10735	-	-
Madanriting	-	3013	6160	-	-
Shillong U.A.	94039	122752	176064	+ 30.53	+ 43.43

Source : Census of India, (1971) Meghalaya, Series 14, Vol. IX.

It is evident from the table that the growth of population is higher in the period 1961-71 compared to 1971-81 in all the four constituents except Shillong Municipality. The reason may be the largescale outmigration resulting from the shifting of the capital of Assam from Shillong to Dispur. However, the overall growth rate remains high during the decade of 1971-81 for Shillong urban Agglomeration as a whole. The growth of population is largely accounted for as the product of (a) Natural increase (b) Change in the Municipality boundary and (c) immigration from the surrounding rural areas, as well as from distant places, including interstate migration<sup>14</sup>.

14. A.K.Barpujari (1976), Problems of Hill Tribes North Eastern Frontier, Vol.II p.74

Of these, the first two causes are not accounted for clearly. According to Mahapatra, "Physical extension of the city does not clearly figure in the census enumeration"<sup>15</sup> and the accurate share of natural increase of population and the growth rate due to physical expansion of the city, do not emerge clearly. The third cause, i.e., Immigration into Shillong could be of two types - (a) One is augmented by the migration streams from the immediate hinterland of Shillong, (b) The other is the augmentation by the migration streams from distant places or interstate migrations.

In the case of Shillong, the probable reason is that the first stream is not as significant due to the traditional agricultural-tribal milieu surrounding it. The second process is also not as prominent due to the relative decline of its urban functions, particularly after the shifting of the capital of greater Assam.

However, from the pre-Independence period, transport played an important role in bringing about the movement of people from rural areas increasing the pace of rural to urban migration. This became more prominent in the post-Independence period when the city developed links with the rest of the national economy.

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15. A.C.Mahapatra (1984) op.cit

As an important tourist centre and health resort, Shillong has been attracting people ever since 1920s and 1930s onwards, when the road linkage with Assam was developed. The picturesque location of the city in a valley surrounded by peaks and hills, attracted tourists from all over the country. During the colonial period, Shillong served as the Summer resort for most of the administrative Officers and Planters. The region was variously called the 'Scotland of the East' or the 'flower valley' etc. by the early travellers who were impressed by the abundant natural beauty of the region. In the post-Independence period, tourism in Meghalaya developed at a faster pace, providing one of the most important economic bases in the region. However, after the shift of the capital in 1972 and the political turmoil in Shillong during the year 1979, tourist arrival to this region declined substantially.

Besides being an tourist centre, Shillong performed as an important education centre by the turn of the century. The Western Education which was brought in by Welsh Mission spread throughout the urban agglomeration.

Shillong acted as foci for imparting modern western education. Concentration of large number of Schools and Colleges attracted migrants to the city to persue education.

From a small village in 1866 to a Class I city in 1981, the city has, however, grown totally to cater to the

needs of the urban group as an enclave of modernization in the midst of the rural hinterland which continued much the same way. The modern transport network, expansion of the city infrastructure has influenced the tribal social order only to a limited extent, giving rise to a dualistic economic organization.

### 3.5 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The historical outline on the origin and growth of Shillong provides insights into the nature of rural-urban linkage which may be summarized as below.

Firstly, the city was developed to suit the colonial demands of exploitation of natural resources and for a better administrative and defence control over the region.

Secondly; the regional structure during the period of inception of the city is characterized by the fragmentation of space only on politico-administrative lines without any indication towards structural changes in the economy. It is significant that city which remained under direct British control was surrounded by numerous Khasi princely States.

Thirdly; even after Independence, the nature of urbanisation is characterized by a mere growth in the population without being accompanied by any economic transformation in the hinterland.

Fourthly; the historical antecedents of the development of the city had far-reaching implications.

a) The process of reorganization of space was induced from above leading to a complete split in the city space linked to the national and global economy and the hinterland continuing with the old tribal order. The process of under-development of the space economy thus began with this split as the re-organisation of space was not a response to changes in the regional structure, generated through soci-economic instrumentalities.

b) The hegemonic and dominant character of the city space in relation to its hinterland was inherent in the process and it contributed to weak linkages it has with the hinterland.

c) Even after Independence, though the city has snapped its direct relationship with the metropolitan economy in the dependence structure, it continues to reproduce the process of under-development by perpetuating its administrative dominance.

**CHAPTER IV**  
**ECONOMIC BASE OF SHILLONG**  
**URBAN AGGLOMERATION**

CHAPTER - IVECONOMIC BASE OF SHILLONG URBAN AGGLOMERATION

## 4.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:

In this chapter an attempt is made to understand the economic base of Shillong with a view to analysing its linkages with the rural hinterland. This chapter focuses on the present economic base of the city and analyses the functions and services it renders by a reference to its size, workforce distribution in different sectors of the economy, its production base and revenue structure etc.

In the previous chapter, it was demonstrated that the evolution and growth of the city had very little relation to the needs of the regional economy. Nor was it a result of any significant socio-economic transformation of the rural economy. The development of the city was more of a response to the colonial compulsions in the nineteenth century having to provide the much needed administrative infrastructure. It is no wonder therefore that from its very inception the city has acquired an 'enclave' status without influencing the development in the economy of the rural hinterland in any significant manner. The city grew independent of the needs of the regional economy.

## 4.2 SHILLONG : PRESENT

Historically, the region has never been under effective control of the main land. However, it came under the colonial control in the late 19th century. Shillong was established

mainly for administrative (garrison town) purposes, and continues to serve the purpose of being an essentially service oriented, highly tertiarized city without much productive base.

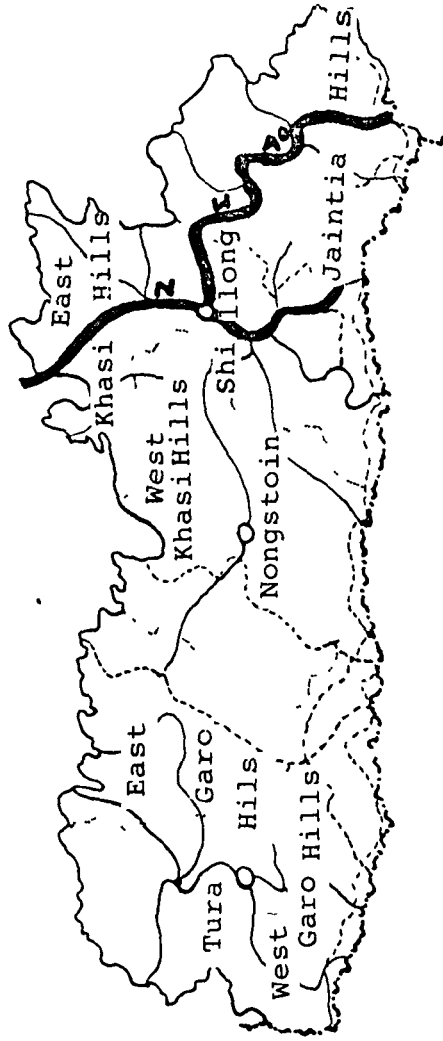
The city is an integrat part of the urban system of the North-Eastern Region, which is in nexus with metropolis of Calcutta and the urban system, developed around the port city. The urbanisation process of Shillong can be attributed to the peculiar location of the city in a predominantly tribal and hill area with limited sedentary agricultural practices and inadequate transport linkages within and without the region.

In the context of the broader Indian perspective, the region is generally considered as 'cultural back waters'<sup>1</sup>. Situated as it does, it has served in the past as a gateway between the mainland and the interior parts of the North-East. By virtue of its particular location, Socio-political influences crept into the region through migration from the mainland. Its locational factors have brought the fusion of diverse elements, which provide variety to its socio- economic spectrum. The city has developed as the premier centre for educational and cultural activities in the region. In terms of sheer size, the city accounts for nearly 70 per cent of the total urban population of the State. Its administrative importance is overwhelming. Almost all headquarters of main Central and State Government as well as local government are located here.

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1. S.N. Rao (1977) - "Geographical factors in cultural History of the North-Eastern India". Paper presented at the seminar on Resource base and problems of Regional Development, Shillong.

MEGHALAYA  
TRANSPORT NETWORK (ROADS)






-  National highway
-  District roads
-  Other Roads



Fig 42

Besides Guwahati, Shillong serves as the most important trading node for all the states in the north-east.

It is imperative at this point to examine in detail some of the important functions which Shillong performs and its own economic base.

#### 4.3 TRANSPORT

Efficiency in transportation sector is an important precondition for maximising a region's growth potential. In the North-East in general and Meghalaya in particular, absence of adequate connectivity has been a serious impediment for a balanced economic development.

During the pre-Independence period, road linkages between sylhet (Bangladesh) and Guwahati passed through Shillong and connected the two river valleys of Brahmaputra and Surma which opened up new frontiers of trade and established Shillong as the entrepot of British Raj in the region. In the post-Independent era, the road links were established with other frontier states like Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura which further established Shillong as an important transaction centre or the 'gateway' to the interiors of the North East.

Shillong is well connected through a network of national highways (NH-40 and 42 fig.4a) with Guwahati in the

North East, Jowai in the East, Cherrapunji and Silchar in the South. It is also connected by air with Calcutta, Guwahati and Silchar. However within the state, transport network remains highly inadequate (Table 4.1). Connectivity is particularly poor in West Khasi Hills District. Another district, where transport facility is highly inadequate is West Garo Hills.

Table-4.1

MEGHALAYA - (DISTRICT-WISE ROAD LENGTH, PER 100 Sq.Km.)  
(1986 - 87)

Districts	Types of Roads		Total
	Surfaced (Matalled)	Un-Surfaced (non Metalle )	
Jaintia Hills	10.72	16.025	26.75
East Khasi Hills	14.53	19.23	33.76
West Khasi Hills	3.50	10.02	13.64
East Garo Hills	11.21	10.11	21.40
West Garo Hills	8.62	12.49	21.15
Meghalaya	9.46	13.80	23.26

Source : (Public Works Department - Head Quarters Shillong Meghalaya)

A cursory examination of the tables reveal that East Khasi Hills has the better road communication network. This can be explained by the fact of location of Shillong urban agglomeration in the district. It also indicates that

the volume of trade and communication remain the highest in the district, while the other area have a lesser degree of involvement in the trade network. Table 4.2 makes the situation more than clear.

Table - 4.2

Meghalaya : District-wise number of Vehicles on Road (1986)  
per 1000 population

Sl. No.	Type of vehicles	Jaintia Hills	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills
1.	Trucks Govt.	11.34	9.11	-	17.39	11.90
2.	Private	59.02	18.49	44.27	56.98	23.18
3.	Buses Govt.	1.03	2.39	-	-	-
4.	Private	5.29	5.16	9.16	1.42	10.53
5.	Three wheelers Govt.	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Private	-	.042	-	-	-
7.	Cars Govt.	7.21	15.53	-	0.85	11.90
8.	Private	5.70	21.21	63.63	13.04	7.37
9.	Jeeps Govt.	40.20	52.47	68.63	43.47	29.76
10.	Private	13.48	15.17	-	4.27	18.75
11.	Two wheelers Govt.	4.12	4.095	-	-	7.14
12.	Private	4.56	23.29	15.34	-	32.66
13.	Tractor Govt.	13.40	2.31	9.09	-	8.33
14.	Private	0.93	1.08	9.09	8.69	0.73
15.	Trailers Govt.	20.61	9.65	27.72	-	19.04
16.	Private	3.35	7.57	3.05	8.54	2.52
17.	Taxi Govt.	-	-	-	-	-
18.	Private	6.71	7.52	3.03	17.39	1.69
19.	Other car Govt.	2.61	4.40	-	.56	11.90
20.	Private	0.87	0.45	-	-	2.52
21.	Total Govt. Private	97.1491				

Commissioner of transport Meghalaya.

As evident from table 4.2, the East Khasi Hills District dominates the communication network, indicating the location of a intense trade node in the state. However, the private sector has a larger share in the transport network than the public, which emphasises the dominance of small-scale trade and commerce in the district in general and Shillong urban agglomeration in particular linking it with the outside world. The other predominantly rural districts do not have such intense communication link.

#### 4.4 EDUCATION

Western Education was brought in by the Welsh Presbyterian mission. The Shillong urban Centre acted as a foci for imparting modern education. Concentration of a large number of schools and colleges attracted and continue to attract a considerable section of the population from rural areas as well as across interstate borders to persue education.

However, this migration trend is predominantly towards the Shillong urban agglomeration, as the city dominates the literacy scenario. Though the State of Meghalaya has a literacy rate of 34.08 per cent (1981 census). It is not evenly distributed. A major share of the literate persons and most of its educational institutions seems concentrated in East Khasi Hills District or in Shillong city. The given table 4.3 further establishes the dominance of the Shillong urban agglomeration in this field.

Table - 4.3

MEGHALAYA - EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (AT DISTRICT LEVEL) 1985 - 86

Districts	TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS					
	Primary Schools	Middle & Senior Schools	Higher Secondary Schools	Training Institute	Colleges	University
Jaintia Hills	456	68	22	2	1	-
East Khasi Hills	1145	214	93	4	10	1
West Khasi Hills	1287	77	26	-	1	-
East Garo Hills	613	70	32	1	1	-
West Garo Hills	1408	193	95	3	-	-
Meghalaya	5209	622	268	10	14	1

Source : Directorate of Public Institutions, Meghalaya.

In terms of number of primary schools, East Khasi Hills dominance is not felt much. The number exceeds that of East Khasi Hills in West Garo Hills and West Khasi Hills. But, as one moves in the higher levels of education, prominence of Shillong emerges much more clearly. East Khasi Hills has the largest number of middle and Senior schools and 10 out of 14 colleges in Meghalaya. The Central University (North Eastern Hill University) is also located in this district. It is needless to mention that most of these educational institutions in East Khasi Hills are actually located in Shillong.

#### 4.5 OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

Definition of an urban centre veers around the nature of occupational structure, with a sound production base providing more employment opportunities especially in non-primary sectors. This would help in absorption and assimilation of in-migrants, particularly from neighbouring areas, creating possibility of income-transfer and trickle-down effect in an urban agglomeration.

Shillong came up essentially as an administrative town which offered employment opportunities only in service sector in the early years of its existence, the city grew due to the expansion in administration and commercial activities. The formation of the second chief commissionership in 1912 brought the legislative council for the first time and marked the beginning of the modern expansion of Shillong. After Independence there was a greater acceleration in the process of expansion of the city but continued to enlarge only tertiary functions.

Table 4.4 shows a low percentage of workers to the total population. The female participation rate is particularly low in almost all wards in the city. However, definitional problems may account for this low share of workers in the total population.

Table-4.4  
Percentage of workers to total Population  
(SHILLONG URBAN AGGLOMERATION)  
 in per cent

Urban Units	1971			1981		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Shillong Municipality	33.16	49.63	13.63	33.53	48.68	16.89
Cantonment	31.08	53.23	2.15	30.78	42.63	17.47
Nongthymmai	30.70	47.13	12.07	32.44	47.58	15.83
Pynthorunkhrah	-	-	-	29.70	48.63	7.88
Madan Rytting	-	-	-	27.39	41.86	12.16
Shillong U.A.	32.84	49.26	13.65	32.50	47.64	15.72

Source : Census of India (1981)  
 General Population tables Meghalaya.

Analysis of table 4.5(a) shows more or less unchanged share of workers to total population of Shillong. The percentage of male workers shows a declining trend than that of the females. The percentage change of share of workers according to different industrial categories (census classes) also indicate relative stagnation. Except in the case of Mawlai and Nongthymmai, the decline in the primary sector and increase in non-primary sectors has been minimal. These two areas have been included in the agglomeration only recently and are fast losing their rural character.

Growth in tertiary sector has been predominant in all the urban units. The development of tertiary sector is based on the dominance of administrative functions and the development of the educational services. The urban centre has a small manufacturing base.

Table-4.5(a)

## PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS TO TOTAL POPULATION (1971 - 81)

## ( SHILLONG URBAN AGGLOMERATION)

Urban Units	% of Agricultural workers		% of workers in House Hold industries		% of other workers				
	1971	1981	1971	1981	1971	1981			
Shillong Municipality	1.35	0.37	- 0.98	1.52	1.66	+ 0.14	97.13	97.34	0.21
Cantonment	0.21	0.10	- 0.11	2.18	0.93	- 1.25	97.61	98.97	1.36
Mawlai	37.86	19.78	-18.08	3.62	0.88	- 2.74	68.52	79.44	10.92
Nongthymmai	2.24	1.41	- 0.83	1.44	0.86	- 0.58	96.32	97.73	1.41
Pynthorumkhrach	-	9.88	-	-	1.73	-	-	88.39	-
Madan, Rytting	-	2.96	-	-	2.61	-	-	94.43	-
Shillong Urban Agglomeration	4.59	3.65	- 0.94	1.78	1.48	0.3	93.63	94.81	1.18

Source : Census of India, 1981, General Population tables Meghalaya.

TABLE - 4.5(b)  
GROWTH RATE IN THE WORKERS AT SHILLONG URBAN AGGLOMERATION

	Agricultural Total		% Growth rate (71-81)	House Hold Industries Total		% Growth rate (71-81)	Other workers Total		% Growth rate (71-81)
	1971	1981		1971	1981		1971	1981	
Shillong Municipality	392	364	- 7.1	442	598	+ 3.52	28234	35146	+ 2.44
Cantonment	3	2	- 3.3	-	19	-	1467	2027	+ 3.81
Mawlai	1829	1224	- 3.3	175	55	- 6.85	3310	4914	+ 4.84
Nongthymmai	61	99	+ 6.27	71	60	- 1.54	4763	6835	+ 4.35
Pynthorunkharah	-	315	-	-	55	-	-	2818	-
Madanrting	-	50	-	-	44	-	-	1593	-
Shillong Urban Agglomeration	1850	2054	+ 1.10	718	831	1.57	37744	53360	+ 4.13

Source - Census of India 1981.

An analysis of the census data on the occupational structure of Shillong for the year 1971<sup>2</sup> and 1981 shows an overwhelming concentration of workers in the 'other services' and 'other workers' respectively. Nearly 63 per cent of the workforce in the year 1971 was recorded in 'other services' category. The tertiary sector accounted for an overwhelming 89 per cent of the workforce. On the other hand, manufacturing sector accounts for a meagre 10 per cent of the workforce. The industrial distribution of workers shows a highly tertiarized urban economy and indicates only tertiary links with the hinterland. The trade sector too claims 7 per cent of all workers.

In 1981, the 'other workers' category accounts for about 95 per cent of all workers which includes mostly 'services' trade, construction and transport functions. The tertiary links seem to remain unchanged.

The small manufacturing sector too shows limited productive base of Shillong largely oriented towards consumption originating within the city. Tables 4.6a and 4.6b indicate that Jaintia Hills and West Khasi Hills do not have any noticeable small scale industry and thus, do not support any major share of the working population in this category. East and West Garo Hills have about 5 per cent of the total registered industries, providing occupation to a mere 6 per

TABLE-4.6(a)  
SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES - 1986 - 87.

Industry	No. of Units (percent)	Investment in Plants & Marketing in (Lakh) (Percent)	No. of Person Employed (Percent)
Motor Repairing/Serviceing	8.2	7.56	10.12
Wooden furniture	9.35	3.75	7.71
Leather based industry	1.24	0.15	0.92
Bakery	11.22	6.46	10.28
Flour & Rice Mills	5.98	6.03	3.75
Printing Press	3.36	6.14	4.88
Kniting & Embroidery	6.85	1.40	2.90
Steel based industry	3.11	5.56	4.16
Tyre works	2.11	4.03	1.98
Saw Mills	3.74	14.06	7.86
Stone crusher & chip	1.37	5.05	2.08
Cane & bamboo works	4.36	0.10	2.24
Weaving & Tailoring	7.60	1.11	6.89
Line making	0.74	2.34	1.53
Others	19.45	31.48	22.67
	11.22	5.93	10.42
Grand Total	802.	348.09	49.49

Source : Directorate of Industries Meghalaya.

TABLE-4.5(b)  
REGISTERED FACTORIES IN MEGHALAYA (1989)

District	Units	Employees
Jaintia Hills	-	-
East Khasi Hills	49 (84.4)	2630 (85.2)
West Khasi Hills	-	-
East Garo Hills	3 ( 5.1)	210 ( 6.1)
West Garo Hills	6 (10.5)	288 ( 9.7)

Source : Directorate of Industries Meghalaya.

cent (210) only. Only East Khasi Hills shows a slightly rising trend with as many as 49 registered which is about 84 per cent of the total registered factories employing 2630 persons or 85.2 per cent of working population in the secondary sector. Table 4.6a shows that much of the employment in manufacturing sector is geared towards motor-repairing /servicing, bakery, wooden furnitures, saw mills etc. A very high proportion of investment is in saw mills. This indicates that the tertiary functions are linked to the forest resources for the consumption of urban needs.

An analysis of the structure and sources of revenue in the State also proves lack of productive base of the city and a greater dependence on outside/centre support for city's sustenance (table 4.7a and 4.7b).

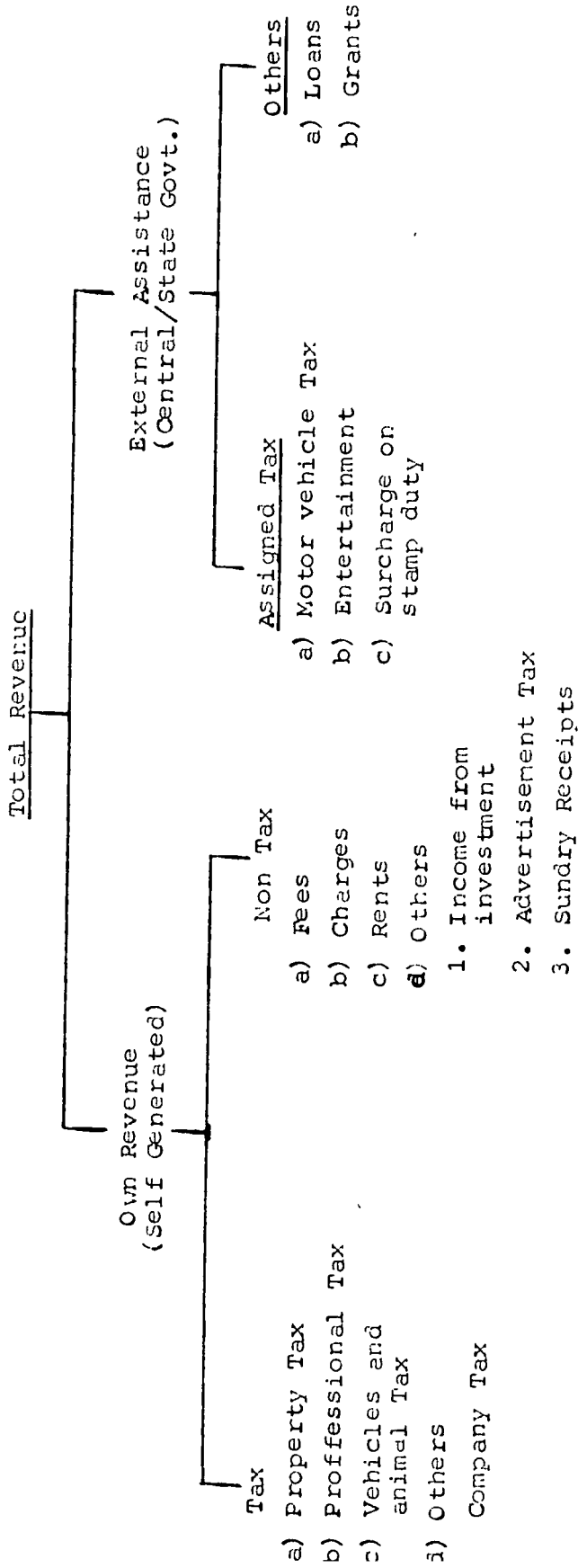
TABLE - 4.7(a)

REVENUE RECEIPTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA (Rs. in lakhs)

Heads	1984-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89
Share of Central Taxes	1066.60	4552.24	5526.86	6529.00	8010.00
State Taxes	1224.36	1492.51	1773.61	1878.75	2057.90
Non Tax Revenue	978.61	1151.22	1411.06	1444.94	1458.07
Grants in aid from the Centre	11528.12	11101.95	12754.37	16005.87	18358.13
<b>Total Revenue Receipts</b>	<b>14797.99</b>	<b>18297.92</b>	<b>21465.90</b>	<b>25858.56</b>	<b>29884.10</b>

Source : State Budget, (Statistical Handbook Meghalaya 1987)  
Directorate of Statistics and Economics.

SOURCES OF REVENUE



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Source : Urbanisation and urban development Policy Issues of the North Eastern Region.  
National Institute of Urban affairs, Research study series, Number - 39. p.p. 78.

TABLE 4-7(b)

## COMPOSITION OF MUNICIPAL REVENUE - SHILLONG (Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Municipal own Revenue			Other Sources	
	Tax	Non Tax	Total	Grants	Total
1976-77	18.00	1.00	19.00	2.02	21.02
1979-80	18.30	1.80	20.10	4.60	24.70
1982-83	20.30	2.20	21.22	5.75	26.80

Source : Finance Commission Report - 1983.

It is clear from the tables that the capital base on the State as a whole is mainly dependent on two main sources of Revenue, Tax and Government grants i.e., central grants to the State. Data in table 7(b) makes the dependent nature of the urban economic system particularly more revealing. In all the three year figures, in Municipal revenue category, taxes account for the major share of 20 lakhs out of total 2680 lakhs accounting for about 84 per cent of the capital generation. This followed by the central assistance, which is about twelve lakhs.

In a span of 8 years a steady rise of revenue is marked from the table 7b. This again indicates that a larger share of population is coming into the white collar jobs, or in the tertiary sector.

Raise in Government aids indicates the expansion trends in the tertiary sectors of the urban Area.

#### 4.6 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The main findings of the analysis may be broadly outlined as below:

Firstly; Consequent upon the development of Shillong as an administrative centre, the city has functions primarily oriented towards administration and other associated functions.

Secondly; Concentration and growth of people has led to the growth of trade as an important function. Through administration and trade, the city has been able to develop only tertiary linkages with the hinterland.

Thirdly; the city has attracted other tertiary functions such as construction, banking services or educational institutions which have only one-way linkage with the hinterland.

Fourthly; an analysis of the workforce structure reveals an overwhelming segment of the working force in tertiary occupation, largely a reflection of the functions the city is performing. The location of many State Government and nearly all Central Government institutions and Offices has contributed to the tertiarization of the city's economic base. This also indicates its dependence on the national economy.

Fifthly; the work in the secondary sector is negligible. The production in the city is mostly geared towards consumption within the city, as is evident from the data on the nature of industrial units and employment

therein. The productive base of the city bears very little evidence of its fulfilling the requirements expected to be generated in the hinterland.

Finally; it may be concluded that the 'enclavization' of the city is further substantiated by its economic base which has extra-economic tertiary linkages with the hinterland. The tertiary linkages, as is well known, tend to be extractive in character.

**CHAPTER V**  
**RURAL URBAN LINKAGES**  
**AND IMPLICATIONS**

CHAPTER - VRURAL - URBAN LINKAGES AND IMPLICATIONS

## 5.1 INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The analysis attempted in earlier chapters with reference to regional economy and economic base of Shillong provides sufficient indication that the conventional approaches to the study of rural-urban linkages such as central place theory are inadequate because they fail to integrate politico-economic processes to the development and differentiation of space. In the context of peripheral economies, this process appears to be best conceptualized within the framework of a 'dualistic model' of economic organization of space. In the present chapter, an attempt has been made to indicate a conceptual frame in which the nature of city-hinterland linkages in peripheral economies could be understood in relation to the spatial organization in such economies. It is proposed to develop a model which may be useful to empirically examine the city-hinterland relationship. It should be admitted, however, that the model is based on both empirical findings and conjectures based on other studies of similar nature.

## 5.2 GENERALITIES

Before presenting the model it may be useful to briefly state the theoretical underpinnings and the empirical

context, which provide the basis for the present formulation.

The process of spatial differentiation<sup>1</sup> is based on the principles of (a) comparative advantage (b) regional specialization and (c) Maximization of regional flows of mobile factors of production<sup>2</sup>. Historically spatial differentiation took place on an international level during the nineteenth century, and was in the colonial countries related to merchant and finance capitalism<sup>3</sup>. Merchant capital, by creating a world market was instrumental in bringing about the international division of labour and operated to preserve and create the differentiation in economic development. It was transmitted to the colonies initially in its independent form and later as dependent or industrial capitalism. Within the colonies it carved out trading regions where it operated unhindered, buttressed by administrative and material infrastructure. Several

1. The concept is derived from the term spatial structure which refers to the mode in which space is organized by and implicated in the operation of social and/or physical process. The concept recognises a duality between spatial process and spatial structure; that is between 'movement over the earth's surface' and the resulting 'arrangement of phenomena on the earth's surface'. The concept assumes that the space may be primordialily given, but the organization and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation and experience. (E.W. Soja (1980).
2. David Harvey (1973) Social Justice and the City John Hopkins University Press, Mary Land, p.196.
3. Geoffrey Kay (1975) Development and under development, Mac Millan, p.86

trading systems were evolved to ensure a regular and reliable trade. Enclaves were created which were geared to the production of agricultural or industrial raw materials.

These processes were experienced in geographically negative areas, by and large averse to agricultural development, in a slightly different context. The emphasis was laid on extraction of natural resources which formed the main impulse for spatial organization in these areas during colonial period. In these fragile eco-system dualism between extractive city and subsistence-based hinterland was the natural outcome of the spatial organization. Meghalaya was no exception.

While cities are formed through the geographic concentration of social surplus, there is very little evidence of availability of agrarian surplus in the hinterland to have necessitated the economic reorganization of the space into rural and urban. The development of the city, therefore, presupposes a lack of integration of the space economy and indicates hegemonic relationship with the hinterland.

Available historical data on the growth of Shillong indicate that the city had its origin in the colonial regional structure to cater to the needs for colonial exploitation of natural resources available in the region. The regional structure at the time of establishment of the city shows a highly

uniform space i.e., the city was thrust upon a region of subsistence production largely unrelated to market forces or trade and without sufficient social surplus. Since urbanisation is largely the outcome of either surplus generation or surplus extraction, the growth of any urban centre through socio-economic instrumentality was unlikely.

The immediate compulsion for the British colonial power was to have an effective administrative control over region for extraction of natural resources, quelling of local revolts and easy transportation of raw materials, particularly forest produce. Establishment of the city facilitated the colonial interests. Thus, the pre-British space economy was by and large undifferentiated. The spatial differentiation was based on the principle of administrative control exercised by numerous Khasi States, ruled by the local Chieftains. The only possible difference in the economy of the region might have been influenced by local variation in environment, such as topography, soil, forest cover etc. or such transitional zones bordering plains, where subsistence peasant farming had already become operational due to the influence of neighbouring peasant economies in the plains.

It may be theoretically posited that the British penetration into the area and the establishment of the city for the first time, brought the division in the space economy

into the city space and its hinterland, which brought under its orbit heterogeneous political entities directly or indirectly.

Thus the emergence of the city had no relationship with the economic transformation of the region. From its very inception, the city emerged as a 'created space', for the colonial interest, having more intimate linkages with the global economy, rather than with the immediate hinterland dominated by tribal economy and polity. However, having got a foothold in the region, the British could establish its suzerainty over the local chiefs through negotiation, force and other means to facilitate extraction of surplus.

The city seemed to grow in response to the tertiary demands, such as trade, administration, educational facilities, transport network, and other related functions, shaping the economy of the urban area, into a highly tertiarised one. This nature of the urban functions was inherent in the process of city formation. The rural hinterland, however, continued to be characterised by subsistence production. The growth of the city during the British period and after, led to the growth of organised banking, acceleration in trade, administration, defence services etc.

All these further helped the centralised gathering of natural resources and the incipient financial surplus

which were now available to a small sections which got integrated to the city economy contributing significantly to the tertiarisation of the city's economy.

The city, therefore had no symbiotic link with its rural hinterland and could not provide sufficient impetus for its economic transformation. As the available information pertaining to the evolution and growth of the city suggests, even after colonialism, the city continued to grow as a tertiary centre carved out by the trade activities, the main impulse of which came from outside. It may be thus useful at this stage to provide a few valuable informations pertaining to the extractive and dominant character of the city.

### 5.3 OUT-FLOW OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The ecological conditions in the region has provided it with rich forest cover. This valuable resource is much in need outside the region, not only for industrial use, but also for many kinds of domestic requirements. Opening up of the region through better transport facilities has the adverse effect on this vital resource which is getting depleted very fast. A cursory examination of the data in table 5.1, shows the extent of outflow of logs and other forest produce. The data pertains to the East Khasi Hills District alone. The quantum of loss to forest resources is

much higher for the state as a whole.

TABLE - 5.1  
FOREST PRODUCTS - (LOGS AND OTHER ASSOCIATED PRODUCTS) 1989-90.

Type of forest products.	Qty. in No. of logs	Revenue Receipt in Rs.	Specification - Log Types
Class I	3183.80	558756.90	Sal, Titacham, Bonsum, Gamari, Bola, Nahar.
Class II	2599.95	23042.0	Red pine, Hallock, Patauri, Amri, Sanaru.
Class III	50785.2	4517343.50	White pine, Birch, Hingery, Khokan, Champa etc.
Class IV	6069.04	269016.58	Achi, Sida, Jarul, Haldu, Nakri Sal, Rongipoma.
Class V	1418.53	50286.88	Bhelu, Pichhela, Bepal, Bajrany, Choraneem, Singan.
Others	in Kgs./Qtl.	-	
a) Tezpatta	1140 Qtls.	11400	
b) Wild paper	132 "	132000	
c) Broomstick	1160 "	20880	
d) Pine Dhup	280 "	1764	
e) Sisia Bark	130 "	6825	
f) Other Pine products	1100 "	2068	
g) Pine wood	1300 "	2730	

Source : District Council Office, East Khasi Hills, Shillong.

The state undoubtedly earns some revenue from the sale<sup>4</sup> of timber and other forest produce. But the loss to forest cover with increasing demands from outside lands

4. Most of the forest in the region are privately or community-owned, for which no reliable record of contracts for felling of trees or area allotment is available. Only a small proportion is under direct State Government control, as closed forests. The extent of out-flow of forest resources provided in the table pertains to a single district and is only a small part of the actual amount of the outflow.

to cause incalculable damage to environment and land-resources. The growth of a city of Shillong's size itself has contributed to a significant rise in the demands for forest resources within itself. The city, through its administrative control and effective transport connectivity, plays a major extractive role as far as forest resources are concerned.

#### 5.4 PROFITS OF TRADE

Shillong acts as one of the most important trading centres for the entire North East immediately after Guwahati. Since profits of trade is largely of urban origin and implies profit extracted from rural areas, Shillong acts as an important transit point between the rural hinterland and the city system in this process. Profits arising out of trade has a very significant meaning in regions which are based on subsistence production. Available data show that agrarian surplus is negligible in the hinterland and the production base of Shillong too is largely meant for consumption. Thus trading activity tends to be extractive in nature as it involves no return flow. This is because no produce goes out of the region to bring in profit into the region. This one-way trade and profits arising out of it, certainly provides the city the much needed merchant capital for its sustenance, but it proves restrictive to whatever little capital formation is possible in the rural areas. The city,

by organizing trade activity, articulating it through transport network and propogating consumerist tendency increases moneytization in its hinterland. In this process, the city acts as a major agent in integrating the subsistent hinterland to market forces and accelerates the process of under-development of the region.

A concomitant feature of this process is age sex and skill selective outmigration of the effective labour force from the hinterland to the city.

#### 5.5 FINANCIAL CAPITAL OUTFLOW

Another important means through which the city exercises its extractive role is the outflow of financial capital through an extension of organised banking system. This is evident from an analysis of the credit deposit ratio (C.D.R. ) in the nationalised banks.

Table 5.2 provides informations on amount of credits and deposits in different banks operating throughout the state. The data is available for five successive years and for four major banking organizations. The deposits far exceed the amount of credit in all nationalised banks. The commercial banks show a larger gap in the C.D.R. However, the gap seems to be marginally narrowing doen towards the latter part of the period 1985-86(fig.5.1).

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TABLE - 5.2  
SHILLONG : CREDIT DEPOSIT RATION OF SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANKS.

RS. IN LAKHS.

Sl. No.	Banks	1985		1986		1987		1988		1989	
		Credit	De-posit	Credit	De-posit	Credit	De-posit	Credit	De-posit	Credit	De-posit
1.	State Bank of India and its associates.	1819	5480	2092	6670	2268	9333	3567	10573	5898	13864
		R(.33)		R(.31)		R(.24)		R(.33)		R(.41)	
2.	Nationalised Banks.	1526	6409	1850	7665	2039	9688	3029	11756	4953	12865
		R(.32)		(.24)		R(.20)		(.25)		(.38)	
3.	Regional Rural Banks.	91	312	166	375	284	544	438	784	509	976
		R(.43)		(.43)		R(.52)		(.55)		(.52)	
4.	Others Scheduled Commercial Banks.	95	569	113	654	123	823	247	985	423	1025
		R(.16)		(.17)		(.14)		(.29)		(.26)	
Total :		3531	12670	4211	15364	4714	20388	7281	24098	11783	28730
		R(.27)		(.27)		(.23)		(.30)		(.41)	

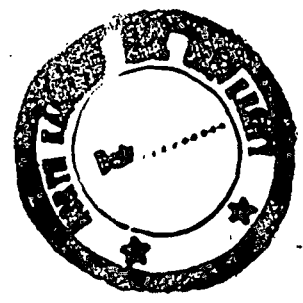


TABLE - 5.3

## MEGHALAYA : CREDIT DEPOSIT RATIOS OF SCHEDULED COMMERCIAL BANKS

(RS. IN LAKHS)

Districts	Banks	No. of Banks	Credit	Deposit	Credit Deposit Percentage
Jaintia Hills	State Bank of India and its associates	17	317	1,073	29.54
			R (.29)		
East Khasi Hills	Nationalised Banks	66	3,580	17,177	20.84
			R (.20)		
West Khasi Hills	Regional Rural Banks	16	261	410	63.66
			R (.63)		
East Garo Hills	Other Scheduled Commercial Banks	11	130	308	42.21
			R (.42)		
West Garo Hills	-	23	425	1,420	29.93
Meghalaya	-	123	4,713	20,388	23.12
			R (.58)		

Source : Yearly Balance Sheet, Reserve Bank of India, North Eastern Zonal Office, Guwahati.

**MEGHALAYA**  
**TRENDS IN CREDIT DEPOSIT RATIO**  
**(1986-89)**

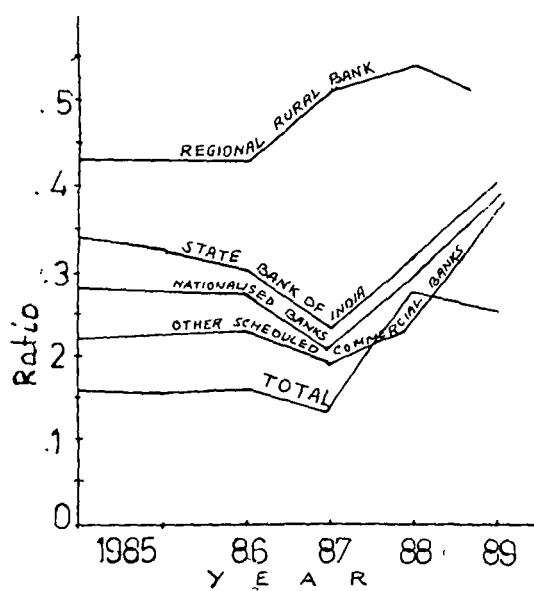


FIG- 5 1a

This indicates the classical system of characterising a backward economy. Since, the region lacks in entrepreneurial, managerial skills and development of infrastructure etc., it is apparent that capital flight takes place to areas where the rate of return could be higher, despite avowed politics of increasing investment in these areas. The banking system thus becomes one of the modus operandi of capital flight from the region and deprives it of productive investment and development.

An analysis of the district-wise break-up in the credit deposit ratio shows a slightly different picture (Table 5.3).

At the district level too the amount of deposits is much larger compared to the credits. However, the gap between the two is the highest in the most urbanized district of East Khasi Hills district. This may be due to concentration of a large number of salaried employees belonging to both centre and the state.

In general, the credit-deposit ratio analysis shows that a large proportion of the financial resources get extracted out of the region through various nationalised and commercial banks.

#### 5.6. BUDGETARY PROVISIONS

The dominance of Shillong urban agglomeration in the State is further established by a close scrutiny of the budgetary allocation of expenditure of the State Government (Table 5.4a & 5.4b).

TABLE - 5.4 (a)  
MEGHALAYA - REVENUE RECEIPTS (RS. IN LAKHS)

Heads	1984-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89
1. Share of Central taxes.	1066.60	4552.24	5526.86	6529.00	8010.00
2. State taxes.	1224.36	1492.51	1773.61	1878.75	2057.90
3. Non tax Revenue.	978.91	1151.22	1411.06	1444.94	1458.07
4. Grants in aid from the centre.	11528.12	11101.95	12754.37	16005.87	19358.13
<b>Total Revenue Receipts.</b>	<b>14797.99</b>	<b>18297.92</b>	<b>21465.90</b>	<b>2585.56</b>	<b>29884.10</b>

TABLE - 5.4 (b)  
MEGHALAYA - REVENUE EXPENDITURE (RS. IN LAKHS)

Heads	1984-85	85-86	86-87	87-88	88-89
<b>Expenditure on Economic develop.</b>					
1. Agriculture and Allied activities	1807.62	2687.24	2941.78	3467.96	4038.14
2. Rural development.	-	749.05	664.41	966.35	1032.54
3. Special area programme.	-	88.07	65.41	144.62	210.75
4. Irrigation and Flood control.	-	127.39	161.47	224.50	283.50
5. Energy.	8.42	-	371.07	333.00	439.00
6. Industrial and Minerals.	232.21	436.07	461.01	605.85	823.45
7. Transport.	506.69	939.54	1047.44	1072.58	1166.20
8. Science, Technology.	-	3.87	3.62	5.85	6.20
9. General Service.	198.06	229.17	241.82	384.23	378.14
<b>Total :</b>	<b>2753.00</b>	<b>5260.40</b>	<b>5958.03</b>	<b>7204.94</b>	<b>8378.92</b>
10. Social and Community Service.	2480.71	4429.59	4885.83	6828.45	7691.37
11. Non development expenditure.	2194.42	3807.47	4798.26	6126.25	6963.62
<b>Total :</b>	<b>7428.13</b>	<b>13497.46</b>	<b>15642.12</b>	<b>20159.64</b>	<b>23033.91</b>

Source : Budget at a glance.

These tables indicate that a large chunk of the allocation goes for urban development schemes, under various heads<sup>6</sup>. However, half of the allocated expenditure accounts for the Meghalaya Government employee's salary etc. Besides these, trade, commerce and other social development work also account for a considerable proportion of the budget provision.

#### 5.7 RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES AND INTERACTIONS-ANALYTICAL MODEL

There are only a few of the examples of the hegemonic relationship of Shillong over its hinterland. Since the regional economy is not best suited to afford the establishment of such a large urban centre based primarily on consumption, the continuation of the induced spatial differentiation into the city and its hinterland presupposes two types of linkages: one, with the hinterland which is one of dominance and the other with the rest of the national economy which is one of dependence and sub-servience.

It is possible to understand the linkages between the city and its hinterland in the model (fig.5. 2), in which the city space forms an island within the subsistence hinterland characterised by primitive agriculture, share cropping and remnants of earlier communal mode of production. On the other

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6. These are : Developmental expenditure, special area programmes, industrial development, Transport, Education, General service etc.

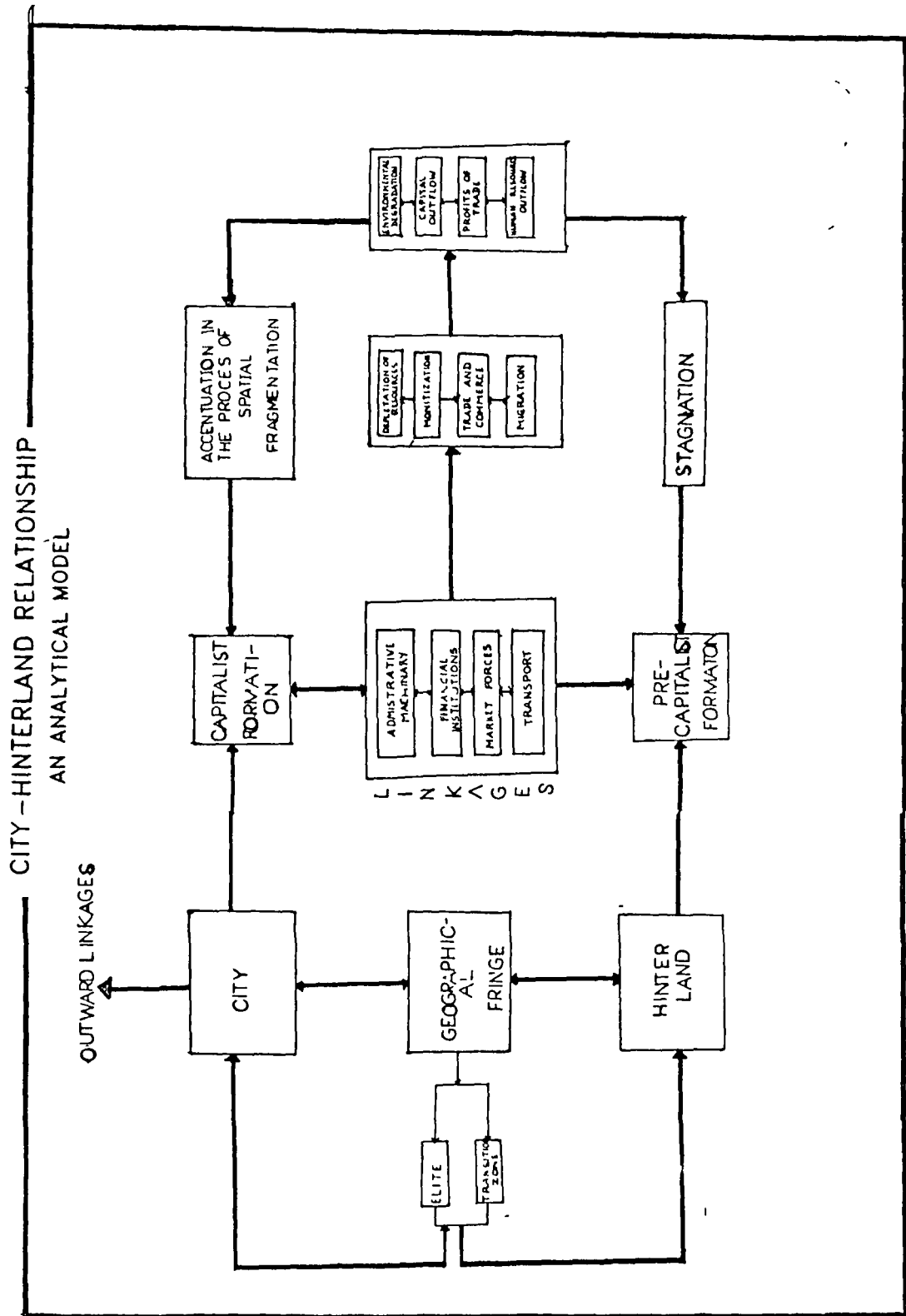


Fig. 5.2

hand, the city space is characterised by concentration of functions such as administration, trade and financial institutions. This is a typical example of the segmented articulation of diverse social formation expressed in spatial terms as the city and the country. The two areas may be described as having characteristics of capitalist<sup>7</sup> and pre-capitalist<sup>8</sup>, economies respectively. The model is based on the premises that the city acts as the agent and pivot of concentration of surplus mobilised from the rural hinterland. In this peripheral economy, as most studies dealing with dependent development of cities reveal, the pre-capitalist structures are retained for functional reasons. They absorb a large segment of surplus labour and substantially bear the costs of reproduction of labour force.

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7. Capitalist formation : refers to one of the two modes of spatial organization in the dualistic model of economic organization in under-developed countries. Available evidences suggest that a large chunk of Shillong's economy is based on its dependence on the central assistance. The concentration of work force in the tertiary sector of particularly in Government services is assumed as part of capitalist sector. The term undoubtedly is loosely used here for a fuller treatment on capitalist relations, see Ashok Rudra(1983) "Class Relations in Indian Agriculture" in S.A. Shah(ed) India: Degradation and Development, M.Venkataramaiya foundation, Hyderabad, p.2045).
8. The rural areas in Meghalaya, characterised by tribal economic organization with low level of technology subsistence of food production and low level of market intervention in the exchange process is termed as 'pre-capitalist'.

Rural-urban area. These areas reflect the transformation in the form of changes in the cropping pattern, consumption pattern and occupational characteristics of the population which gets more and more integrated with that of the city. Thus a transitional zone occurs between the city and the country-side.

#### 5.8 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the spatial differentiation in this hilly region which began with the dependent colonial economy has produced the city in response to the national space economy. The city is subservient to this. On the other hand, the rural space is linked to the city through the nexus of administrative and market forces in an overall dependent structure.

In this pattern of development, the rural pre-capitalist structure are maintained rather than dissolved due to the fragile nature of the ecosystem and social composition. This is in sharp contrast with the dependent development of migration permits the reproduction of labourforce in subsistence hinterlands with communal mode of production.

The two spaces are linked through an intricate control of four factors: administrative machinery, trade and financial institutions; all linked through transportation and communication networks and effectively carry out the functions of outflow of capital and resources effeminate inflow

of into the city. The entire process therefore leads to depletion of natural and human resources, greater monetization, trade and commerce and migration from the rural hinterland or the pre-capitalist formation.

The overall outcome through all these interlinked agents thereby creates environmental degradation, capital outflow and human resources outflow from the hinterland.

Spatial differentiation, under capitalist-commercial domination developed under a colonial political economy do not lead to spatial integration. On the contrary, it becomes an instrument in establishing and accentuating the process of underdevelopment in the rural-hinterland.

However, a positive feed back also occurs whereby the linkages affect the rural hinterland by forming geographical fringes, within the vicinity of the cities in areas potentially more suited to agrarian development, such as those located in plains and with already developed peasant economies.

The dependency approach in understanding rural-urban linkages has largely ignored the development of cities in ecologically fragile areas such as those in the hilly and mountaneous regions lying in the margins of the country and its economy but integrated to it through the nexus of market forces.

The model presented in this chapter may be considered only as a highly simplified attempt to understand the nature of dependency. More empirical work is necessary at the field level for better conceptual clarity.

# CHAPTER VI

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER - VISUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 This study is an attempt to understand the nature of linkages and interactions in the politico-economic context of a region which remains in the periphery of the country's geography and economy. The study, primarily aimed at understanding the nature of urban development, particularly that of Shillong and its possible link with its rural hinterland, while many studies have emphasised the impact of the city on its hinterland assuming cities as the nucleus or foci of diffusion of culture and development, this particular attempt assumed that the processes, both political and economic, are responsible for the division of space into rural and urban. Moreover, development of the city and the true nature of its linkages with the hinterland is a reflection of the historical needs of the dominant socio-economic processes, which integrate disparate and often highly contrasting social formations in space. The analysis in the study using Shillong as a case study, provides valuable understanding in this regard.

The major findings and generalization in the study are summarized below.

6.2 The analysis of the ecological setting and pattern of landuse etc. in the study area reveals that the ecological conditions are not very favourable for generation of agra-

rian surplus. The available area for cultivation and the actually cultivated area, constitute only a negligible proportion of the total geographical area. The techniques of cultivation as well as cropping pattern too indicate a highly subsistence nature of agricultural production, barring a few areas of notable exceptions, particularly adjacent to the townships. Secondly, the region has some important natural resources, the forest resources being the most significant. Some amount of coal, limestone, silliminate and clay is also available in few areas. But there is hardly any evidence of industries linked to such resources. Thirdly, the structure of workforce in the entire state, shows little diversification with more than 80 per cent of the workforce concentrated in the agrarian sector alone. The development of rural wage market too is negligible.

Broadly speaking, the region by and large is characterised by traditional agricultural practices. There is very little evidence of any structural transformation necessitating the development of a large city. The growth of the city and its enormous size bears little symbiotic relationship to the rural areas around it.

The city may be envisaged as having an enclave character, a common feature of most cities developed in the hands of colonial administration which sustains without having to depend on the structural requirements of the region. The cities develop a dependent relationship with the national/

global economy and establish relationship in relation to its hinterland particularly with respect to the extraction of natural resources.

The historical outline on the origin and growth of Shillong provided insights into the nature of rural urban linkages, which may be summarised as follows:

Firstly, the city was developed to suit the colonial demands of exploitation of natural resources and for a better administrative and defence control over the region. Secondly, the regional structure, during the period of the inception of the city is characterized by fragmentation of space only on politico-administrative line without any indication towards structural changes in the economy. It is significant that the city which remained under direct British control was surrounded by numerous Khasi princely States. Thirdly, even after Independence, the nature of urbanization is characterised by a mere growth in the population without affecting economic transformation of the hinterland in any significant manner. As far as the implication of the urban growth in Meghalaya is concerned, it may be pointed out that the process of re-organization of space was externally induced leading to a complete split in the space linked to the national and global economy on the one hand and the hinterland continuing with the economic structure of an essentially tribal social order. The processes of under-development of the region thus began with this split. This was due to

reorganization of space in the region which was not a response to changes in the regional structure, generated through socio-economic instrumentalities. Moreover the hegemonic and dominant character of the city-space in relation to its hinterland was inherent in the process and it contributed to weak linkages it had with the hinterland. Even after Independence, though the city has snapped its direct relationship with the metropolitan economy in the dependence structure, it continues to reproduce the process of underdevelopment by perpetuating administrative dominance.

6.4 The study of Shillong's present economic base indicates that, consequent upon its development as an administrative centre, the city has functions primarily oriented towards administration and other associated functions. Concentration and growth of population has led to the growth of trade as an important function, through administration and trade, the city has been able to develop only tertiary linkages with the rural areas in hinterland. As a corollary, the city has attracted other tertiary functions such as concentration of banking services, educational institutions etc. which have only one way linkage with the hinterland. Analysis of the workforce structure reveals an over-whelming segment of the working force in **tertiary** occupation a reflection of the functions the city is performing. The location of many State Government headquarters and nearly all Central Government institutions and Offices has contributed to the **tertia-**

rization of the city's economic base. This also indicates its dependence on the national economy. The workforce in the secondary sector is negligible. The production in the city is mostly geared towards consumption within the city, as is evident from the data on the nature of industrial units and employment therein. The productive base of the city bears very little evidence of its fulfilling the requirements expected to be generated in the hinterland. All these indicate extra-economic linkages as is well known, tends to be extractive in character.

§.5 In conclusion, it may be mentioned that the spatial differentiation in this hilly region, which began with the dependent colonial economy, has produced the city in response to the national space economy to which it is subservient. The rural space in the hinterland is linked to the city through the nexus of market forces in a dependent structure.

In this pattern of development the rural pre-capitalist structure are maintained rather than dissolved, due to the fragile nature of ecosystem and social composition. This is in sharp contrast with the dependent development of cities in areas potentially more suited to the agrarian development, such as those located in plains and with already developed peasant economies.

The dependency approach in understanding rural-urban linkages has largely ignored the development of cities in ecologically fragile areas such as those in the hilly and mountaineous regions lying in the margins of the country and its economy but integrated to it through the nexus of market forces. The model developed in this regard may be considered only as a highly simplified attempt to understand the nature of this kind of dependency. More emperical work is necessary at the field level for better conceptual clarity.

The most limiting factor in the study of rural-urban linkages and interaction in this part of the country flows from lack of adequate data. The present study had to be conducted under these constraints. It is proposed to go deeper into the question by addressing the problem through generation of primary data at the field level and test the model with more empirical informations.

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