

**URBAN POVERTY AND THE POOR
IN SHILLONG: EXPLORATIONS IN FORM
CONTENT AND STRUCTURE**



By

Nandini Chakravarty

A Thesis

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TO
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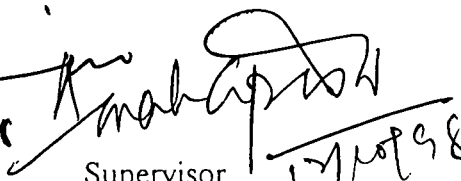
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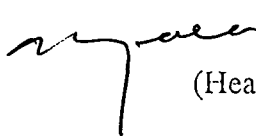
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I, Ms. Nandini Chakravarty, hereby declare that the subject matter of thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Geography.


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PREFACE

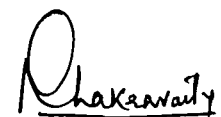
It is always easier to talk about poverty than write about it. At political level eradication of poverty and the emancipation of poor remain at the forefront of all the manifestos of the political parties contesting elections. In planning circles - whether economic, social or regional - 'poor' constitute the basic theme around which much exercise is undertaken. Themes of a majority of films and literary works centre around issues concerning poverty. Not to be left behind, a large number of social scientists of the post-second world war era too have committed themselves to an understanding of the phenomenon of poverty and are suggesting means and ways of 'scientifically' combating the problem which continues to baffle politicians, planners, novelists or the scientists alike.

The present work is no exception. The compelling needs for undertaking a research of this kind flow on the one hand from the societal concern for the poor and the professional requirement of committing the discipline of one's own training to an area of social concern on the other. One does not know which one came earlier; however, it would suffice to say that both seem to be equally rewarding and scholarly pleasing.

Geographer's concern with social well-being dates back to early seventies. A number of books and many research theses have devoted attention to geographers' analysis of poverty in its different manifestations. The present work is only a humble addition to these already existing geographical treatment of the subject. While it is similar to such works in a

variety of ways, it is dissimilar in a few respects. It may be worthwhile to emphasise on the latter.

While dealing with urban poverty, most social scientists consider it as a special feature of large metropolitan centres, ignoring the specificities of smaller order urban centres. Likewise, in Indian context, when it comes to poverty, the towns of the North-East region are merely brushed aside as under tribal problem. The present work rejects both the propositions as it takes up for an intensive investigation, the case of Shillong, located in the tribal dominated region of North-East India. The study is based on an exploration of the form, content and structure of urban poverty and the poor in a regional setting characterised by a tribal ethos. When one talks of tribal ethos one is only too conscious of the egalitarian, unstratified and the communitarian social structure which is unlikely to breed poverty. But poverty and its associated features are by now too obvious and apparent in most towns located or emerging in the tribal areas. What can provide a better regional ground for understanding and exploring the form, context and structure of poverty than the towns in the North-East India which are only recently witnessing a transformation of the earlier tribal social ethos ?



Nandini Chakravarty

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I owe a debt of gratitude to Professor A.C. Mohapatra, my supervisor, for his unfailing interest in the subject of this research. His encouragement and critical appreciation have helped in writing of this thesis and have been valuable assets all through. Working under his care and supervision has been a rewarding experience.

I acknowledge gratefully the help and encouragement received from other faculty members as well as the members of the non-teaching staff of the Department of Geography, NEHU, Shillong, during the course of the preparation of this thesis.

I owe especial thanks to Dr. Devendra Kumar Nayak who quite patiently took the pain in advising me to prepare the questionnaire for field-survey and later on in calculations and analysis of the data. I also record with pleasure the help and intellectual support received from Dr. B.S. Butola.

I am grateful to Dr. N.P. Goel for his inexhaustible patience, ungrudging help and timely suggestions at various stages in completing this thesis.

I place on record my sincere gratitude to the authorities of the Arunachal University, Rono-Hills, Itanagar, for granting me leave to enable me to complete my unfinished research.

At several stages of the research I have taken help from the libraries and scholars from several academic institutions, notable among them being, Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, Indian Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS), Shimla, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), New Delhi, and Arunachal University, Itanagar. I am indeed grateful to all of

them. I am also grateful to Mr. Panda, Assistant Director, Urban Office, Shillong, for his help and co-operation in providing me with maps and statistical accounts.

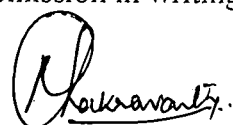
During the long and tedious field-work connected to this research I have received ungrudging help and support from my friends Dr. Anup Saikia and Ms. Wanri who eminently deserve my gratitude. I would also like to thank Shrikant Sharma, Ganendra Sarma, Arvind, Amrendra, Rajesh, Amit, and all my friends and colleagues at Arunachal University who came forward to help me whenever they felt I needed it.

It is difficult to find words when one has to thank one's own family members. It is even more difficult when the person happens to be my dear and loving mother who has been more of a friend to me than a guardian. Without her active and emotional support I would have found this journey extra-ordinarily tiring. My father has been a silent observer but a constant source of inspiration throughout. Nandan, my younger brother, too has been highly supportive especially in moments of emotional breakdown, something common to most researchers.

I must confess that I took Shyam, my husband, for granted in many occasions and have absented myself from the normal routine domestic work on the pretext of doing my research work. He has been only too kind and caring in spite of my daily quota of thrusting all responsibility of the delay in completing the research work on him. He never considered my research as mine only.

Lastly, I take the sole responsibility for any error or omission in writing this thesis.

Date : 12/10/1998
Place : Shillong



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Chapter I

Introduction

“The city ...is the point of minimum concentration for the power and culture of a community The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship Here in the city the goods of civilisation are multiplied and manifolded; here is where human experience is transformed in to viable signs.... Here is where the issues of civilisation are focused...” .

--*Lewis Mumford*¹

1.1 Introduction

Broadly speaking, poverty is a condition represented by the inability of the poor to meet their basic needs for physical survival and well-being. Poverty is living at or below the subsistence or any other defined criteria that implies inadequate income to fulfil the basic minimum needs of life such as, food, nutrition, shelter, clothing, medicines, education etc. Failure to meet the minimum needs whether biological or otherwise results in poverty. Robert S. MacNamara describes poverty as "a condition of life so characterised by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, high infant mortality and low life expectancy, as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency."²

Poverty is multi-dimensional. A wide variety of interrelated factors cause it and perpetuate it. If the objective is to reveal the components and characteristics of poverty with a view to identifying the urban poor, it becomes imperative to understand the meaning of poverty in its wider context. Since it is a phenomenon that is complex in its

¹Lewis Mumford (ed.), *The Culture of Cities*, Harcourt, New York, 1970, p. 3.

² Edward Soja, *The Reassertion of space in critical social Theory*, Verso, London, 1989.

genesis as well as in its manifestations, understanding of poverty is sometimes hindered by introduction of variables and parameters that do not accord with complex socio-economic situation in typically poor countries called the third world.

It is in these countries that one encounters extreme disparity in levels of living among social classes and across regions at all levels- macro, meso and micro. Prosperity and poverty co-exists in the society that engenders extreme inequality and deprivation.

Spatial manifestation of social and economic inequality take concrete forms in cities where slums and poverty pockets bear testimony to those inequalities. The problem of urban poverty in a particular situation however, needs to be viewed separately because of the different spatio-temporal characteristics of the cities having varied contents and structural attributes. To analyse and understand these variations a specific area needs to be taken to draw the contours of poverty conditions that could provide empirical verifications to concepts and theories connected with the variations.³

1.2 The Concepts of Poverty :

Poverty is a phenomena which is complex in origin as well as in its manifestation. There is a long standing debate on whether poverty is absolute or relative whether it is subjective or objective. Differently expressed there are various basic approaches to the conceptualisation of poverty. Concepts like biological inequality and relative deprivation has been fruitfully used in the analysis of poverty in the sociological literature.

Absolute and relative approaches are the other dimensions to explain the complexities of poverty. Usually two versions of absolute and relative approaches are used, bourgeois and Marxist. While the former defined poverty in relation to human physiology and in terms of subsistence levels of nutrition, the latter treats the subsistence

³ The term 'urban units' is a collective connotation for towns/urban agglomerations of either class.

minimum more than physiologically determined, including both natural and necessary wants.

At the other end it is argued that poverty is essentially a relative phenomenon. The relative approach defines poverty as a position of the individual vis-a-vis a society primarily in terms of distance between the poor and the average medium standard of living in the society, thereby making poverty one of the aspects of inequality.

It needs to be appreciated that rural and urban poverty are inextricably interlinked. A large section of the people migrate from rural areas, which has its impact over urban employment and poverty, since migration from the rural areas make up a large part of the increase in urban population. In other words we can say that slums which are manifestations of extreme poverty conditions represents rural poverty pockets within the urban set up. Therefore it can be assumed that rural poverty and urban poverty reflects itself as two aspects of the same problem.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that the significant proportion of the urban poor are members of scheduled caste and are usually headed by women as the head of the household, against the customary perception of male as the head of the family. In the social structure these women are rather insecure and working in the informal sector renders them doubly disadvantaged and hence any simple perception eliminating poverty through programmes to increase employment cannot deal with the complex implications of urban poverty.

Social structure also plays a definite role in the perpetuation of poverty conditions, by creating social inequality. As argued by the *functional theorists*, it is an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that the most important positions are continuously filled by the system of stratification which is necessary for continued and

successful operation of the society in which economic and political power play a central role in creating inequality.

There is mutually reinforcing relationship between social institutions and dominant classes. Marx distinguished one class from another on the basis of ownership of the means of production and the purchase of the labour power of the others. Dahrendorf explains the origin of social inequality as gain of the one group at the expense of other, thereby explaining poverty in terms of norms, sanction and power.

The approach here is not merely to measure poverty and represent them. This study keeps spatial dimension of poverty as the essential problematic and views the entire question of the urban social space as 'produced space' and 'representational space'.⁴

There are various ways in which one can understand space. It is crucial to formulate a proper conception of it, if one has to understand urban phenomena in the spatial context, its social correlates, the spatial form, and the structure of the existing society.

As E.W. Soja explains, "Space is a material product in relation with other material elements having particular relation, giving space a form, a function and a social significance. It is not therefore a mere social structure, but a concrete expression of each historical ensemble in which society is specified. It is a question then of establishing the structural and conventional laws that govern the existence and transformation specifying its articulations with other elements of historical reality"⁵.

⁴ Henri Lefebvre(1992), Production of Space, Blackwell, UK.

⁵ Edward Soja, op.cit.

In the words of Manuel Castell,⁶ “Urban space is structural, that is to say it is not organised randomly, and the social process as it expresses itself in specifying each period of societal organisation-creating the city”. The way a city space is organised and fashioned, it can have a profound effect upon social processes. Thus for a proper understanding one has to appreciate these spatial forms and the social processes. One must relate social behaviour to the way in which the city assumes a certain form (Cassier 1944) provides a useful starting point for a general view of space by differentiating three different categories of space or spatial experience.⁷

Levi Strauss (1963) on the other hand has shown how the spatial lay out of the whole village in the primitive culture may reflect the mythology of the people and the social relationship which exists among the various groups in the society.⁸

Thus social space not only varies from individual to individual and from group to group, but it also varies over time. If one attempts to understand space, one must consider its symbolic meaning and its complex impact upon behaviour of social groups. It is unavoidable therefore to approach any analysis of space and its organisation without referring to the city as a complex whole. Any general understanding therefore must relate to the social process i.e. the structure, and the spatial form, which the city assumes and expresses in the process of urbanisation.

There is no set universal standard to measure and identify social space. the degree and level of these, thus varies from region to region and within the region it self and therefore demands differential treatments. The problem of both urbanisation and urban poverty in the present study needs to be viewed in different connotation. As the study

⁶ Manuel Castell (1979), *The Urban Question*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

⁷ Andhrea Menefee, Singh and Alfred de Souza (1980), *The Urban Poor*, Delhi, Manohar Publishers.

⁸ V.H. Dandekar and Nilakantha Rath, 'Poverty in India' *Indian School of Political Economy*, Pune, p.98. (Reprinted from *Economic and Political Weekly*, Bombay. Vol. 6, nos. 1 & 2, 2 January 1971, and 9 January 1971.

attempts to analyse the emergence, sustenance and continuous growth of the city strongly dominated by tribal social order which is not characterised by levels of societal inequality found among the non tribal segment and therefore lacks expression in the typical forms of poverty, migration and other associated features, so very common in the towns and cities elsewhere in the country. The process of urbanisation, locational factors, topography and ethnic considerations differentiate the slums, which are manifestations of poverty conditions in terms of their spatial growth, population size and living conditions.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Poverty is and remains the most important concern for all developing societies. India is no exception. Whereas in recent times, there might have been a marginal fall in the level of general poverty as indicated by various official and unofficial assessments, the absolute quantum as well as level remains alarmingly high for example, it is generally agreed that the overall level of poverty in India is not less than 30 percent of the population, that would mean an absolute quantum in excess of 300 million people⁹.

Whereas the alleviation or even identification of poverty remains the central concern in the development efforts of the country, from policy perspective approaching this issues and designing a appropriate poverty alleviation schemes to be implemented needs an approach that is spatial, i.e. by dividing the incidence either by rural or urban or between the administrative divisions of the country, since the reasons of incidence could differ substantially in the regional context.

Incidence of poverty in urban areas could be viewed as originating from various sources for various reasons:

⁹ V.M. Dandekar and N. Rath, *op cit*.

- a) The level and nature of urban poverty would depend to some extent on the nature and level of poverty in general in a given situation.
- b) The incidence of urban poverty could be accumulated through the classical migration stream i.e. through migration of people from rural to urban areas due to various reasons like perceptions of better avenues of earning and employment in urban areas, deterioration of conditions of living in rural areas, due to natural calamities, or due to individual family misfortunes.
- c) The incidence of urban poverty could also get accentuated due to depressed economic climate, de-industrialisation, high inflation, and shrinkage of avenues of employment, and earning either in the formal or informal sectors of the economy.

Qualitatively the nature of incidence of poverty in urban or rural areas also could be different.

- a) The high real-estate price differentials between the urban and the rural areas means that a substantial part of urban poor even in the developing countries have no access to the land market. Therefore they tend to live in either authorised or unauthorised urban land belonging to either the ULB, the government or even private land which in large cities take the form of slums. These slums are environmentally unsuitable or even dangerous for the life of the slum dwellers, because they are not only highly congested but lack basic physical amenities, like water sanitation etc. This situation may not be as they are in the rural areas.
- b) It is also generally observed that there is a greater deprivation of the urban poor in terms of critical social sector achievements like, education health and nutrition compared to those among the poor in the rural areas.

- c) There is also a great degree of uncertainty in the sphere of their employment and career avenues since a majority of the slum dwellers are in the informal sector of the urban economy.
- d) It is also found that compared to the rural areas, there are many more broken families in urban slums, and are headed by women. There is a possible lack of security and psychological assurances of the family.

From the theoretical perspective, the problem of urban poverty has been viewed by geographers in two ways:

- i) The studies by urban morphologists who analyse the problems of slums, essentially as a phenomenon and is therefore primarily positivist in approach.
- ii) The second approach is by Marxist theoreticians like Henry Lefebvre, Manuel Castell, David Harvey, E.W. Soja.¹⁰ Generally the approach is to view urban poverty as a product of industrial capitalism. Henry Lefebvres¹¹ path breaking studies high lighted the slums as specific produced social space, resulting from parallel structural relationship of capitalism. This of course has been questioned by other Marxist theoreticians as a questionable interpretation of capitalism as interpreting the situation of urban poor as a space 'fetishism'. Castell's position was more structural in nature, Harvey's initial position was more Lefebverian in nature, but subsequently his position moved towards the question of a fresh interpretation of modern capitalism in terms of finance and circulating capital in which the urban economy plays an important role.

¹⁰ E.W. Soja, op.cit.

¹¹ Henry Lefabvre, Production of Space ,Blackwell, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA

From the foregoing theoretical perspectives the problematic of the urban poor in developing countries like in India, could be viewed in relation to: (i) the incidence of large number of poor in the urban areas; (ii) the congregation of the poor in large cities, as a specific social space-specific feature or in Lefebverian sense a 'product' of specific type of capitalism; (iii) the relationship of the poor and poor localities with the rest of the urban space, functions and activities; (iv) the question of ethnicity and poverty-ethnicity relations in the perspective of urban social space; and (v) finally, the question of functionality of the urban poor in relation to their employment, occupation and earning etc. to the urban economy itself.

One could conclude that the urban poor is placed in terms of a competitive social situation, where each group is considered free to choose from among given endowment of resources. However, this kind of urban analysis is based upon the assumption of consensual society, with commonality of interest. In reality, urban deprivation is a product of cumulative processes concerning all urban services by the class, that has access to both economic and political power. Urban poverty, therefore, can be seen in the context of social process is that continually marginalizes certain groups that are deprived of access to urban resources.¹²

These macro-process are producing and reproducing poverty and deprivation are not uniform spatially in terms of their causes, patterns of manifestation across and effects within towns and cities in the third world. Causes and manifestation of poverty depend among other things, the specificities of regional economy to history and nature of urbanisation and its socio-cultural settings.¹³

¹² V.M. Dandekar and N. Rath, op cit.

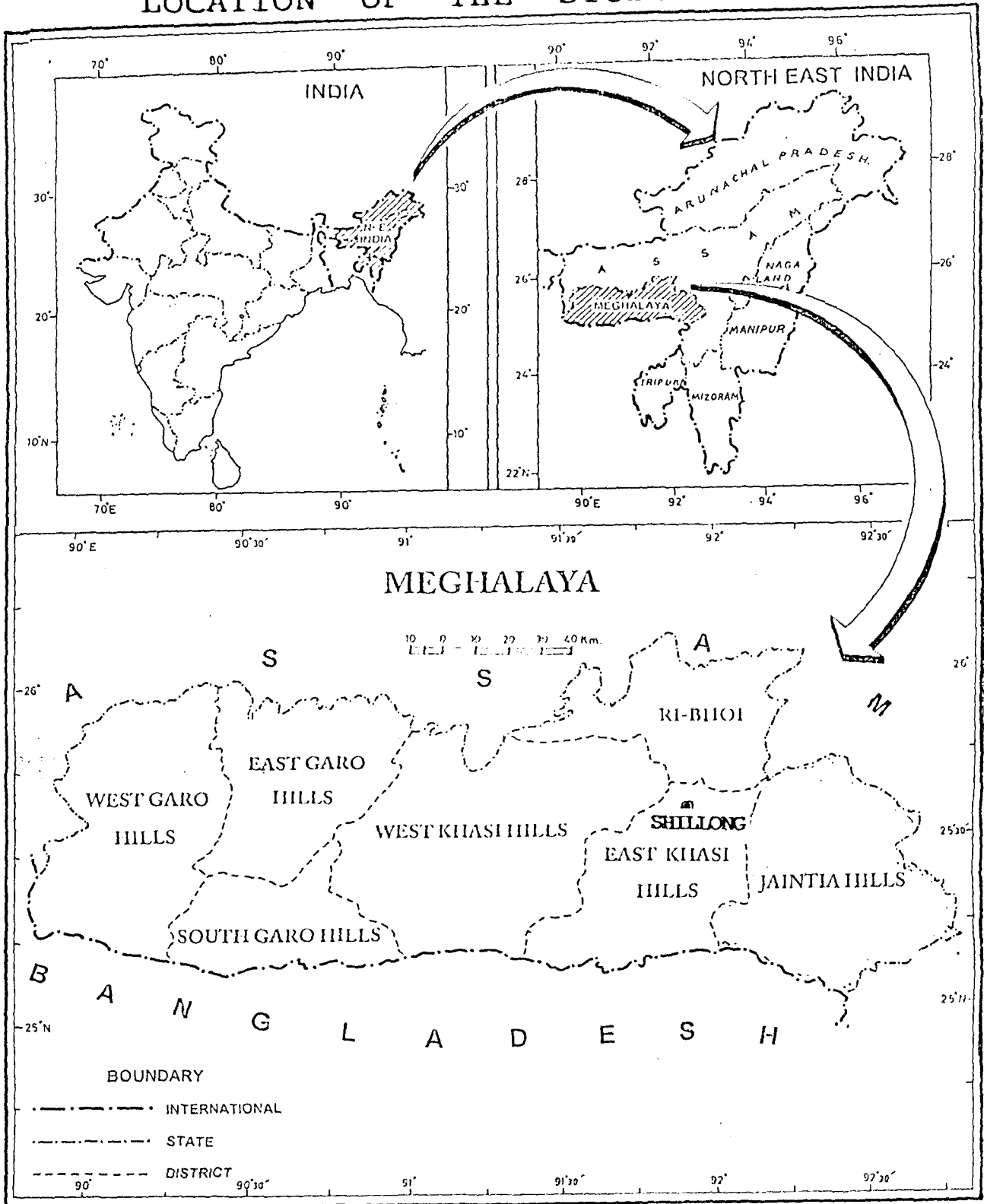
¹³ John, Melbarun, Inequality Measures, Prices and Household Consumption; European Economic Review, Vol. 5, 1967.

Most societies in the world are characterised by manifestation of poverty in urban areas affecting a large segment of population. Most studies on urban poverty, also indicate that a very high proportion of urban poor consists of migrants coming from rural areas. It may be noted, however, that all migrations need not be related to poverty alone. Poverty in a very large urban centre is spatially manifested in concentrations in slums. Slums and urban-poverty are thus seen as synonymous.

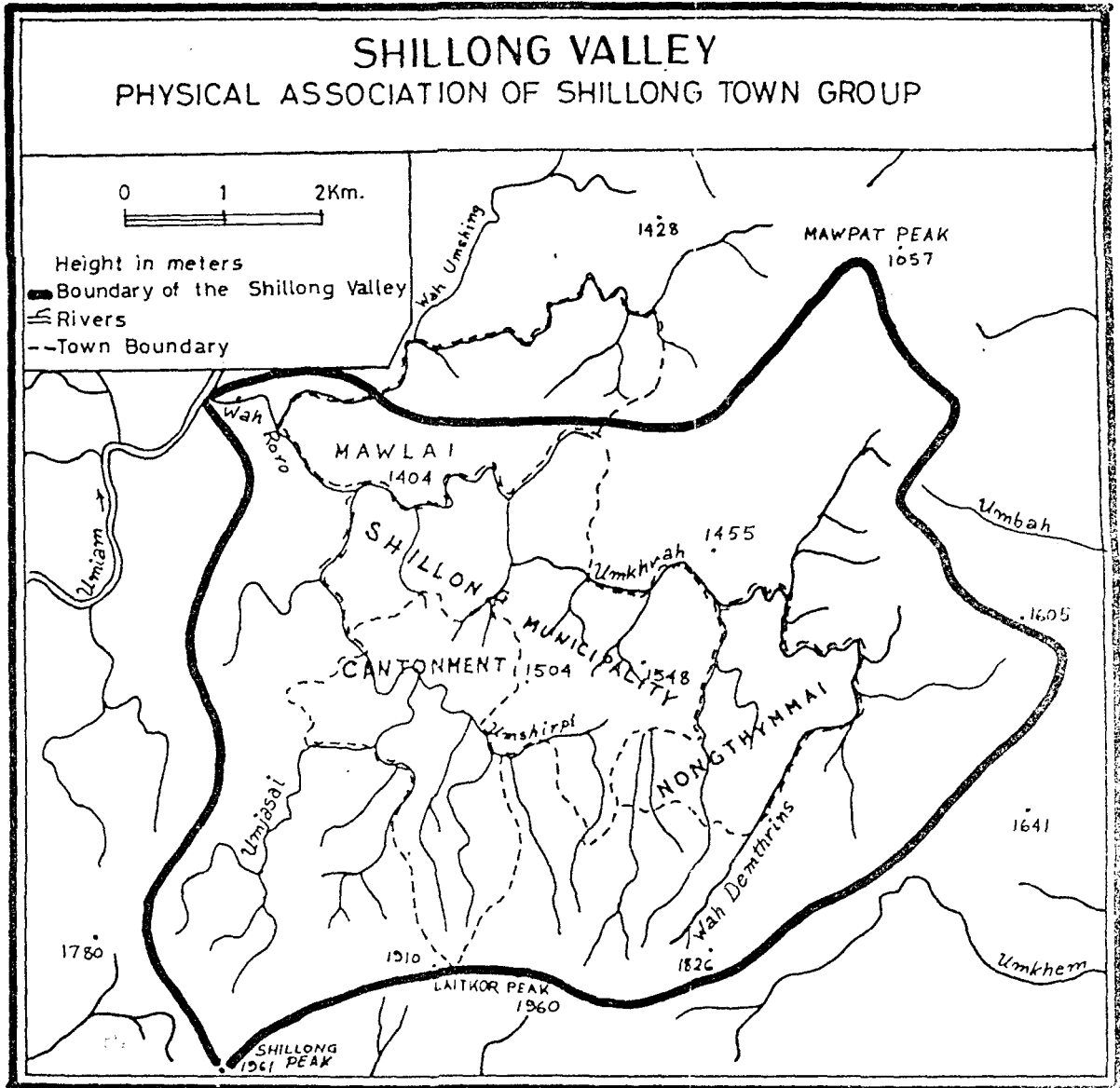
However, this process may not be applicable to smaller order urban centres, or those located in the tribal areas. Concept of poverty and deprivation in a tribal setting cannot be compared with that of the non tribals. The tribal social structure is far more egalitarian in nature and the poverty and deprivation in these societies are conditioned by social organisation and technology in relation to natural resource endowments. These are non-structured, non-stratified societies. On the other hand, the non-tribal societies are highly structured and hierarchical and engenders deprivations, inequality and poverty. However, urban centres in tribal areas sustain a significant segment of non-tribals and this factor alone, brings it closer to a generalised understanding of poverty. Moreover, an important area of study may relate to examining the role of the urban centre itself in creating conditions of poverty through its impacts on the tribal social structure.

- (i) Most tribal societies are based on egalitarian principles in sharp contrast to extreme structural inequality that characterises non tribal economies. Economic differentiation in tribal societies, however, is not ruled out.
- (ii) Urbanisation in the tribal areas is of recent origin and is not linked to a endogametic development of the structural transformation of the tribal economies in most cases, the process of urbanisation is a thrust upon a subsistent rural economy.
- (iii) The consequent urban growth in the tribal areas is due to natural growth of the tribal population living in such societies and a substantial non- tribal in migrants coming in to these cities for variety of reasons.

LOCATION OF THE STUDY AREA



Map 1.1



Source: Problems of Hill Area Development by JP Singh
Map 1.2

Thus, understanding of poverty, its causes and manifestations acquire different meanings and connotations in the above context. Unlike many larger order urban centres and urban areas outside the tribal belt, manifestations of poverty, in tribal townships are not easily identifiable over space in form of slums. This study is an attempt to understand the patterns processes and manifestations of poverty in a fast growing city i.e., Shillong located in a regional milieu dominated by tribal social order.

1.4 A Brief Background to Shillong

Shillong is the capital of Meghalaya at an altitude of 1561 m above the mean sea level. On its west and south lies Bangladesh plain, to the east the Barak valley and to the north the valley of Brahmaputra (Assam plains) (Map 1.1).

The region enjoys sub-tropical monsoon climate. The amount of rainfall varies within the region, ranging between an average 300 to 400 cm, annually. Despite its senile topography, the rejuvenated parts of the plateau lends to quick soil formation combined with high average annual rainfall that permits thick and quick vegetal growth.

The analysis of the ecological setting and pattern of the landuse reveals that the ecological conditions are not very favourable for generation of agricultural surplus. The available area for cultivation and the actually cultivated area constitute only a negligible proportion of the total geographical area (Map 1.2). The technique of cultivation as well as the cropping pattern too indicate a highly subsistence nature of agricultural production barring a few areas of notable exceptions, particularly adjacent to the townships. The region has some important natural resources, the forest resource being the most significant. Some amount of coal, lime stone, sillimanite and clay is also available in some areas. But there is hardly any evidence of industries linked to such resources. The structure of the work force in the state shows little diversification with more than 80

percent 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 symbolic 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. The city sustains itself without having to depend on the structural requirement of the region. The cities develop a dependent relationship with the national/ global economy and establish relationship in relation to its hinterland.

Shillong emerged to suit the colonial demands of exploitation of natural resources and for better administrative and defence control over the region. The regional structure, during the period of inception of the city is characterised 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. Even after independence, the nature of urbanisation is characterised by mere growth in the population without affecting the 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 reorganisation of space was externally induced leading to complete split in 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 process of under development of the region thus began with this split. This was due to reorganisation of space in the region which was not a response to changes in the regional structure through socio- economical instrumentalities. More over the hegemonic and

dominant character of the city space in relation to its hinterland was inherent in the process and it contributed weak linkages it had with the hinterland. Even after independence though the city snapped its direct relationship with the metropolitan economy in the dependence structure, it continues to reproduce the process of under development by perpetuating administrative dominance.

Shillong's present economic base indicates that consequent upon its development as an administrative centre, the city has functions primarily oriented towards administration, trade 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 the hinterland. As a corollary the city has attracted other tertiary functions, such as concentration of banking services, educational institutions etc. resulting in to a overwhelming segment of the working force in tertiary occupation, thereby reflecting the nature of function the city is performing. The location of many state government headquarters and nearly all central government institutions and offices has contributed to the fertiarisation of the city's economic base. The work force in the secondary section is negligible. The production of the city is mainly geared towards consumption within the city. The production base of the city bears very little evidence of its fulfilling the requirements expected to be generated in the hinterland.

It may be mentioned that the spatial differentiation in the 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. Urbanisation in the region is therefore, is more as a result of superimposed conditions, than that of indigenous growth. Under such conditions spread of urbanisation has been uneven and urban poverty has taken the form of slums and has become a prominent feature of the cities morphology manifesting itself in

typical characteristic like that of any urban centre in India, despite a weak city hinterland relationship and limited resource base within a different social order.

Within this framework the specific characteristics of the city may be underlined as follows:

- i) The city is located in a hilly terrain and enjoys temperate weather conditions throughout the year, but winter months are very severe. The topography and the weather conditions does not permit surplus agricultural growth.
- ii) The city has grown in the midst of tribal areas which continue to remain under quasi-subsistent and quasi-foraging economic organisation and there is no industrial base, or production unit .
- iii) A very high proportion (nearly 45 percent) of the urban population is located in Shillong city only and the city continues to be the nodal point of all secondary and tertiary activities. The workforce structure shows a heavy dependence on the tertiary and secondary sectors.
- iv) The city also supports a sizeable proportion (near by 55 percent) of people of non tribal origin, most of them being displaced Bengali and migrant Nepali and Bihari population.
- v) The population composition presents a high degree of ethnic diversity and economic -- disparities across and within varied ethnic segment. This is reflected in the emergence of about 24 clearly identifiable slums of various sizes in different localities within the city agglomeration.

1.5 Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To develop a framework to study structural reasons of urban poverty;
2. To place the genesis and perpetuation of urban poverty in the specific regional and social context;

3. To analyse the ethnic, social and economic roots of urban poverty;
4. To analyse the structural attributes and relations of the urban poor in Shillong.

1.6 Hypotheses

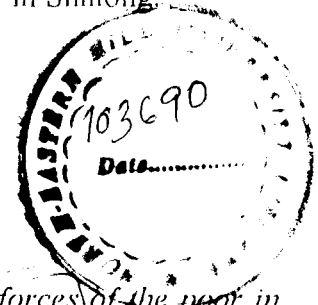
The study puts before itself the following hypotheses for evaluation:

1. *"Ethnic identity and spatial segregation are the most important forces of the poor in Shillong, i.e., the way they reside in specific slums and in the manner the urban space is organised."*

The general theoretical expectation is that poverty of the poor is an integrating factor, i.e., the poor, irrespective of their ethnicity and other primordial relationship, would cling together and develop social networks on common consideration of their deprivation. Other considerations could only follow. However, because of its long history, the divide or perception of a divide between the tribal and the non-tribals, slums develop on ethnic lines. This provides a certain degree of uniqueness to the situation.

2. *"The ethnic divide in the spatial manifestation of poverty spills over to the proportion of poor in the ethnic groupings, generally the proportion of poor among the tribals (ST population) is less than the non-tribals among the poor".*

It is assumed that a township containing a very large proportion of tribal population will not have social and economic inequalities of very high order, primarily because of more egalitarian tribal social structure. Ethnic solidarity and clan consciousness are likely to prevent the process of complete pauperisation among the tribal population. On the other hand, the non-tribals, largely migrants come from a stratified economic and social situation and that process continues not only among themselves, but also between them and the tribal population.



3. *“The incidence of poverty being less severe among the tribal slum-dwellers is due to their being better placed in terms of social sector indicators like health, sanitation and education and also the asset profile of the tribals compared with non-tribals.”*

Due to legal restrictions, non-tribals cannot own land; due to the impact of the Christian missionaries, the tribals have better access to health measures and education, especially girl child education which is quite prevalent due to matriliney and matri-local systems among the Khasis, Garos and the Jaintias.

4. *“The incidence of poverty is more spatially dispersed within the city and the areas of concentration (the slums) are less profound”.*

Unlike large metropolitan cities where incidences of poverty has clear spatial manifestation in slums, smaller order towns are not likely to develop a large number of poverty pockets in select areas within the city. The poor is more likely to be intermixed with the non-poor in different areas within the city rather than forming pockets of its concentration.

5. *“Poverty is more endemic among the recent migrants (in slums) than among old migrants.”*

This is largely because the new migrants especially those from rural areas live in low paid, uncertain vocations like wage-work and live within an uncertain psychological framework. The longer they stay, the better they carve out a niche within the urban situation. Their children may get educated and skilled, and get better paying jobs.

6. *“Secondary poverty is more widespread among the slum-dwellers. Rising unemployment and ethnic strife can affect the situation of the poor for worse, i.e., they are likely to become poorer.”*

With growth of the city without any change in its economic base, unemployment, uncertain social situation, discriminations etc. indicate possibilities of change of secondary poverty to primary poverty.

7. *“The society making a transition from an egalitarian milieu (of the tribal society) to market economy (capitalism) making a dent in the traditional social structure, the stratification will manifest in further impetus to poverty-- poverty to more slums”. This can be interpreted in terms of the nexus between the structure and the morphology of the city.”*

1.7 Data base:

The study has been conducted based on various primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources:

Data regarding, the indices of poverty in the selected study areas is collected through structured questionnaire at household level, as per the sample design. Of the total 24 declared slum areas of Shillong city six slums were selected after pilot survey, depending upon the ethnic concentration in the area, distance from the CBD and locational aspects.

The sample was designed in the following manner:

A. Sample design.

| Characters | No. of Slums | Duration | Ethnicity |
|------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| (a) Old Slum | 2 | more than 50 years | Dominantly Punjabi |
| (b) Not very old Slums | 2 | Between 20-50 years | Dominantly Nepali, Bengali |
| (c) New Slums | 2 | Less than 20 years | Dominantly Bihari |

Depending upon their duration of existence slums have been classified as new and old slums and not very old slums. Care has been taken to ensure that the selected areas represent dominance of at least one ethnic community each. The communities represented are: (i) Punjabis, (ii) Nepalese (iii) Bengali (v) Bihari and (vi) Tribals (Khasis, Garos, and Jaintias).

Secondary sources:

The information pertaining to the evolution and growth of Shillong, analysis of occupational pattern, distribution and density of the people, data regarding various indicators of poverty like, health indicators, literacy rate, nutritional level etc. are collected from published reports, papers and relevant sources like surveys conducted by N.I.U.A, N.C.E.R.T., N.E.I.P.A., N.S.S.O. reports of the Planning Commission, health surveys, and census tables and reports.

1.8. Methodology

As understanding of poverty its causes and manifestation acquire different meanings and connotations in spatial context, measurement of poverty vary depending upon conditions of absolute and relative deprivation.

In the regional context both basic need and income measurement has been used to analyse and understand the dynamism of urban development and urban poverty in the context of form content, and structure.

In order to collect information regarding the poverty conditions, particularly in the slum area, both primary and secondary methods have been used.

Methodology for collection of Data

Primary data was collected on the basis of structured questionnaire at the house hold level. Households were selected on a random basis (at least 10 percent) of the households were surveyed in each locality after stratifying their population on ethnic basis (stratified random sampling). Collection of information included both opened and pre-coded type, the answers of which was elicited through interview method.

Methodology for Data Analysis

The data so collected is tabulated and is aggregated in the following manner to understand the three aspects of the research. The specific form i.e. the spatial forms, the content and the structure of poverty manifested in the slums of Shillong city.

I. Morphology of slums: This has been analysed with the following variables:

- (i) Site and location of the slums
- (ii) Size of slums
- (iii) Morphology of the slums
- (iv) Residential density, house types and building material
- (v) Physical amenities
- (vi) Income levels.

II. Content of poverty:

This section has been analysed with the help of the following variables:

- (i) Migration
- (ii) Rural-urban background of the slum dwellers.
- (iii) Age-sex composition
- (iv) Ethnicity and language
- (v) Education and literacy status

- (vi) Social disabilities
- (vii) Religion
- (viii) Occupations
- (ix) Women in slums
- (x) Status of children (nutrition, health, education)

III. Structural roots of poverty is analysed with the help of

- (i) Ethnic plurality,
- (ii) Migrants and the slums
- (iii) Education, occupation and income classes
- (iv) Indebtedness among the poor
- (v) Position of the child in the slum

Demographic variables-such as size of the family, birth rate, death rate, sex ratio age structure etc. economic variables-such as occupational structure, occupation mobility, income etc. social variables-such as educational levels, morbidity pattern, housing, portable water etc. has been used further to get an insight into the existing living conditions of the slum dwellers.

In order to understand the levels of disparity in all the above variables the data was processed with the help of disparity indices. In order to understand extent of inequalities, cross table calculations were made to identify various co-relates of poverty and its causes. Suitable cartographic technique is employed to present the data to indicate spatial, temporal and social characteristic of the study area.

1.9 Organisation of the study

The study has been organised into the following broad chapters.

- (i) The first Chapter, Introduction, of the thesis deals with the research setting, statement of problem, objective, methodology and a description of the study area. It also tries to reflect on the utility and relevance of the present study.
- (ii) The second chapter, Literature, is an assessment of various theoretical attempts to understand the growth and sustenance of poverty. The chapter also reviews various approaches and concepts of poverty.
- (iii) The third chapter, Shillong - A General Background, is an endeavour to trace the nature of development of Shillong city through historical past and the contemporary settings and spatial restructure of the city.
- (iv) While the historical aspects are focused in third chapter, the fourth chapter, Morphology of the Slums, deals with the spatial manifestation of poverty in the slums and the existing physical conditions. The chapter also attempts to give an idea of the specific location of these slums and the existing ethnic concentrations in them.
- (v) The fifth chapter, Social and Economic Composition of the Poor, is an attempt to recognise and analyse, the broad characteristics of the socio-economic status of the slums in terms of their quality of life, basic amenities, income and other associated aspects. It also attempts to understand the problems associated with the availability of urban infrastructure.
- (vi) The sixth chapter, Structural Roots of Poverty, highlights the existing and the emerging structure of poverty in the slums of Shillong city with an attempt to understand the ethnic and the migrant non migrant aspects and its consequence on the growing instances of poverty conditions among the slum dwellers of the city in being manifested in the form of increasing number of slums.
- (vii) The last chapter, Conclusion, presents a brief resume of the work covered in the study along with the main findings. The chapter also comes out with some suggestions, to deal with the distinct phenomena that differentiates the slums of Shillong city, from their counterparts in other areas of the country.

1.10. Relevance of the Study

Slum conditions in urban communities have drawn the attention of a large number of scholars, besides social workers and social organisations, economists, urban geographers,

city planners and others. However they have studied this problem from different angles, mostly taking a partial component of the slums, for example either, health or nutrition, or income, or social structure etc. Very rarely a wholistic study has been attempted to understand the process of slum formation itself, i.e. causes that accentuates poverty conditions and continues to contribute towards the growing cycle of poverty and deprivations.

The present study aims at understanding the causes of poverty, their manifestations in the formation of slums. The study is also different in a way, since it set up is within a tribal social order, where the typical forms of exploitation does not exist and the city supporting the slum formation has a hegemonic rural urban relationship.

Some of the other broad difference and relevance of the study becomes clear from the following

- i) While most of the studies conducted earlier, give us descriptions of either physical, demographic health and social conditions only, this study aims at understanding the forms, content and structure of poverty, manifested in the form of slums within an subsistence economy.
- (ii) So far most of the studies have been aimed at big urban centres or metros, while very few studies have been conducted on medium sized cities, particularly within tribal set ups where relations of production still exist at a subsistence level. The present study is an attempt towards this direction.
- (iii) Northeast in general and Shillong in particular, are known for its diversity in its cultural and social life, that is conditioned by many historical, social and cultural factors. Historical analysis indicates that the growth of the city as a super-imposed one, with minimum link with its rural hinterland. Under such conditions, growth or sustenance of the city itself is a questionable phenomenon. Emergence of slums as manifestation of poverty further adds to this, and therefore, needs an in-depth understanding.

ANNEXURE TO CHAPTER I

HOUSE HOLD SCHEDULE

for Ph.D. Thesis

Urban Poverty and the Poor in Shillong; Exploration in form, content and structure

Investigator - Nandini Chakravarty

Department of Geography, NEHU

Year of Survey - 1995

(A) GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. House Code : _____
2. Locational Identity : _____
3. Area/Ward : _____
4. (a) Name of the Respondent : _____
 (b) Age : _____ (c) Sex : _____
 (c) Religion : _____ (e) Caste : _____
 (d) Tribe : _____ (g) Clan : _____
 (h) Mother tongue : _____
 (i) Size of the household : _____
 (j) Type of family : _____
5. Duration of stay : _____
 (a) Migrant : _____ (b) Non-migrant : _____
 (c) Recent migrant (within last five years) : _____
 (d) Place from where migrated : _____
 (e) Purpose of migration : _____

(B) DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC

| Sr. No. | Relation with H.H. | Age | Sex | | Marital Status | Literacy Status | Tech. Education | Main Occupation | Income |
|---------|--------------------|-----|-----|---|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------|
| | | | M | F | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

Col. 2. Relation with H. of House hold - Son, Daughte, Father, Mother, Wife, Self, Other(s).

Col. 5. Marital Status - Unmarried, Never married, Married, Divorced, Separated, Widow, Widower.

(C) ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

- (a) Total Family Income from all sources : _____

(b) Income gathering assets : _____

(i) Land owned. Yes/No. If yes, (a) Total land _____
Rural _____, Urban _____ (in Sq. ft. in case of urban and in hectare in case of rural)

In case of rural land please state its usage

| Sr. No. | Crops grown | Area in ha. | Whether marketed | Amount received |
|---------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

(ii) Whether owning urban house. Yes/No _____

(iii) Whether rented. Yes/No _____ Rent received per month: _____

(iv) Live stock Yes/No. No. of Cows _____, Buffaloes _____
Pigs _____, Poultry _____, Any other(s) _____

(v) Owning of Truck (Nos.) _____, Taxis (Nos.) _____
Any other _____

(vi) Owning of shops (Nos.) _____, Type _____
Location _____, Income if known _____

2. Indebtedness :

| Sr. No. | Source | Purpose | Amount of Loans taken | Interest rate | Mortgage | Outstanding amount |
|---------|--------|---------|-----------------------|---------------|----------|--------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

Col. 2. Source - (01) Private money-lender, (02) Bank, (03) Relatives, (04) Other

Col. 3. Purpose - (01) H.H. exegency, (02) Medical need, (03) Marriage, (04) Child birth, (05) Death, (06) Purchase of asset, (07) Making house, (08) Shop, (09) Education, (10) Any other.

3. Sale/Purchase of urban land/property during the last five years :

| Sr.No. | Nature of land/property | Location of the land/property | Year | Amount | Purpose | Sold to (ethnicity) |
|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------|--------|---------|---------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |

(D) OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

(a) Total no. of earning members in the household :

| Sr.No. | Sex | Age | Type of Occupation | Place of work | Nature of earning | Amt. Of wage (daily/ monthly) | No. of working days, it temporary |
|--------|-----|-----|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

(b) Monthly income of the family _____
 (c) Annual income of the family _____

(E) AMENITIES**Information on Housing Conditions and Amenities**

(a) Type of house - (i) Pucca/RCC _____
 (ii) Semi pucca _____
 (iii) Katcha/Thatched _____
 (iv) No. of rooms in the household _____

(b) Status of ownership - (i) own house _____
 (ii) rented _____
 (iii) sub-rented _____
 Amount of rent per month in case it is rented _____

(c) Drinking water - Yes/No. _____
 If yes, whether within/outside house _____

(d) Source - (i) Hand pump, (ii) well, (iii) tap, (iv) common hand pump
 (v) common tap, (vi) any other

(e) Sanitation -

1) Whether toilet facility is available in the house, Yes/No. _____
 If Yes, whether within the house _____
 whether outside the house _____

2) Type of toilet -

(i) Insanitary _____ Individual pour flush _____
 (ii) Individual dry _____
 (iii) Common pour flush _____
 (iv) Common dry _____
 (v) Any other _____

3) Whether the household has electric connection : Yes/No.

(F) HEALTH CONDITIONS

1) Information about women and children :

| Sr.No. | Married women | Present age | Age at marriage | Age at which first pregnancy took place | No. of children born | No. of children survive at present | Family planning measures |
|--------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|---|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

2) Condition of children between 6 to 14 years of age group :

| Sr.No | Age | Sex | | Whether the child is working | Whether enrolled in school | Whether school dropout | Remarks |
|-------|-----|-----|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|---------|
| | | M | F | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

3) Whether there are any physically handicapped/disabled in the household Yes/No _____

If yes, Type of disability

- (a) Blindness (b) Night blindness (c) Mental disability
 (d) Hearing impairment (e) Speech impairment (f) Polio
 (g) Accidental handicap (h) Any other (specify) _____

Chapter II

Literature

2.1 Introductory Statement

Studies on poverty, by and large, have been conducted by economists and sociologists with a view to assessing mainly its dimensions and magnitude. However socio-psychological, cultural and political dimensions of poverty have not attracted much attention. Urban poverty has been mainly studied in the context of housing conditions and urban services and the needs of the people living in the slum areas. Although a few of these socio-economic studies do throw some light on the slum life, the coverage and focus of these studies vary and differ and are mainly confined to slums and squatter settlements of large cities only. Therefore if one has to draw a profile of urban poverty it has to be the selection of those elements which have a certain degree of logical coherence and mutual compatibility. In order to do so it is necessary to reveal how poverty and its causes have been perceived and analysed by different approaches and theories.

While various approaches to the study of poverty provides explanations for the conditions and causes of poverty, the various definitions and empirical studies provide a basis for identification of the poor, the level of poverty and magnitude. In the present chapter an attempt is made to review the available literature on urban poverty, its spatial manifestation and underlying causes.

2.2 Review of literature

The term 'poverty' refers to "the state or condition of having little or no money, goods or means of support", i.e., a condition of being in want of something that is needed, desired or generally recognised as having value. This implies that there are various degrees of poverty depending upon different states or conditions of the poor. It further implies that the essence of poverty is rooted in the concepts of inequality and deprivations.¹

The poverty is historical in nature. Hence the meaning of poverty may change in specific spatio-temporal context. The state of being poor in the United States or the United Kingdom is different from being poor in India or Pakistan. Further more poverty in India, which was on the eve of independence is different from what it is four and half decade later. Differently expressed, the meaning of poverty not only varies from society to society but it also varies within the same society at different points of time. When it is said that "poverty is relative to time and space", it implies that what one may define as poverty is related to the conditions and possibilities in the given society. As the society changes in the quality and kind of production in the prevailing standards of life, the definitions of poverty changes accordingly. The standard of living against which deprivation is measured varies considerably and the concept of deprivation itself is not constant across the countries.²

¹ National Institute of Urban Affairs (1988), *Dimension of Urban Poverty : A Situational Analysis; Research Study, Series No. 25*, New Delhi.

²FAO (1967), *Calorie Requirement , Nutritional Studies , No. 15*, Rome

There is a long standing debate on whether poverty is absolute or relative, whether it is subjective or objective. Differently expressed, there are various basic approaches to conceptualisation of poverty as absolute and relative.³

2.3 Concepts of poverty

Poverty is a phenomena which is complex in origin as well in its manifestation. A number of questions arise. What is the 'norm' of poverty? what is the "poverty line?", etc. In order to answer such questions, both the anatomy and the physiology of poverty in countries like India have to be studied in wider frame of reference, as poverty is a case of plurality of causes and heterogeneous inter-mixture of effects. Thus the first requirement of the concept of poverty is of a criterion as to who should be the focus of a criterion as to who should be the focus of the concern. These considerations comes out sharply in the alternative approaches to the concept of poverty.

(a) The biological concept

As professor Gunnar Myrdal puts it "poverty is great social and moral challenge. Poverty as an operational concept in the context of a poor country like India has to be understood carefully and it is an intellectual challenge".

In his famous study of poverty in York, Rowntree (1901) defined families as being in primary poverty if their total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency. Biological considerations related to the requirements of survival have been often used in defining the poverty line. Starvation clearly is the most telling aspect of primary poverty.

³ AK Sen (1973), *Poverty Inequality And Unemployment: Some Conceptual Issues*, *Economic And Political Weekly*. No 8 Special Number.

The biological approach has come under rather intense fire recently. First, there are significant variations related to the physical features, climatic conditions and work habits. For a specific group in a specific region, nutritional requirements are difficult to define precisely. Second, the translation of minimum nutritional requirements into minimum food requirements depends on the choice of commodities and on the consumption habits of people in a particular area.

In view of these problems, one may well agree with Martin Reus (1971) assertion that "almost every procedure in the subsistence level definition of poverty can be reasonably challenged". However, at the same time it can hardly be denied that malnutrition is only one aspect of the idea of poverty, it is an important aspect and one that is important for many developing countries.

(b) The inequality concept

The idea that the concept of poverty is essentially one of inequality are presented powerfully by Miller and Roby who conclude,

Casting the issue of poverty in terms of stratification leads to regarding poverty as an issue of inequality. In this approach we move away from efforts to measure poverty lines with pseudo scientific accuracy. Instead we look at the nature and size of the differences between the bottom 20 or 10 percent and the rest of the society, our concern becomes one of narrowing the differences between those at the bottom and better off in each stratification dimension.⁴

One can argue that inequality is fundamentally a different issue from poverty. To try to analyse poverty 'as an issue of inequality' or the other way round, would do little

⁴ A.K. Sen (1973), op.cit.

justice to either. Inequality and poverty are not, of course, unrelated. But neither concepts subsumes the other.

(c) *Relative deprivation concept*

The concept of relative deprivation has been fruitfully used in the analysis of poverty especially in the sociological literature. Being poor has clearly much to do with being deprived, and it is natural that for a social animal, the concept of deprivation will be a relative one. But within the uniformity of the term 'relative deprivation' there seems to exist some distinct and different notions.

One distinction concerns the contrast between feeling of deprivation and conditions of deprivation. According to E.R. Townsend,

There is indeed much to be said for a set of criteria that can be based on concrete conditions, so that one could use relative deprivation in an objective sense to describe situation where people possess less of some desired attribute, be it income, favourable employment conditions, or power.

On the other hand, the choice of 'conditions of deprivation' cannot be independent of feelings of deprivations. Material objects can not be evaluated in this context without reference to how people view them. Townsend emphasises the importance of the "endeavour to define the style of living which is generally shared or approved in each society and find whether there is... a point in the scale of distribution of resources below which families find it increasingly difficult... to share in the customs, activities and diets comprising that style of living".⁵

⁵ A.K. Sen (1973), op.cit.

A second contrast concerns the choice of reference groups for comparison. These different issues related to the general notion of relative deprivation have considerable bearing on the social analysis of poverty.

(d) *The concept of value judgement*

The view that 'poverty is a value judgement' has recently been presented forcefully by many authors. It seems natural to think of poverty as something that is disapproved of, the elimination of which is regarded as morally good going, further it has been argued by Mollie Orshanky, an outstanding authority in the field that 'poverty like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder'.

Eric Hobson (1968) puts it as "poverty is always defined according to the conventions of the society in which it occurs".⁶ But this does not make the exercise of poverty assessment in a given society a value judgement. Nor a subjective exercise of some kind of other, for a person studying and measuring poverty the conventions of society are matters of fact and not issues of morality or subjective search. Adam Smith in his work says,

by necessities I understand not only the commodities which are indispensably necessary for the support of life, but whatever the custom of the country renders it incident for the creditable people, even the lowest order to be without.⁷

⁶ Eric Hobson (1968), On Social Structure In David L. Shilla (eds) International Encyclopaedia Of Social Sciences Vol. 14.

⁷ Ibid.

In similar vein Karl Marx (1867) argues that,

while historical and moral element enters the concept of subsistence, nevertheless in a given country, at a given period the average quantity of the means of subsistence for the labourer is practically known.⁸

(e) *Concept of policy definition*

Certain related issues like 'the measurement of poverty' based on certain standards are usually accepted as standards of public policy formations. The United States President's Commission on income maintenance (1969) arguing for a policy definition in its report on poverty and plenty states that,

If society believes that people should not be permitted to die of starvation or exposure then it will define poverty as the lack of minimum food and shelter necessary to maintain life. If society feels some responsibility for providing to all persons an established measures of well being beyond mere existence, for example good physical health then it will add to its lists of necessities, the resource required to prevent and cure sickness. At any given time a policy definition reflects a balancing of community capabilities and desire. In low income societies more able to support their dependent citizen begin to consider the effects that pauperism will have on the poor and non poor alike.⁹

⁸ Karl Marx (1857-78), *Grundrisse Der Kritik Der Politischen Okonomie*. English Translation By M. Nicolaus (1973), Grundrisse Foundation of The Critic of Political Economy; Penguin, Harmondworth.

⁹ Various studies of Social indicators differ in their origin and immediate aim. For example, NASA ordered such a study to bring out the second degree consequence of the technical innovations produced by the space programme (Buer 1966 -68). In France the attempts of this kind were tried to the drafting of National plan (Shonfield and Shaw, 1972). The Swedish studies were initiated as a contribution to the discussion of low income problem by official committee (Johnson 1970 and Van Otter), in United States.

There are at least two difficulties with this 'policy definition'. First, practical policy making depends on a number of influences going beyond the prevalent notions of what should be done. Policy is function of political organisation and depends on a variety of factors including the nature of the government, the sources of its power and the forces exerted by other organisation. Second, even if policy is taken to stand not for actual public policy, but for policy recommendations widely held in the society in question, there is clearly a difference between the notion of deprivation and the idea of what should be eliminated by 'policy'.¹⁰

(f) Concept of standards and aggregation

This concept poses two distinct questions. Firstly in comparing the poverty of two societies, how can a common standard of necessities be found, since such standards would vary from society to society.

Secondly, while the exercise of identification of the poor can be based on a standard of minimum needs, that of 'aggregation' requires some method of combining deprivations of income over all indicator.

In this context, it becomes particularly tempting to redefine the problem as an unethical exercise, as has indeed been done in the measurement of economic inequality. But the ethical exercise involves similar ambiguities, and further more ends up answering a different question from the descriptive one that was originally asked. There is very little alternative to accepting the element of arbitrariness in the description of poverty and making the element as clear as possible.

¹⁰ M. Alamgir (1976), *Poverty Inequality and Development, Strategy in the Third World*, Mimcograph, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dacca.

Poverty thus is a matter of deprivation. The recent shift in focus specially in the sociological literature from absolute to relative deprivation has provided a useful framework of analysis. The much maligned biological approach, which deserves substantial reformation relates to the identifiable core of absolute deprivation, keeping issues of starvation and hunger at the centre of the concept.

Thus to view poverty as an issue in equality as is often recommended, seems to do little justice to either concept.

2.4 Various definitions of poverty.

Michael Harrington addressed the question: What is poverty and then replies that it is historically related concept. He writes,

There are new definitions in America of what man can achieve, of what a human standard of life should be. Those who suffer levels of life well below those that are possible (even though they live better than medieval knights or Asian peasants, are poor... Poverty should be defined in terms of those who are denied the minimal levels of health, housing, food, and education that our present stage of scientific knowledge specifies for life as it is now lived in the United States.¹¹

On the theoretical level, the Government of United states also recognises the relative nature of poverty. The United States President's Commission on Income Maintenance Programs states:

¹¹ Edmund R. Leacu (1978), International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Vol. 14, Macmillan & Co., London, p. 488

As society becomes more affluent it defines poverty as not only the lack of the components of a subsistence level of living, but also the lack of opportunity for persons with limited resources to achieve the quality of life enjoyed by persons with an average amount of resources. The definition of poverty progresses from one based on absolute standards to one based on relative standards.¹²

A report of the Congress, on the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare proudly states,

Poor persons living in the United States in the 1970s are rich in contrast to their counterparts in other times and places. They are not poor if by poor is meant the subsistence levels of living common in some other countries. Nor are most poor like their counterparts in this country fifty or one hundred years ago.¹³

Peter Townsend, an articulate exponent of this view, has suggested a definition of poverty in terms of relative deprivation. He states:

Individuals and families whose resources over time fall seriously short of the resources commanded by the average individual of family in the community in which they live, whether this community is a local, national or international one, are in poverty.

Definition of poverty in relative terms has, thus, involved more factors than income adequate for subsistence they have considered the critical issues to be the result of income distribution in a society. Measure of relative deprivation brings more

¹² M.G.Runiman (1966), *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* Routledge & Kegan Paul , London.

¹³ Ibid.

people under poverty than the official counts. The relative approach of conceptualisation of poverty transcends the economist biases of much poverty research which are limited only to gross measures of personal or household incomes. It introduces the sociological effects of poverty as indicators of poverty. This measure has an edge over a poverty-line definition, fixed in terms of income for various households combinations and only adjusted for the cost of food basket purchased by average poor households.

The relative deprivation definition of poverty is, however, not free from its shortcomings. First, it underplays the importance of the levels of poverty-line which tells us how many people are below it, how far below it and how many are near to the poverty condition. Thus, the composite issues of poverty remain neglected, if one adheres merely to relative approach. Secondly, the relative deprivation approach tries to find out a scientific poverty threshold and forgets that the delineation of poverty is not a "scientific exercise". It is in fact a value issue like most questions of statistics.¹⁴

Defining poverty as relative to the standard of living to the whole society means that poverty could be ended only by thoroughly restructuring the wealth of the society. Such a redistribution could entail major changes in social and political order.

The interpretation of the absolute factors is always based on some appreciation of the welfare and values of society as a whole; there is always a relative component in any definition of poverty, even one in which only 'vital minimum' is considered. Thus the distinction between absolute and relative poverty can be misleading if this fact is ignored and that the two approaches to poverty are not independent of each other. In fact, poverty is a manifestation of the social system and the structure on which the given society is

¹⁴ Peter Sorkin (1959), *Social and Cultural Mobility*, The Freepress, Newyork

based. There is no universal, absolute definition of poverty. There, therefore, cannot be any universal poverty line.

This leads one to the consideration on the dimensions of poverty. The dimension refers to the composition of poverty. There is a distinction between the characteristics on components of poverty, i.e., the elements by which it is defined and the factors involved in the generation of poverty. The dimensions or components of poverty form a vector by which poverty can be defined and measured. Many of these dimensions are interrelated, and, therefore, also contribute to the generation of poverty. There are also several variables which have a role in the explanation of poverty without contributing to its definition. The dimensions or variables considered in the definition of poverty are relevant not only for policy matters but also for understanding the cause of poverty and for evaluating programs to reduce poverty.

Poverty, therefore, is one of many kinds of powerlessness, of being subject to one's social situations instead being able to effect it through action, that is, through behaviour which flows from decisions and plans.¹⁵ Thus, the lack or inadequacy of income is the most common factor included in the definition of poverty. Considerable studies have been carried out to refine the income definition of poverty. These efforts include the value of in-kind transfers into the income-measures. Discussions of the measure of poverty indicate, however, that the definition of poverty cannot be limited to income but that other resources should also be considered. so the control over capital is also included besides the income. Some scholars have included earnings capacity also in order to define poverty.¹⁶ But it is realised that income alone as a criterion is not sufficient dimension of poverty, although it is significant.

¹⁵ M.G. Runiman, op.cit.

¹⁶ M.G. Runiman, op.cit.

Several other scholars have taken calories, protein, life expectancy, years of schooling etc. to analyse poverty but none of them singularly is a sufficient dimension of defining poverty.

Thus poverty is defined and delineated on the basis of the behavioural or attitudinal criteria. This definition hinges on the concept of "culture of poverty". It implies that the poor share a distinctive type of values, traits, and belief-complex which set them off from the non-poor group of the society. This type of culture matrix is the product of the continued economic deprivation and socialisation in a milieu of economic inadequacy. It is assumed that the 'culture of poverty' has a tendency to permeate among the children of the poor. Harrington points to "a personality of poverty, a type of human being produced by the grinding, earning life of the slums" certain objections are raised on accepting the definition of poverty by reference to a 'culture complex'. One serious objection to it is that there are different groups of the poverty stricken people who are spread in different geographical locations and live in different opportunity structures. So it is wrong to say that there is a single "culture of poverty". It is proper to refer to "cultures of poverty".¹⁷

2.5 Different ideologies

A moment's reflection on such related concepts of penury, and destitution makes it clear that there are variable degrees of poverty. Despite the fact that the label of 'poor' is given to groups of widely varying conditions, as if there is only one group of poor, but this is not the case. In the past, slaves of the Roman Empire, the serfs of the Middle Ages, the *peons* of Latin America, the inmates of English poor houses and the Shudras of India

¹⁷ Oscar Lewis (1972), *The Study of Social Culture: On Understanding Poverty*, *Magnum*, London.

were called the poor. In the last two centuries, several new labels have been given to the poor in order to remove the stigma. For example, the poor farmers in the countryside and slum-dwellers in the urban areas are called 'poor'. And efforts are on to affix new labels to poor. Whatever be the intentions behind the characterising or classificatory designations of the poor, one thing is clear : there are varied degrees of poverty.

(a) *Classical Ideologies*

Classical topologies of the poverty and inequality are those of Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau, for example, Plato, in his Republic, wanted to create a society where each individual assumes the occupation for which he is best fitted. He made the Republic, the product solely of the division of labour.¹⁸ He distinguished between inherent inequality of men and social inequality based on providing the men their occupation for which they deserve. In Politics, Aristotle gave the scheme of three classes present in all States: one class is very rich, another very poor and a third is a mean. He also gave a dichotomous scheme : one is the basic division of people into freed and slave; and the other is the division into those who work and those who do not.¹⁹ Rousseau made a distinction between natural and moral inequality.²⁰

(b) *Modern Ideologies*

In the modern literature dealing with poverty, one can get various topologies of poverty based on different bases. One basis of classifying poverty is moral one. Moralists divide

¹⁸ Barbara Bernad (1957), *Social Stratification, A Comparative Analysis of Structure and Process*, Bracc & Co. Newyork.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

poverty into two types : the deserving and non-deserving. Although inadequate and meaningless, this topology has survived for a remarkably long time.

Galbraith made distinction between "insular poverty" and "case poverty". "Insular Poverty" points out to the environmental poverty say, for instance, those who live in rural areas or depressed areas. The other category of "case poverty" relates to personal causes of poverty. Galbraith says that "case poverty" is commonly and properly related to (such) characteristics of individuals so uplifted (as) mental deficiency, bad health, inability to adopt to discipline of modern economic life, excessive procreation, alcoholism, insufficient education²¹. It sees that the poverty for Galbraith is on account of individual defects. One critic of Galbraith remarks that his topology of poverty smacks of "Social Darwinism".²²

A distinction is made between "economic level" and "low cost poverty level". These two types delineate two empirical categories much graded differ in size and social characteristics.

Harrington's topology of the poverty combines both causes as well as the visibility of the poverty. According to him, there are six types of poor (1) the unemployed marginal farmers and farm workers; (2) Negroes; (3) deviants (beats, alcoholics, urban hillbillies); (4) the aged; (5) the mentally ill; and (6) slum dwellers.²³

Humphrey - a spokesman of the liberal ideas, used a practical combination of causes and visibility and came forward with a six-fold topology of the poor : (1) urban

²¹ Richard Hall (1969), *Occupation and The Social Structure*, Prentice Hall, London.

²² Ibid.

²³ R. Hunter (1964), *The Slums Challenges and Response*, A Free Press Paperback, Macmillan & Co., London.

poverty; (2) rural poverty; (3) depressed areas and Negroes; (4) welfare recipients; (5) the under-depressed; and (6) the unemployed.²⁴

S.M. Miller basing his topology on the combination of economic security and familial stability, classified poverty into four types : (1) the stable poor; (2) the strained; (3) the covers; and (4) the unstable. Miller's topology is sociological one which combines within it a large number of factors.²⁵

Kosa classified the poverty into two - chronic and acute. The chronic poverty implies a long established life-long or perhaps multigenerational deprivation process and the acute poverty implies deprivation following a period spent above the poverty level.²⁶

Recently, Tumin specified five forms of inequality : (1) role differentiation; (2) ranking in accordance with property, power and prestige; (3) ranking in accordance with intrinsic attributes of a role; and (4) ranking in terms of approximation to social values and norms.²⁷

Dandekar made a distinction between inequality of natural capabilities and those of social position. Inequality that do not involve any ranking order and those which do.

The topologies of poverty and inequality are legion. It transpires that there is not one class of poor but many varieties of them. Each generation sees poverty differently and judges it according to a particular set of social values, which may be quite unlike those of an earlier era. Thirdly, there can be no uniform definition of poverty. The term 'poor' and

²⁴ R. Hunter (1964), *op.cit.*

²⁵ S.M. Miller and M. Rein (1971), *Poverty Changing Social Stratification*, Oxford University Press, London.

²⁶ N. Kosa (1980), *Income Inequality and Poverty*, Oxford University Press, New York.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

'poverty' seemed dangerously elastic and capable of covering a host of social fallacies.²⁸ Finally, the structure of poverty and the attendant complications have changed.

There are three prominent traditions of political thought liberalism, conservatism, and socialism which dominated the scene over centuries. From these emerged two differing interpretations of poverty : one is individualistic represented by liberalism, and the other is societal represented by either conservation or socialism.

(c) *Individualistic Ideologies of Poverty and Inequality*

Individualistic interpretation, a product of liberalism emerged out of the revolt against the authoritarian government starting with the French Revolution. Despite differences, liberals, by and large, focused on the needs of individual and thereby relegated the needs of the state or society to a secondary or even irrelevant position. They asserted that individuals have an inherent right to seek private ends and must be free to have and use private property. This individualistic materialism supported capitalism as the most appropriate form of economic organisation, declared laissez-faire as the best doctrine, and denied that poverty could be legitimate subject for public policy. Poor people were seen as no different from anyone else. The poor's status reflected their (in) ability in the competition with the non-poor.²⁹

One group of liberals justified human freedom through the concept of a natural order. John Locke, for instance, argued that God had set a natural order and before the existence of civil society men lived in a sort of pre-social state, called the state of nature, and by the virtue of a contract among themselves, society came into existence. This

²⁸ V.M. Dandekar and Neelkanth Rath (1970), *Poverty in India*, Indian School of Political Economy, Pune, Reprinted from EPW, Vol. 6, No. 1 & 2, Bombay.

²⁹ A.K. Sen (1973), *op.cit.*

came to be known as social requirements; but in order to ensure the exercise of his liberty he entered into a contract by which the individuals conferred power, not to the government, but to the community. This contract is not absolute because the natural rights of life, liberty and property remain in the hands of individuals. In other words, not every right in society comes from the state.

Another group of the liberals demolished the idea that government originated in a social contract. A generation after Locke, Hume argued that the government is the creation of the human need; it is the utility which dictated that men follow government. This came to be known as the doctrine of 'utilitarianism' for its justified government on the ground of being useful to man. To be more to the point, it was based on 'egoistic-individualism' assuming that 'pleasure alone was good'.

The third group of liberals drawing from the utilitarian philosophy justified the laissez-faire economics. Adam Smith, for example, justified human freedom on the basis of the organic relationship between individual and social growth. He believed that a natural harmony existed in the economic order; and expressed this harmony through the image of an 'invisible hand'.³⁰ Another example is that of Sumner. Drawing from Darwin's evolutionary theory of survival of the fittest to human society, the Social Darwinists, combined in one, the materialistic individualism reflected in laissez-faire capitalist doctrine and social analogies. Sumner, for instance, maintained that there could be no possibility of social reform of the poor.³¹ For him, the poverty is an individual matter: an individual failed in the economic struggle due to his own fault, idleness, bad habits, intemperance, vices, and similar other human weaknesses. So only the individual

³⁰ A.K. Sen (1973), *op.cit.*

³¹ *Ibid*

could overcome it. While defending this position, Summer negated any obligation of the society to help the poor. According to Hofstadter, "Like some latter-day Calvin, he came to preach the predestination of the social order and the salvation of the economically elect through the survival of the fittest".³²

By the middle of the nineteenth century individualistic approach to poverty came under sharp attack of both conservatives and socialists. Scholars scoffed at the idea that personal diligence and virtue determined whether a man was poor or rich. In the process of criticism, a different view emerged which argued that it was not because of the individual fault, but because of social system the poor are poor and stay poor. This brings us to the societal interpretation of poverty.

(d) Social Ideologies of Poverty and Inequality:

Both conservatives and socialists, despite their sharp differences, agreed on at least one thing : the social order was superior to privately determined individual rights. They conceived individuals as part of the organic whole, creations of their society.

The tradition of conservatism emphasised inherent human inequality. For instance, Edmund Burke, one of the most ardent adherents of this tradition, rejected the concept of natural social equality and argued that, the natural differences of rank now in existence arose from a natural division of labour. Then he goes on to assert that, 'the natural aristocracy should rule men of ability and wealth should lead'.

There arose two brands of socialism: Pre-anarchist and Marxian. The Pre-Marxian socialist philosophy emphasised the social element in human relationships and

³² A.K. Sen (1973), op.cit.

argued that men should promote the general well-being which was compatible with any social order based on a competitive struggle for the means of livelihood.

The Marxian socialist thought maintained that the poverty was not the result of individual failure but of economic and social forces, and these forces were appropriate subject for public policy. The state could act to eradicate poverty and it should. They anticipated a classless society of equal humans as the ultimate expression of the socialist ideal.

In reaction to conservatism and pre-socialism, a new brand of liberalism which came to be known as 'organic liberalism'. One of its proponents, T.H. Green, upheld both individual freedom and inequality as well as the inherent right of individual to seek private ends, but he took organic view of society. Green came to see that liberty must not be merely negative (freedom from government interference), it must be positive as well freedom for development.³³

The two interpretations - individualistic and societal, argued that the poverty was not a proper subject for the public policy. It were those ideologies which perpetuate and maintain poverty and inequality. However, it was socialism, especially the Marxian brand which treated poverty as product of social 'relations' and argued that the poverty must be brought within the purview of social reform.

2.6 Various approaches to poverty

There is a long standing debate on whether poverty is absolute or relative, whether it is subjective or objective. Differently expressed, there are various basic approaches to conceptualisation of poverty as absolute or relative.

³³ MacIver & Page (1965), *Society*, Macmillan, London.

(a) *Absolute Approach of Poverty*

There are two versions of absolute definition of poverty : bourgeois and Marxist. The bourgeois theorists try to define poverty in relation to human physiology and in terms of subsistence levels of nutrition. The Marxists treat subsistence minimum more than physiologically determined. They include both natural and necessary wants. According to Marx,

The workers natural wants, such as food clothing, fuel and housing vary according to the climatic and other physical conditions of his country. On the other hand the number and the extent of his so called necessary wants ... are themselves the product of historical development, and depend to a great extent on the degree of the civilisation of a country.³⁴

Marxists thus argue that the subsistence minimum varies historically, but at any given time and place it can be identified and approximately measured. Following this line of argument, Baran and Sweezy define poverty as "the condition in which those members of a society live whose incomes are insufficient to cover the subsistence minimum for the society at that time".³⁵

Much effort has been made to define poverty line which represent the lower limit of the existence of a population. Among the early studies Rowntree's "Primary Poverty" can be mentioned. Recently several studies have been conducted to establish the absolute poverty line in both developed countries such as the USA, UK and the underdeveloped counties of the third world.³⁶

³⁴ S.D. Osmania (1985), Rich Slum Dwellers : A Problem of Unequal Access International Labour Review, U.K.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Dandekar & Rath, opcit.

These studies provide mostly economic definition of poverty. One of the most common elements stressed in the definition of poverty based on subsistence level is the lack or inadequacy of income. According to Dandekar "want of adequate income, howsoever defined, is poverty".³⁷ Some scholars argue that "poverty has to be identified with deficiency in the total level of living which includes not only energy requirements but also balanced diet needed for health and the other basic needs essential for human existence at a tolerable level. The poverty line in terms of specific income level varies depending on assumptions as to what constitutes "the daily needs of life", and the cost of these items. Dandekar has mentioned four such criteria for the definition of poverty line: (1) the proportion of expenditure taken up by specified essential items such as food, (2) calorie value of food, (3) cost of balanced diet and finally, (4) cost of essentials of tolerable human existence. Abel Smith and Townsend define poverty in terms of social security assistance.³⁸

The concept of subsistence implies that something are necessary for human existence and goods and services beyond this level are treated as luxuries. This represents value judgements about desirable level of activity and comfort. Secondly, the cost of basic necessities varies widely. Thirdly, a "poverty line" definition has failed to distinguish the different minimal needs of families of different sizes, different stages in the life-cycle, and different geographical location. Another difficulty in using a "poverty line" is that the line is relative to time. This creates the difficulty in comparing the magnitude of poverty of the day with that of the past. The goods or services considered necessary minimal are not fixed but increases with the general increase in the living standards.

³⁷ Dandekar & Rath, opcit.

³⁸ Peter Townsend (1974), *Poverty as Relative Deprivation: Resources and Style of Living*, Penguin, Weddenburn, London.

Thus efforts to define poverty on the basis of nutritional requirements cannot be defined in terms of calories necessary for physiological functioning in modern societies. The type of food being acceptable and the way of preparing food, change with the standard of living in the society. Side by side the proportion of income spent on food also changes. In other words the "minimum decency" or the "subsistence levels" are generally found to increase in real terms, with the proportion of the increasing average living of standard in the society.

(b) *Relative Approach of Poverty;*

At the other end it is argued that poverty is essentially a relative phenomenon. Several scholars have opted for a relativistic definition of poverty. The relative approach defines poverty as the position of the individual vis-à-vis a society, primarily in the terms of distance between the poor and the average or medium standard of living in the society, thereby making poverty one of the aspects of inequality. The definition of poverty line may be in absolute terms at a point in time, but what it measures is relative deprivation, and it therefore changes as the characteristic of the society concerned.³⁹

Relative deprivation occurs when there is significant disparity between living conditions of many in most of the societies and the population that might be denoted as poor. Galbraith writes... people are poverty-stricken when their income, even if adequate for survival, falls markedly behind that of the community. Then they cannot have what the larger community regards as the minimum necessary for decency and they cannot

³⁹ M.G. Runiman opcit.

wholly escape, therefore, the judgement of the larger community that they are indecent. They live outside the grades or categories which the community regards as acceptable.⁴⁰

A report of the Congress, on the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare proudly states: Poor persons living in the United States in the 1970s are rich in contrast to their counterparts in other times and places. They are not poor if by poor is meant the subsistence levels of living common in some other countries. Nor are most poor like their counterparts in this country fifty or one hundred years ago.⁴¹

Definition of poverty in relative terms has, thus, involved more factors than income adequate for subsistence they have considered the critical issues to be the result of income distribution in a society. Measure of relative deprivation brings more people under poverty than the official counts. The relative approach of conceptualisation of poverty transcends the economist biases of much poverty research which are limited only to gross measures of personal or household incomes. It introduces the sociological effects of poverty as indicators of poverty. This measure has an edge over a poverty-line definition, fixed in terms of income for various households combinations and only adjusted for the cost of food basket purchased by average poor households".

The relative deprivation definition of poverty is, however, not free from its shortcomings. First, it underplays the importance of the levels of poverty-line which tells us how many people are below it, how far below it and how many are near to the poverty condition. Thus, the composite issues of poverty remain neglected, if one adheres merely to relative approach. Secondly, the relative deprivation approach tries to find out a

⁴⁰ The question of Relative Deprivation vis-a-vis the rest of the community is involved also in fixing of the minimum needs on which the choice of the poverty line is based, so that the estimation of absolute deprivation involve some consideration of relative deprivation also.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

scientific poverty threshold and forgets that the delineation of poverty is not a "scientific exercise". It is in fact a value issue, like most questions of statistics.⁴²

Defining poverty as relative to the standard of living to the whole society means that poverty could be ended only by thoroughly restructuring the wealth of the society. Such a redistribution could entertain major changes in social and political order.

The interpretation of the absolute factors is always based on some appreciation of the welfare and values of society as a whole, there is always a relative component in any definition of poverty, even one in which only 'vital minimum' is considered. Thus the distinction between absolute and relative poverty can be misleading if this fact is ignored and that the two approaches to poverty are not independent of each other. In fact, poverty is a manifestation of the social system and the structure on which the given society is based. there is no universal, absolute definition of poverty. there, therefore, cannot be any universal poverty line.

This leads one to the consideration on the dimensions of poverty. The dimension refers to the composition of poverty. There is a distinction between the characteristics on components of poverty-i.e. the elements by which it is defined and the factors involved in the generation of poverty. the dimensions or components of poverty form a vector by which poverty can be defined and measured. Many of these dimensions are interrelated, and, therefore, also contribute to the generation of poverty. There are also several variables which have a role in the explanation of poverty without contributing to its definition. the dimensions or variables considered in the definition of poverty are relevant not only for policy matters but also for understanding the cause of poverty and for evaluating programs to reduce poverty.

⁴² Peter Townsted, op.cit.

There are two popular approaches for discerning the components or dimensions of poverty to define it; one is unidimensional or single variant approach and the other is multi-dimensional or multivariate approach.

(c) *Unidimensional or Single-Variate Approach*

Several scholars have relied almost exclusively on the single variate approach. i.e., the income criteria for delineating and defining. According to Haggstrom "Money is a generalised source of power over people through a right to control over goods and services". As such money is one of many kinds of power. Poverty, therefore, is one of many kinds of powerlessness, of being subject to one's social situations instead to being able to effect it through action, that is through behaviour which flows from decisions and plans.⁴³ Thus, the lack or inadequacy of income is the most common factor included in the definition of poverty. Considerable studies have been carried out to refine the income definition of poverty. These efforts include the value of in-kind transfers into the income-measures. Discussions of the measure of poverty indicate, however, that the definition of poverty cannot be limited to income but that other resources should also be considered. So the control over capital is also included besides the income. Some scholars have included earnings capacity also in order to define poverty. But it is realised that income alone as a criterion is not sufficient dimension of poverty, although it is significant.

Several other scholars have taken calories, protein, life expectancy, years of schooling etc. to analyse poverty but none of them singularly is a sufficient dimension of poverty.

⁴³ N. Takayama (1979), *Poverty Income Inequality and Their Measures*, Econometrica, London.

(d) *Multidimensional or multivariate Approach*

A larger number of scholars, especially the Europeans have depended on the multi-dimensional criteria because of the multivariate nature of ~~the~~ poverty. They argue that poverty must be defined as a vector of satisfaction and deprivations which results from the level of living of the poor. So the individual's 'level' of living is preferred in defining the criteria of poverty.

Efforts to describe systematically the life situation of man including both the 'standard of living' and the 'standard of life' are as old as the social sciences themselves. By passage of time more refined methods have developed and the scope of the study has widened.⁴⁴

According to Drewnowski,

the level of living of a population is the level of satisfaction of its needs attained in a unit of time as a result of the flow of goods and services the population enjoys in the unit time".⁴⁵ But this definition lacks clarity. The level of satisfaction can not be equated with the flow of goods and services consumed by the population. The availability of goods and services does not guarantee satisfaction. Many a times the level of living is equated with the purchasing power of the population.⁴⁶

Another dimension of delineating poverty is the "negative risk" criteria. The poor are defined in terms of their lack of skill level, education, and training due to which they are deprived of the access to economic resources opportunities and rewards of the society. Poverty is defined and delineated on the basis of the behavioural or attitudinal

⁴⁴ H. Tweil (1976), *Theory and Measurement of Consumer Demand*, vol 2, Amsterdam, North Holland.

⁴⁵ J. Drewnowski (1977), *Poverty Its Meaning and Measurement Development and Change*, Duckworth, London.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

criteria. This definition hinges on the concept of "culture of poverty".⁴⁷ It implies that the poor share a distinctive type of values, traits, and belief-complex which set them off from the non-poor group of the society. This type of culture matrix is the product of the continued economic deprivation and socialisation in a milieu of economic inadequacy. It is assumed that the 'culture of poverty' has a tendency to permeate among the children of the poor. Harrington points to "a personality of poverty, a type of human being produced by the grinding, earring life of the slums" certain objections are raised on accepting the definition of poverty by reference to a 'culture complex'. One serious objection to it is that there are different groups of the poverty stricken people who are spread in different geographical locations and live in different opportunity structured. so it is wrong to say that there is a single "culture of poverty". It is proper to refer to "cultures of poverty".

One approach is to distinguish three classes of components of poverty: food consumption (disaggregated by nutrient), non-food consumption (desegregated by type) and a social group of variables (health, security, education, status)⁴⁸. Recent work on basic needs has followed the same tradition and include such variables as participation, self-reliance, mobility, contraception, etc.⁴⁹ British sociologists Townsend and Reniter, have adopted multi-dimensional approach to the conceptualisation of poverty. They analysed the data through demographic characteristics. According to Drewnowski "level of social development of people's well being cannot and should not be measured by GNP" personal income or expenditure per head. A special yardstick of measuring social variables should be devised. He divided the overall living into two groups of components;

⁴⁷ Oscar Lewis, op.cit.

⁴⁸ M. Orshansky (1969), How Poverty is Measured; Monthly Labour Review, Boston.

⁴⁹ Ibid

(a) physical needs (nutrition or food intake, shelter and health); and (b) cultural needs (education, leisure and recreation and security).

Following the same argument, McGranahan has developed a concept of socio-economic profile which explains the relation between social factors and economic growth.⁵⁰ The influence exerted by social factors (levels of living or human resources) upon economic growth is to be mainly dependent upon the following conditions; the social structure, the structure of the distribution of incomes and levels of living, the structure of production and related economic aspects, and the characteristics of the social factors themselves. Johansson has broken down the level of living concept into nine components, namely, (1) Health and the use of medical care; (b) Work and working condition; (3) Education; (4) Economic resources; (5) Political resources; (6) Family background and family relations; (7) Housing and environment; (8) Security to life and property; and (9) Leisure and recreation.

Poverty can be explored with the help of multi-variables that constitute poverty. Many of these components can be quantified but, for several others, qualitative measures are important. Some variables such as income, level of nutrition, level of physical consumption, and to some extent, levels of education, participation and certain other variables can be treated qualitatively.

2.7 Types of Poverty

A moment's reflection on such related concepts of penury, and destitution makes it clear that there are variable degrees of poverty. Despite the fact that the label of 'poor' is given to groups of widely varying conditions, as if there is only one group of poor, but this is

⁵⁰ J.W.McGranhan (1978), Three Issues of Development Strategy, IFPRI, Washington DC.

not the case. In the past, slaves of the Roman Empire, the serfs of the Middle Ages, the Peons of Latin America, the inmates of English poor houses and the Shudras of India were called the poor. In the last two centuries, several new labels have been given to the poor in order to remove the stigma. For example, the poor farmers in the countryside and slum-dwellers in the urban areas are called 'poor'. More recently, new characterising designation of the 'poor' is Hard-to-Reach. And efforts are on to affix new labels to poor. Whatever be the intentions behind the characterising or classificatory designations of the poor, one thing is clear : there are varied degrees of poverty.

(a) *Classical Type*

Classical typologies of the poverty and inequality are those of Plato, Aristotle and Rousseau, for example, Plato, in his Republic, wanted to create a society where each individual assumes the occupation for which he is best fitted. He made the Republic the product solely of the division of labour.⁵¹ He distinguished between inherent inequality of men and social inequality based on providing the men their occupation for which they deserve. In Politics, Aristotle gave the scheme of three classes present in all States, one class is very rich, another very poor and a third is a mean. He also gave a dichotomous scheme, one is the basic division of people into freed and slave; and the other is the division into those who work and those who do not. Rousseau made a distinction between natural and moral inequality.⁵²

⁵¹ Plato, in Mathlus Peter (1972), Adams Burden: Digonesis of Poverty in Post Medieval Europe and the Third World Now, Gildersleve Lecture, Barnerd College, Coloumbia University.

⁵² Ibid.

(b) *Modern Type*

In the modern literature dealing with poverty, one can get various typologies of poverty based on different bases. One basis of classifying poverty is moral one. Moralists divide poverty into two types : the deserving and non-deserving. Although inadequate and meaningless, this typology has survived for a remarkably long time.

Galbraith made distinction between "insular poverty" and "case poverty". "Insular Poverty" points out to the environmental poverty say, for instance, those who live in rural areas or depressed areas. The other category of "case poverty" relates to personal causes of poverty. Galbraith says that "case poverty" is commonly and properly related to (such) characteristics of individuals so uplifted (as) mental deficiency, bad health, inability to adopt to discipline of modern economic life, excessive procreation, alcoholism, insufficient education. It seems that the poverty for Galbraith is on account of individual defects. Critics of Galbraith remarks that his typology of poverty smacks of "Social Darwinism".⁵³

A distinction is made between "economic level" and "low cost poverty level". These two types delineate two empirical categories much greater differ in size and social characteristics.

Harrington's typology of the poverty combines both causes as well as the visibility of the poverty. According to him, there are six types of poor (1) the unemployed marginal farmers and farm workers; (2) Negroes; (3) deviants (beats, alcoholics, urban hillbillies); (4) the aged; (5) the mental health problem; and (6) slum dwellers.⁵⁴

⁵³ Galbraith in J. Davis (1977), *Equity and Efficiency as Component of the General Welfare*, South African Journal of Economics, South Africa.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Humphrey - a spokesman of the liberal ideas, used a practical combination of causes and visibility and came forward with a six-fold typology of the poor : (1) urban poverty; (2) rural poverty; (3) depressed areas and Negroes; (4) welfare recipients; (5) the under-depressed; and (6) the unemployed.⁵⁵

S.M. Miller basing his typology on the combination of economic security and familial stability, classified poverty into four types : (1) the stable poor; (2) the strained; (3) the capers; and (4) the unstable. Miller's typology is sociological one which combines within it a large number of factors.⁵⁶

Kosa classified the poverty into two - chronic and acute. The chronic poverty implies a long established life-long or perhaps multigenerational deprivational process and the acute poverty implies deprivation following a period spent above the poverty level.⁵⁷

Recently, Tumin specified five forms of inequality : (1) role differentiation; (2) ranking in accordance with property, power and prestige; (3) ranking in accordance with intrinsic attributes of a role; and (4) ranking in terms of approximation to social values and norms.⁵⁸

Dahrendorf made a distinction between inequality of natural capabilities and those of social position. Inequality that do not involve any ranking order and those which do.

The typologies of poverty and inequality are legion. It transpires that there is not one class of poor but many varieties of them. Each generation sees poverty differently and judges it according to a particular set of social values, which may be quite unlike those of an earlier era. Thirdly, there can be no uniform definition of poverty. The term

⁵⁵ Gailbrith in J. Davis (1977), op.cit.

⁵⁶ S.M. Miller and M. Rein (1971), "Poverty - Changing Social Simplifications, Oxford University Press, London.

⁵⁷ N. Kosa (1980), *Income Inequality and Poverty*, Oxford University Press, London.

⁵⁸ D. Tumin (1979), *On Measuring Poverty - Review of Income and Wealth*, Oxford University Press, London.

'poor' and 'poverty' seemed dangerously elastic and capable of covering a host of social fallacies. Finally, the structure of poverty and the attendant complications have changed.

2.8 Various ideologies of poverty

There are three prominent traditions of political thought, namely liberalism, conservatism, and socialism which dominated the scene over centuries. From these emerged two differing interpretations of poverty : one is individualistic represented by liberalism, and the other is societal represented by either conservatism or socialism.

(a) *Individualistic Ideologies of Poverty and Inequality*

Individualistic interpretation, a product of liberalism emerged out of the revolt against the authoritarian government starting with the French Revolution. Despite differences, liberals, by and large, focused on the needs of individual and thereby relegated the needs of the state or society to a secondary or even irrelevant position. They asserted that individuals have an inherent right to seek private ends and must be free to have and use private property. This individualistic materialism supported capitalism as the most appropriate form of economic organisation, declared laissez-faire as the best doctrine, and denied that poverty could be legitimate subject for public policy. Poor people were seen as no different from anyone else. The poor's status reflected their (in) ability in the competition with the non-poor.⁵⁹

One group of liberals justified human freedom through the concept of a natural order. John Locke, for instance, argued that God had set a natural order and before the existence of civil society men lived in a sort of pre-social state, called the state of nature,

⁵⁹ Michael Lipton (1977). *Why Poor People Stay Poor - A Study of Urban Bias in World Development*, Smith & Smith, London.

and by the virtue of a contact among themselves, society came into existence. This came to be known as social requirements; but in order to ensure the exercise of his liberty he entered into a contract by which the individuals conferred power, not to the government, but to the community. This contract is not absolute, because the natural rights of life, liberty and property remain in the hands of individuals. In other words, not every right in society comes from the state.

Another group of the liberals demolished the idea that government originated in a social contract. A generation after Locke, Hume argued that the government is the creation of the human need; it is the utility which dictated that men follow government. This came to be known as the doctrine of 'utilitarianism' for its justified government on the ground of being useful to man. To be more to the point, it was based on 'egoistic-individualism' assuming that 'pleasure alone was good'.

The third group of liberals drawing from the utilitarian philosophy justified the laissez-faire economics. Adam Smith, for example, justified human freedom on the basis of the organic relationship between individual and social growth. He believed that a natural harmony existed in the economic order; and expressed this harmony through the image of an 'invisible hand'. Another example is that of Sumner.⁶⁰ Drawing from Darwin's evolutionary theory of survival of the fittest to human society, the Social Darwinists, combined in one, the materialistic individualism reflected in laissez-faire capitalist doctrine and social analogies. Sumner, for instance, maintained that there could be no possibility of social reform of the poor.⁶¹ For him, the poverty is an individual matter : an individual failed in the economic struggle due to his own fault, idleness, bad

⁶⁰ R.S. Summers (1978), "Two Types of Substantive Reasons - The Core of a Theory of Common Law Justification, Cornell Law Review, 63, London.

⁶¹ Ibid.

habits, intemperance, services, and similar other human weaknesses. So only the individual could overcome it. While defending this position, Sumner negated any obligation of the society to help the poor. According to Hofstadter, "Like some latter-day Calvin, he came to preach the predestination of the social order and the salvation of the economically elect through the survival of the fittest".⁶²

By the middle of the nineteenth century individualistic approach to poverty came under sharp attack of both conservatives and socialists. Scholars scoffed at the idea that personal diligence and virtue determined whether a man was poor or rich. In the process of criticism, a different view emerged which argued that it was not because of the individual fault, but because of social system the poor are poor and stay poor. This brings us to the societal interpretation of poverty.

(b) *Social Ideologies of Poverty and Inequality*

Both conservatives and socialists, despite their sharp differences, agreed on at least one thing : the social order was superior to privately determined individual rights. They conceived individuals as part of the organic whole, creations of their society.

The tradition of conservatism emphasised inherent human inequality. For instance, Edmund Burke, one of the most ardent adherents of this tradition, rejected the concept of natural social equality and argued that the natural differences of rank now in existence arose from a natural division of labour. Then he goes on to assert that the natural aristocracy should rule : men of ability and wealth should lead.

There arose two brands of socialism : Pre-anarchist and Marxian. The Pre-Marxian socialist philosophy emphasised the social element in human relationships and

⁶² R.S. Summers (1978), op.cit.

argued that men should promote the general well-being which was compatible with any social order based on a competitive struggle for the means of livelihood.

The Marxian socialist thought maintained that the poverty was not the result of individual failure but of economic and social forces, and these forces were appropriate subject for public policy. The state could act to eradicate poverty and it should. They anticipated a classless society of equal humans as the ultimate expression of the socialist ideal.

In reaction to conservatism and pre-socialism, a new brand of liberalism emerged which came to be known as 'organic liberalism'. One of its proponents, T. H. Griffin, upholds both individual freedom and inequality as well as the inherent right of individual to seek private ends, but he took organic view of society. Green came to see that liberty must not be merely negative (freedom from government interference), it must be positive as well that is freedom for development.⁶³

The two interpretations - individualistic and societal, argued that the poverty was not a proper subject for the public policy. It were those ideologies which perpetuate and maintain poverty and inequality. However, it was socialism, especially the Marxian, which treated poverty as product of social 'relations' and argued that the poverty must be brought within the purview of social reform.

2.9 Theories of poverty

One of the crucial reasons, for the sustenance of poverty and inequality is that the societies patronise, permit, or prefer poverty and inequality and follow differential evaluations, practices and policies. The post-war sociologists, critics and other

⁶³ T.H. Griffin (1978), *International Inequality and National Poverty*, Macmillan, London.

commentators are sharply split in to two camps on this issue: one school of thought maintains that in this era of unprecedented transformations of the society, the concept of poverty and inequality is useless and a classless society is in the offing. The other school of thought takes an opposite stand and holds that the poverty and inequality is continuing since before, during, and since the 'great transformations'. The former school of thought propounding the 'class convergence theory' is based on the ideologies Ossowski and the latter propounds 'class stability' theory implying the continuity of class structure.⁶⁴

(a) *The class convergence theory*

The fundamental argument of the class convergence theory is that ,societies of the world have come to such a phase, where class differences either no longer exists, or are in the process of disappearing in an era of abundance.

The logic of class convergence derives mainly from the two central theories : the traditions of classlessness and the tradition of abundance. The underlying theoretical foundations of these two traditions brought together various elements, including affluent society thesis, end of ideology theory, and the image of the post-industrial society.⁶⁵ Most common major themes among others, which were marshalled to prove the class convergence thesis, are (1) affluence, (2) the standard package, (3) economic transformation, (4) cultural upliftment and homogenisation, (5) embourgeoisement, (6) class consciousness and class struggle, and (7) citizenship. It is very interesting to note that each and every argument of the proponents of non-egalitarian classlessness thesis was refuted by those who took an opposite stand and held that class and class relations

⁶⁴ S.R. Ossowski (1978), *Economic Inequality and Group Welfare*, Oxford University Press, London.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

retain their fundamental stability.⁶⁶ The class coverage theorists argued that it is an era of affluence. There has not only been the impressive rise in the absolute standard of living, but also a radical redistribution of income resulting in the proportion of income shares going to those lying at the lowest rung of the ladder.⁶⁷ Wherever and whatever poverty is there in the affluent society, it is more nearly an after-thought. And, by the early 60s, when it was pointed out that there was widespread poverty, they took shelter of the census data and other bases and managed to define poverty out of existence once again.

The class convergence theorists based their argument on what David Reisman called "Standard Package". One of the implicit assumptions of this phrase was that the rise in the income in the affluent societies permitted a large number of people from all strata of acquire goods and services rendered available. The second assumption was that the ownership of enormous array of consumer's durable has trickled down the social structure. The third assumption was that goods once possessed only by the rich are now widely distributed throughout the class structure and the satiation of need with the material abundance would soon reach a condition of utter wantlessness. Thus, the proponents of the class convergence theory negated a large number of thinkers- Hocks, Malthus, Startre, Marx and others - for whom scarcity, especially material, is a fundamental cause of human conflict.

The class convergence theorists rested their logic on the economic transformation and the attendant consequences. They argued that vast industrial and occupational changes have upgraded the entire work place and narrowed down class- differences. In Collin Clark's' apt discussion, there is occupational shift from primary (agriculture, mining

⁶⁶ S.R. Ossowski (1978), op.cit.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

to secondary (manufacturing) to tertiary (services) occupation.⁶⁸ Drawing from this, the adherents of the class convergence view saw the centrality of theoretical knowledge and explosive growth of a professional managerial class.⁶⁹ According to them, the working class of Marx was becoming both demographically and sociologically obsolete and is destined to be liquidated. There is what Dahrendorf called the "decomposition of capital". The implication is that the property ownership has now been rendered irrelevant to the exercise of social and economic power and replaced by knowledge, technical competence.

The proponents of class convergence theory hold that under the impact of dominant social and technological forces in modern societies, the distinctive class sub-culture had been systematically eroded and a common culture shared by all is in the offing. Commenting on cultural homogenisation and uplift, Wilensky observes,

.... modern societies tend towards cultural standardisation - a widespread sharing of beliefs, values and tastes, cross-cutting groups and categories, the forces that work are well known popular education and mass literacy; high rate of social and residential mobility; the emergence of national market and a national politics, both making use of nation-wide media of mass-entertainment".⁷⁰

The class convergence model leans heavily on the theory of 'embourgeoisement' of working-class both in economic and cultural sense for its arguments. It is argued that the income gap between blue-collar workers themselves, and between the white-collar employees above them, have been narrowing.⁷¹ Due to growing affluence and homogeni-

⁶⁸ C. Clark (1979), 'On Indices for the Measurement of Poverty', Mimeographed, Institute for Field Studies, London.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ C. Clark (1979), op.cit.

sation of culture, the manual workers have become absorbed into the enormous middle class. Mayer states; "... the traditional dividing line between manual workers and white-collar employees no longer holds because large segments of the working class now accept middle class values and beliefs".⁷²

The class convergence theory regarded the existence of class consciousness and class-struggle and its ideal manifestations coming to an end. Lifshultz declared in 1960 that "the fundamental problems of the industrial-revolution has been solved".⁷³ Some scholars went to the extent of predicting the eventual "withering away" of strike itself.⁷⁴

It was argued by class convergence theorists that political as well as economic inequalities have been tremendously reduced and citizenship extended to most of the people. The pluralist rather than concentration of political power was stressed. British sociologists, Marshall, argued at length that class- differences in modern world have been progressively diminished by the steady expansion in the number of persons entitled to the rights of full citizenship and by the enrichment of the citizenship itself.⁷⁵

Miller and Tomaskovic-Devey summed up this tendency,

... The paradox of poverty aimed affluence' and the periodic rediscovery of poverty' indicate that industrial societies do not understand how poverty is produced and maintained - by the basic processes of production and reproduction. Economic change - the increases in the number of transitions - burdens some people while improving the situations of others or even many. The reduction of certain barriers and cleavages may create new forms of stratification. De-stratification do not permanently prevent re-stratification. Quantity is not quality; the unanticipated and hidden may be the important; class is about inequalities and

⁷² Jean Mayer (1975), *Measurement of Famine Relief*, Science Magazine, Oxford University Press, London.

⁷³ L. Lifshultz (1975), *The Crisis has not Passed*, Far Eastern Economic Review, Berlin.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

relationships not level or cardinal scales or even status congruence.⁷⁶

(b) *Functional theory of poverty and inequality*

In 1945, Davis and Moore published an article in which they prescribed the functional theory of social stratification.⁷⁷ Their central argument is that social inequality is "an unconsciously evolved device by which societies ensure that the most important positions are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons".⁷⁸ Stratification system exists because they are necessary for the continued successful operation of society. Davis and Moore further contend that it is possible to specify the factors that determine the relative rank of various attributes to more essential positions to induce individuals to fill them.

(c) *Conflict theory of poverty and inequality*

Conflict theory has its origin in the works of Marx and has been elaborated by later writers, particularly contemporary neo-Marxists. The adherents of this theory argue that economic and political power resources play a central role and inequality is viewed as an outcome of the conflict over distribution. Its main argument is that one must understand the logic and biases of social institutions as well as observable behaviours of social classes and individual actors. There is mutually reinforcing relationship between social institutions and dominant classes; dominant classes act to preserve those institutions which are the basis of their own hegemony. Institutions shape behaviour of both dominant and subordinate classes and the dominant classes often shape institutions.

⁷⁶ L. Lifshultz (1975), op.cit.

⁷⁷ D. Morris (1974), A Matter of People, London.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Marx distinguished one class from another on the basis of the ownership of means of production and the purchase of the labour power of others:

capitalist own the means of production and purchase labour power and the labourers neither own the means of production nor purchase labour power of others but instead, sell their own labour power.⁷⁹

Lenski has argued that inequality in the distribution of privilege in the society is primarily the result of distribution of power.⁸⁰ In Dahrendorf's analysis, classes are distinguished on the basis of their relations to authority in the work place.⁸¹ Elsewhere, Dahrendorf explains the origin of social inequality that inequality always implies the gain of one group on the expense of other; thus every system of social stratification generates protest against its principles and bears the seeds of its own suppression. For him, the existence of inequality in all human society is to be found in norms of behaviour to which sanctions are attached. Society means that it regulates human conduct. This regulation is guaranteed by the incentives or threat of sanctions. The possibility of imposing sanctions is abstract core of all power. Thus he explains poverty in terms of norms, sanction, and power.⁸²

A variant of the conflict theory and the newest perspective explaining poverty and inequality is the World Systems perspective. It is extension and modification of classical differential thought than earlier theories of imperialism. This perspective views poverty

⁷⁹ Karl Marx (1957-78), *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, English Translation by M. Nicolaus (1973), *Grundrisse Foundation of the Critique of Political Economy*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

⁸⁰ L. Lenski (1971), *The Transfer of Power*, H.M.S.O., London.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² M. Dahrendorf (1977), *Problems of Transfers from Egalitarian Development*, Smith, Manchester.

and rich is not as two different stages in the history but an integral part of the same 'world economy'. It is argued that the riches of the rich could not have occurred without the conditioning of the poor from which an economic surplus is extracted.⁵⁹ Wherever the economic well-being of the poor is visible, it is non-autonomous "induced" development, limited by the interest of the rich.⁸³

In the world economy approach, the unity in the world system is stressed. Wallerstein defines the system as a single division of labour not overarching the state. In the world economies, particularly in capitalist world economy is politically organised as a system of competing and unequally powerful states. The dominant position in the world economy is seen as beneficial to the core as whole. Currently the dependent industrialisation is seen as cause of relative stagnation in the long run in most of the third world countries.⁸⁴

Thus the real problem is not that of development and underdevelopment, but of development of underdevelopment, i.e., of exploiter and exploited. Frank analysed this problem with the help of a chain of exploitative relations and extractions and transmission of surplus through a series of metropolis-satellite links.⁸⁵ The metropolis satellite link operates both at global and culturally specific societal levels. At the world scale, the relationships between the developed west and underdeveloped east is a relationship between the metropolis and the satellite. The same metropolis and satellite relationship can be seen at the level of specific societies as well as in the relationships between relatively advanced capitalist city and the oppressed and backward hinterland.

⁸³ M. Dahrendorf (1977), *op.cit.*

⁸⁴ D. Wallerstein (1974), *Poverty, Inequality and Class Structure*, Cambridge University Press, London.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

A few studies have been carried out in the west and east which analyses the slums in urban centres. The prominent social scientists who gave a thought over this problem in the west are Harvey, W. Z. Orbaygh, David R. Hunter, William Foote, Whyte and others. Studies of these writers however focuses on the existing slum conditions in the developed world particularly as description of the physical conditions of the slums and their state of social organisation. William Foote depicts in his case study "The Slums of Chicago City" the specific slum conditions in the ghettos mainly occupied by the Negro population. He writes that the:

slum is a distinctive area of disintegration and disorganisation. It is an area of dilapidated dwellings, many of which, the owners, waiting to sell the land, for commercial purposes, allow to deteriorate. The slum is an area of freedom and individualism. Over to stretches of the slums men, neither know nor thrust their neighbours. Aside from a few marooned families, a large part of the nation's population is transient, prostitutes, criminals, outlaws, and robbers.

Harvey also observes that the social institutions like the church, the family, the occupational groups, government have ceased to bear any direct relationship to local life. Life is highly disorganised, lived without law and without the mores of the large society. similar description of slum life is found in the writings of David R. Hunter in his book on the slums: challenge and Responses. These studies have been criticised by many social scientists. Some viewed that the slum has been observed from the standpoint of middle class norms and standards. The studies try to find out what is not in the slums and fail to offer an objective analysis of the social structure of the slums in the West.

2.10 Methodologies of identifying the poor

The first concern is to develop a criteria so as to identify, as who are the poverty sicken masses? the most common route to identification is through specifying a set of 'basic' or minimum needs, and regarding the inability to fulfil these needs as the test of poverty. The specification, of certain consumption standards fall short of norms, or whose income call below that line. This can be either through specified commodities, or in terms 'characteristics' wheat rice, potato, etc. are commodities. while calcium, proteins, vitamins etc. are characteristics of these commodities.

In identifying the 'basic needs' two alternatives methods become applicable, one is simply to check the set of people whose actual consumption baskets happens to have some basic needs unsatisfied. This can be called the 'direct method', and it does not involve the use of any income notion in particular. In contrast to this in what may be called as income method, the first step is to calculate the minimum income at which all specified minimum needs are satisfied. the next step is to identify those whose actual income fall below the poverty line.

In an obvious sense the direct method is superior to the income method, since the former is not based on particular assumptions of consumption behaviour which may or may not be accurate, at the same time the income method can also be seen as a way of taking note of individual idiosyncrasies carries without upsetting the notion of poverty based on deprivation. the income of a person can be seen not merely to be a rough aid to predicting a persons actual consumption, but also as capturing a persons ability to meet his minimum needs.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ A.K. Sen (1973), op.cit.

The 'direct method' and the 'income method' are not, in fact, two alternative way of measuring the same thing, but represent two alternative conceptions of poverty. the direct method identifies those whose actual consumption of minimum needs while the income method is after spotting those who do not have the ability to meet these needs within the behavioural constrains in that community.

Both the concepts are of some interests on their own in diagnosing poverty in a community, and while later is more dependent on the existence of some typical behaviour pattern in the community, and is more defined in going beyond the observed choices in to notions of ability. A poor person in this approach is one whose income is not adequate to meet the specified minimum needs in conformity with the conventional behaviour pattern.⁸⁷

The income method has the advantage of providing a metric of numerical distances from 'poverty line' in terms of income short falls. This the direct method does not provide since it has to be content with pointing out the shortfall of each type of need. On the other hand income method is more restrictive in terms of preconditions necessary for the 'identification exercise.

- (1) If the pattern of consumption behaviour has no uniformity, there will be no specific level of income at which the 'typical' consumer meets his or her minimum needs. Second if prices facing different groups of people differ, for example between social classes and income groups or localities, then poverty line will be group specific, even when uniform norms and uniform consumption habits are considered.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ A.K. Sen (1981), *Poverty and Famines - An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that the family rather than individual is the natural unit as far as consumption behaviour is concerned. In calculating the income necessary meeting the minimum needs of families of different sizes, some method of correspondence of family income with individual is needed. While the simplest method is to divide the family income by the number of family members, it overlooks the economies of large scale that operate for many items for consumption and that the children's need may be quite different from the adults. To cope with these issues the common practice for both poverty estimation and social security operation is, to convert each family in to certain number of 'equivalent adults' by the use of some 'equivalent scale' or alternatively to convert the families in to 'equivalent households'.⁸⁹

There tends to be lot of arbitrariness in any such conversion. Much depends on the exact consumption pattern of the people involved which varies from family to family and with age composition. Both the minimum needs of children as well as variations of consumption behaviour is a complex field of empirical investigations as the question of maldistribution within the family is also an important issue.

There are also different bases for deriving appropriate equivalence of needs. One approach is to take the nutritional requirements for each age group separately and to take the ratio of their costs given established pattern of consumer behaviour. The acceptability of this approach depends not merely on the validity of the nutritional standards used, but also on the assumption that family behaviour displays the same concern for fulfilling the respective nutritional requirements of members of different age groups in the family.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ A.K. Sen (1973), op.cit.

⁹⁰ A.K. Sen (1973), op.cit.

- (2) Second approach is to examine how the people involve in the families regard the equivalence question themselves, i.e., how much extra income they think is needed to make a larger family have the same standard of well being as the smaller one. Empirical studies of these views (Goedhart, Halberstadt, Kapteyen and Van Praag, 1977) have shown considerable regularities and consistencies.⁹¹
- (3) Third way is to examine the actual consumption behaviour of families of different sizes and to treat some aspects of this behaviour as an indicator welfare.⁷⁰ The fraction spent on food has been treated as an indicator of poverty, two families of different sizes are regarded as having 'equivalent income' when they spend the same proportion of their income on food only.

The commonest measure of overall poverty is the head-count measure H , given by the proportion of the total population that happens to be identified as poor, i.e., falling below specified poverty line income. If q is the number of people who are identified as being poor, and n is the total number of people in the community then the head count measure is $H = q/n$.

This index has been widely used explicitly or by implication ever since quantitative study and measurement of poverty began.⁹² It is still the main index of poverty statistics on which poverty programs are based. It has been extensively utilised both for inter temporal comparison as well as for international contrasts.⁹³

⁹¹ G. Pyatt (1977), *Planning for a Better Future*, JLO, Geneva.

⁹² N. Kakwani (1979), *Issues in Measurement of Poverty*, Discussion Paper No. 330, Institute of Economic Research, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.

⁹³ Ibid.

Another measure that had a fair amount of currency is the poverty gap method in which the aggregate shortfall of income is taken as poverty line for identifying specified poor.⁹⁴ In the aggregate assessment of poverty these income gaps are taken in to account to calculate the shortfall of income for bare minimum existence. This however does not give the real picture as the shortfall in any person's income is dependent upon other factors in the community.

A quick perusal of the available methodologies on the identification and assessment of poverty reveals that while various methods have been analysed in various dimensions, much is needed on the analysis of poverty on a space specific basis, particularly on the emerging trends of inequality and economic deprivation in smaller towns in tribal regions, for understanding spatial manifestation of poverty in such locations.

This understanding of poverty, its causes and manifestations acquire different meanings and connotations in the above context. Measurement of poverty in these spatial manifestations would depend upon the relative comparison only, and even the level of absolute poverty will be determined by the short fall in contrast with the cases in which the absolute conditions are less than that of them. Qualification of poverty would, thus seem to need the marrying of considerations of absolute and relative deprivation, even after a set of minimum needs and a poverty line have been fixed.

⁹⁴ N. Kakwani (1979), *op.cit.*

2.11 Empirical studies

William Foote, Whyte in his book "Street Corner Society"⁹⁵ offers an objective study of slum life. His study is mainly concentrated on aspects namely, (a) Group Process; (b) the relations of individual to group; (c) and the relations of groups to large organisations. He is of the opinion that many sociologists look at slum districts through the glasses of middle class morality, and it is not, in fact studying the slum district at all but only nothing how it differs from a middle class community. He says that street corner slum had its own social organisation. It also had its own norms of behaviour. Throughout his study he places great emphasis on studying the relations of an individual with a group and the structure of the informal groups or gangs. He believes that these group studies tell us something about the relations of the groups structure, with leadership, performance and mental health.

But the study of the "Street Corner society" of William Whyte is related only to the study of informal groups and gangs which will not be of much useful to unfold the multidimensional of social structure of the slum and its relation with the rest of the community.

Some studies on slums, in India, were carried out in relation to Indian census enumeration of 1961. the prominent studies on Indian slums are (i) Slums of Madras City by P.K. Nambiar; (2) The Analysis of slum Areas of Ahmedabad by R.K. Trivedi. Some studies on slums were carried out on the basis of socio-economic surveys. They are the studies conducted in Bombay under the auspicious of the Bombay Municipal corporation by S.N. Sen and D.R. Gadgil, respectively, in Calcutta and Poona. These studies as commented by Paul D. Wiebe, tell us much about the physical, demographic, health and

⁹⁵ Whyte & William Foote (1966), Street Corner Society; The Social Structure of an Italian Slum, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

crowding conditions and distributions of resident people, according to variables such as place of origin, length of residence and religious preferences.

A more objective and complete study of social structure of slum has been carried out by A.R. Desai and S.D. Pillai⁹⁶ on a Bombay slum namely 'Golibar' by Paul D. Wiebe⁹⁷ on the social life in Indian slums at Madras and by K.N. Venkatrayappa on a slum at Mysore.⁹⁸

These studies describe the density, state of health, infant mortality, state of education, economic conditions, political life of the slum dwellers and the factors responsible for the formation of slums in the City. The studies conducted by A.R. Desai and S.D. Pillai and Paul D. Wiebe may be considered as more objective and broad-based. Paul D. Wiebe believes that the slums are not the end product of forces in society that are divisive and destructive. He says that it is not possible to delineate fully any of the local pattern that occur without reference to similar or related patterns in the Madras, Tamil Nadu and Indian environment. In India, where both old and new cultural forms emphasise continuity across strata classes, the poor consider themselves only as poor, not also as people outside the society and its shared rules of inter- personal decency.

2.12 Empirical studies in Geography

The Encyclopaedia Americana defines slum as "Segregated area of the city inhabited by the unemployed or low income earners or the second class citizens". It further describes slums as a typically overcrowded areas with poor housing and high unemployment. According Marshall Clinard "Slums are those portions of the cities in which housing is

⁹⁶ A.R. Desai and S.D. Pillai (1970), *Slums and Urbanisation*, Bombay, University of Bombay.

⁹⁷ Paul, D. Wiebe (1975), *Social Life in an Indian Slum*, Delhi, Vikas Publishing House.

⁹⁸ Venkatarayappa, K. (1972), *Slums*, Delhi, Sterling Publishers.

crowded, neglected, deteriorated and often obsolete,⁹⁹ and finally a definition of the slum is offered in the report of urban land policies of the United Nations: "A slum is a building or group of buildings or area characterised by overcrowding, deterioration, unsanitary conditions or absence of facilities or amenities which because of these conditions or any one of them endanger the health safety or morals of its inhabitants or the community."¹⁰⁰

Among the Indian the notable works on slums go to the credit of the sociologists as well as the geographers. The works which are highly illuminating are on "slums of old Delhi".¹⁰¹ "Slums and urbanisation" A profile of Indian slums" by A.R. Desai and S.D. Pillai.¹⁰²

Of course very few Geographers have attempted the study on slums in India. Though a number of papers have been published on related issues of slums. One of the important paper is by Ujagar Sing, Geographical Analysis of slum area in Indian cities with special reference to Kanpur.¹⁰³ M. Prasad and A Oragon,¹⁰⁴ J.P. Singh, Existing pattern of Residential Landuse in Shillong.¹⁰⁵ Adit Sen Gupta, housing condition of the people in the Calcutta Metropolitan District¹⁰⁶ and V.K. Kumar & S.L. Kayastha, in the case study of slums of Kanpur, are note worthy.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁹ Clinard and B. Marshal (1996), The nature of the slum in slums and community development, London.

¹⁰⁰ Nell, Andorses (1960), in The Urban community, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, p.191

¹⁰¹ Bharat Sevak Samaj (1958), Slums of old Delhi, Atmarram and Sons.

¹⁰² A.R. Desai and S.D. Pillai (1970), "Slums and urbanisation", Bombay, Popular Prakashan. A profile of Indian slums, Bombay, popular Prakashan.

¹⁰³ Ujagar, Singh (1996), "Geographical analysis of slum areas in Indian cities with special reference to Kanpur", The National Geographical Journal of India, Vol. XIII, 3 Sept.

¹⁰⁴ The spatial pattern of Residential Areas in Ranchi city" Geography outlook XII (1976-77), P.110.

¹⁰⁵ J.P. Singh (1977), "Residential Use of Land in Shillong" Geographical review of India, XXXIX, pp.232-40

¹⁰⁶ Adit Sen Gupta (1980), "Housing condition of the people in the Calcutta Metropolitan district" NCH Vol. 26 parts 3&4, pp. 196-208.

¹⁰⁷ S.L. Kayastha and V.K. Kumar (1979), Slums - A case study of Kanpur city, Uttar Bharat Bhoogal Patrika, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 129-137.

2.13 Significance of study of slums for geographers

- (1) The genesis of slums in relation to migration of population from rural areas to urban areas reflect the transfer of population from one place to other.
- (2) Slums have a particular morphology in the overall context of the city morphology in terms of location and growth.
- (3) Slums provide work force in the non-formal sectors and activities in a city in terms of manual labour, transportation, petty trade and into some skilled labour into organised industries. the relation of slums in terms of its functional linkages in the production, distribution i.e. (trade and transportation) of the city is vital interest to geographers because the functional role of the slums and its location has distinct geographical spatial implications.
- (4) Slums, particular form of human settlement.
- (5) Associated with poor standard of living unhealthy environment and this is a relation of a particular types of human settlement with its concomitant adjustment with environment.

Contribution of Geographers

A welfare approach, examines the spatial distribution of society's resources, viewed largely as an outcome of social class and political power. He concludes that 'spatial inequality is an inevitable concomitant of capitalist society'. He further emphasise to 'normative' issues so as to plan things in such a way that any set of alternative spatial

configuration may be evaluated through cities as 'equality, constrained inequality and distributive justice are examined'.¹⁰⁸

Castell in his book (*The Urban Question*), presents an account of the sources of urban conflicts and their effects on urban spatial form. In his case study of San Francisco's Mission district, Castell gives an account of the squatter communities marginal settlements in Latin America.¹⁰⁹ He emphasises that people who are employed in small companies or have occupation in these ranges usually occupy these areas. According to Castell 'Urban marginality' which causes people to live in squatter settlements (themselves diverse in Forms) is 'the inability of the market economy, or the state policies to provide adequate. Urban services to an increasing proportion of city dwellers, including the majority of the regularly employed salaried as well as practically all people making their earnings in so called informal sector of the economy. He further emphasises that the residents of squatter settlement are involved by their relatively strong local community organisation in process of social change' he claims that local organisations parties or to powerful economic elites. Squatters remains dependent on state which provides their territory 'extra-legally'. Only their relative on the states permissiveness entitles the squatter to the spatial basis of their daily existence. T.G. Mcgee., G. Bells give a critique of the application of theories developed in the west in to the third world countries. They argue that the urbanisation process developed in the underdeveloped world is same as in that which occurred in the west.¹¹⁰ He argues that the differentiation is mainly because of high rural urban migration strongly prevalent in the third world countries unlike those of

¹⁰⁸ David M. Smith (1977), *Human Geography*, St. Martin Press, New York.

¹⁰⁹ Manuel Castells (1984), *The city and the Grass roots*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles.

¹¹⁰ T.G. Mcgee, G. Bells (1979), *The Urbanisation Process In The Third World*, Macmillan, London.

the west. Urbanisation in the developing countries is at a faster rate than the expansion of manufacturing employment resulting in unemployment, underemployment and poverty. The persistence of labour intensive traditional economic system characterised by low productivity may be attributed as the cause for persistence of economic backwardness.

Interpreting poverty in the urban situation, Henri Lefebvre has been the most influential in the post-1970s decades. Lefebvre, a Marxist scholar, philosopher and at one time, an important member of the French communist movement has written extensively on the twentieth century urbanisation, especially in Europe.¹¹¹ Influence of Lefebvre on Marxist geographers like Harvey, Castell and Soja has been profound.¹¹²

Lefebvre differentiates the contextual space (the physical space) from social space, i.e., the space that is *produced through anthropogenic actions* -- the city being an important, visible form of such social space. The latter is a product of the nature and character of relationships within the society and between the society and nature. Thus, a particular relationship is likely to *produce and reproduce* the social space. He further differentiates three types of social spaces, (a) *spatial practice*, "The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space...", (b) *Representations of space*, "conceptualised space, the space of scientists, urbanists, architects and planners..." and (c) *Representational space*, "... space as lived through its associated images and symbols...".¹¹³

Application of Lefebvian framework to the problem at hand has similarities, i.e., *representational space* translating into the form or morphology of slums; *representation of*

¹¹¹ The French originals like, *Le Droit a la ville* (1968, Paris), *Du rural a l'urbain* (1970, Paris), *La Revolution urbaine* (1970, Paris), *La Pense marxiste et la ville* (1972, Paris), *Espace et politique* (1973, Paris), culminating in *La production de l'espace* (1974, Paris). The latter was for the first time translated into English in 1992.

¹¹² For example, Harvey's *Social Justice and the City* (1973), Castell's *The Urban Question* (1977) and E.W. Soja's *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) has led to interest among geographers to study the urban social space and poverty and to reinterpret the slum in a new theoretical context.

¹¹³ Henri Lefebvre (1992), op.cit. pp.38-39.

space in terms of the poverty contents of the slums, the poor that are subject to public policies and programmes of poverty alleviation and the *spatial practice* that translates roughly to the reproductive ability of the slum, time and again despite slum clearance or rehabilitation programmes due to the structural roots of the slums that allows continuous and unfettered reproduction of the space.

2.14 Urban poverty in India

Studies on poverty in India have been largely conducted by economists with the primary objective of assessing its magnitude. The number of people who exist below a defined minimum consumption or uniform line is determined.

Is poverty a consequences of physical and ecological conditions of living in a particular setting or is it a socio-economic and political phenomenon? The main thrust of the physiological approach in explaining poverty is on demonstrating the interaction between population growth and pressure on resources and the environment. Uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources and population growth disturb the environmental equilibrium and create conditions in which human wants can not be satisfied, thus leading to the emergence of poverty in the long run. To the extent that the cultivable land per person declines and its productivity decreases owing to population growth, conditions of poverty are created in rural areas. This includes migration of the poor to urban areas where, if labour supply exceeds demand, poverty spreads further. At the local level, each human settlement can ecologically sustain only a certain level of population beyond which, sustaining it creates major distortions in the society. The developed countries did not witness the pressure of population growth on their resources or their environment during their development process to the extent that the developing nations are facing today. With no possibility of migration and with the improvement in the survival

conditions owing to better health and nutrition, advancement in science and technology, the pressure of population growth on the resources of the countries, rendered poor through years of colonial exploitation, has enormously mounted, creating conditions of poverty.

Various explanations have been given for the causes of poverty. Social scientists, however, do not entirely agree with the explanation of poverty offered by non-Malthusians. They define poverty in social, economic and political terms and with respect to individual behaviour. Sociologists on the other hand, find the basic use of poverty in the social structures which breed social and economic inequality. Poverty is essentially a product of traditions and practices which legitimise them and unless they undergo transformation, poverty is less likely to be eradicated.

2.15 Magnitude of poverty

On the basis of the official definition of poverty line the number of poor in the rural areas and urban areas of India have been estimated from time to time. The basic data for this purpose have been taken from various rounds of the National Sample Survey on the private consumer expenditure.¹¹⁴

2.16 Spatial dimensions of urban poverty

The incidence of urban poverty varies from state to state and also among different sizes and classes of citizens. Even within a city, the percentage of people living below the

¹¹⁴ Dandekar and Rath found on the basis of data from NSS (National Sample Survey) in 1960-61 that a private consumer expenditure of Rs. 261.2 in the case of the rural population and Rs. 359.2 for the urban population that, "nearly two-thirds (more than 63.26 percent) of the rural population lived below this average". This low level of consumption, they contended, was "in the nature of the distribution and it only means that the country is poor. But sizeable sections of the population are much poorer". They estimated that in 1960-61, about 40 percent of the rural population and 50 percent of urban population were below the level of the minimum necessary caloric intake of 2,250.

poverty line and in slums varies depending upon whether the slums or squatter settlements is of recent origin or are very old, stretching over more than 25-30 years or whether the slums are on public lands or private lands or whether any improvement works has been carried out in the slum areas by public agencies. Squatter settlements, that is Jhuggi-Jhopdi clusters of recent origin have a higher incidence of households living below the poverty line than those which might have existed over 25-30 years and have declared as slums by the government under the slum legislation act. Escalation in land values and construction costs in metropolitan cities, such as Bombay, Delhi and Bangalore has priced out lower income groups who often seek shelter either in slums or in settlements (housing complexes) developed for the economically weaker sections of the population.

2.17 Index of poverty

It is known that about two-thirds or more of total private consumption expenditure in South Asia is devoted to food in comparison with a proportion of well below two-fifths in the developed economies. In view of this, a very pertinent indicator of levels of living is provided by food consumption levels. Consumption, in turn, is measured most appropriately by the average daily calorie intake per person. According to the Indian data, of the total consumer expenditure (1963-64), expenditure on food grains (cereals and pulses) constitutes 45 percent in the rural areas and 26 percent in the urban area; on all food items the percentages are 70 and 60, respectively. The proportion spent on food items and food grains varies according to the expenditure group. For instance, expenditure on food grains in the lowest expenditure group in rural areas constitutes 65 per cent (on all food items it is 81 percent) of total expenditure, as against 61 per cent of the total expenditure for the corresponding group in urban area. The Indian data, thus, reveals that expenditure on food grains constitutes an important part of the total consumer

expenditure, particularly for the low expenditure groups. In view of this, one prefers to measure absolute poverty in terms of food grain intake alone.

Various estimates of the minimum calorie requirements for a representative "man and women" have been made by different authorities. There exists a consensus that a "reference" man in India requires about 2,250 calories per capita per day. These are to be derived from the entire diet comprising cereals, pulses, sugar, fruits, meat, eggs, etc. In terms of food grains (cereals and pulses), it has been estimated that in the urban area, the calories required would be 1500 (i.e., 66 per cent of the total requirements), for the rural area the same is estimated at 1800 (i.e., 80 per cent of total calories needed in quantitative terms, in order to obtain these calories, food grains consumption of 518 gm. per capita per day for the rural area and 432 gm per day for the urban area are estimated.

The National Sample Survey (NSS Report on Consumer Expenditure, 16th Round, number 138, tables with notes on consumer expenditure) gives the data in terms of quantity of food grains consumed per capita for various expenditure groups for a period of 30 days. This data relates to the year 1960-61 (July 1960 to August 1961). Consumer expenditure as given in the Report comprises all expenditure incurred by the household exclusively on domestic account, including consumption out of home grown produce or transfer receipts like gifts, loans, etc.

In 1971 the estimates show that in the rural area for individual in each expenditure bracket - from rupee 0 to Rs. 15-18 per month- there existed deficiencies in foodgrains consumption in relation to minimum calories requirements; the deficiencies varied from 49 per cent at the lowest expenditure level (Rs. 0-8) to 11 per cent for the expenditure groups Rs. 15-18 per month. Of the total rural population of 355 millions, 184 millions (about 52 % of the total) were considered absolutely poor according to this measure. In regard to the urban area, the deficiencies existed only for individuals in the two

expenditure groups (i.e. Rs. 0-8 and Rs. 8-11 per month). However, even for those in these expenditure groups, the extent of deficiencies was lower than that for the corresponding groups in the rural area. Of the total urban population, only 6 millions (i.e., about 8 % of the total) were considered absolutely poor. The individuals in both rural and urban areas, above the poverty line were found to consume food grain in excess of the "norm".

Thus, poverty both urban and rural poses a unique situation in the Indian context as becomes evident from the UNESCO Seminar Report which mentions that fact very clearly. The report says: "Thus the recent rapid note of urbanisation visible in Asian countries does not speak of a corresponding growth of industry but a shift of people from low productive agricultural employment to yet another sector marked by low productivity employment, namely handicrafts, production, retail trading, domestic services in urban areas".

The cities in India do not grow corresponding to other aspects of cities, namely, social and economic and the infrastructure growth, except in a few metropolitan cities. This unorganised growth of cities with no provision to accommodate the ever growing volume of immigrants and natural growth of population in the city cause creation of slums.

2.18 Magnitude and dimensions of urban poverty:

While various approaches to the study of poverty provide explanations for the conditions and causes of poverty and are helpful in understanding it as a phenomenon. It is the economic definition which gives a clear basis for identification of the poor, the level of poverty and its magnitude. With a low level of income and gross domestic product per capita India is included among the thirty poorest countries in the community of 160

nations, and the existence of mass poverty is a reality. However, India is one of the very few countries of the world which has a fairly good economic and demographic data base. One of the major contributions of Indian economists has been the assessment of the magnitude of poverty and its economic parameters.

In the economic analysis of poverty, the poor are identified as those who do not have defined level of income necessary for fulfilling the minimum physical requirements. This defined level has been called the poverty line and those who fall below it are the poor. The basis of drawing this poverty line is determined by the availability of the money required to spend on minimum nutritional requirements or on the conventionally determined level of consumption which constitute the minimum level of living.

Since food is the most basic needs for survival, it is obvious that poverty can be defined in terms of the food requirement per capita to fulfil this basic need. What is the minimum level of expenditure required for adequate nutrition intake for normal health and productive work has been taken as the survival standard and it is calculated in terms of calories of equivalent food intake.

Various estimates of the minimum calorie requirements for a representative 'man and women' have been made by different authorities. There exists a consensus that a 'reference' man in India requires about 2,250 calories per capita per day. These are to be deprived from the entire diet comprising cereals, pulses, sugar, fruits, meat, eggs, etc. In terms of food grains (cereals and pulses), it has been estimated that in the urban areas, the calories required would be 1500 (i.e., 66% of the total requirements), for the rural area the same is estimated at 1800 (i.e., 80% of total calories needed) in quantitative terms, in order to obtain these calories, food grains consumption of 518 gm. per capita per day before the rural area and 432 gm per day for the urban area are estimated.

Chapter III

Shillong: A General Background

3.1 Historical Outline

In this chapter, an attempt is made to get an insight in to the causes and historical conditions that led to the growth of Shillong as a pre-eminent urban centre of North- East region. This inevitably leads to the domain of history, particularly into the colonial period .The process of urban development in Meghalaya can be traced from the colonial to the post-independence era. The purpose of this 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 substantial information from various census reports and gazetteers, as well as from autobiographies and other published works.

3.2 Precolonial Era

Tribal population in India is largely concentrated in those areas that are hilly, forested and dry; generally negative from the point of view of settled agriculture. Northeast provides such a *cul-de-sac* that is believed to have enjoyed varying degrees of isolation, both physical and social, giving rise to its own cultural contours. Evidences indicate existence of a traditional kingship/ tribal chieftainship in these parts around twelfth century. Jaintia tribes ruled over the Jaintia Hills and the adjacent plains in the thirteenth century and the

Khasi chiefs over the Meghalaya region around sixteenth century A.D., and were the prominent tribal kingdoms in the region.¹

Often these tribal groups remained immune to changes around them and had little or no exchange between one group and the other, except in the periodic markets.² The isolation, both geographical and social, have been a major cause for economic arrest and slower pace of development of the region leading to stagnation in the economy. This isolation was removed only during the colonial occupation, when the Britishers made deep inroads in to these areas in search of mineral wealth, timber and other resources as well as in search for land for the (tea) plantation economy.

3.3 Colonial Penetration

The expansion of British Empire and the demands of industrialisation in Britain gradually engulfed these territories that were rich in natural resources. By the eighteenth 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.³

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 area 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. Khan (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 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 Protection Frontier*, Oxford, New Delhi and T. Wallerstein (1979), *The Capitalist World Economy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 281.

The colonial interest in the North-East, particularly Assam and Meghalaya arose probably with the aim of exploiting the rich forest resources.⁴

With the treaty of Yandaboo⁵ in 1826, British acquired land and established a base in present town of Cherrapunjee. But due to unsuitable weather conditions, particularly excessive rainfall and above all the outbreak of Jaintia rebellion in the 1860s resisting the British entry in to their territory hastened the process of selection of a new and more strategically located centre. Shillong was eventually chosen that satisfied both the conditions, i.e., it was less rainy and easily approachable from Jaintia hills.⁶ Cherrapunjee was too far as a base for Jaintia campaign. Moreover, there was scarcely any decent market from where its residents (mostly, British) could procure common articles of consumption. The central location of Shillong helped easy accessibility for the British compared to the existing base at Cherrapunjee. The district headquarters was shifted to Shillong in 1866. The area of the station then covered the base, Shillong peak, Sadew village, Nongkseh village, Mawkhar, Laban and Laitumkhrah villages.⁷

Shillong's importance grew as it started serving as the nodal point of transport, mainly towards Bengal to the south. A reasonably well laid-out road connected

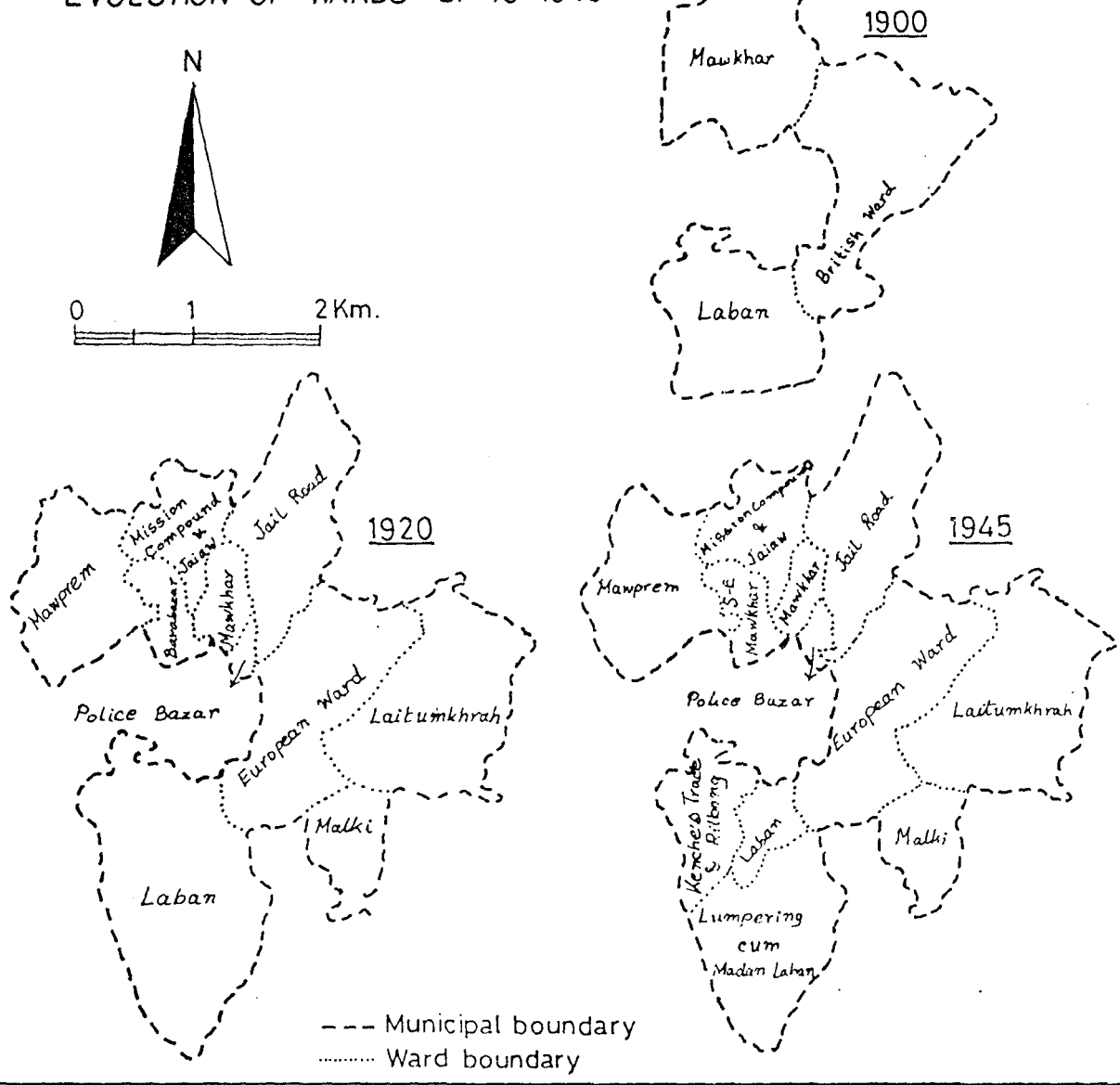
⁴ The preference of these two states were mainly for comparatively easy accessibility and nearness to Bengal (present Bangladesh) through Sylhet, which served as the main connecting route for trade.

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 infantry was moved up the Meghalaya region, forming a base in Cherrapunjee. D. Syiemlich (1987), *Our City - NEIHA DECENNIAL*, Dept. of History, NEHU.

⁶ Though Shillong is only 65 km north of Cherrapunjee the amount of rainfall is substantially less (129") 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. Money was also paid 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. *Periodical Report- Dr. James Howard Thornton*.

SHILLONG MUNICIPALITY EVOLUTION OF WARDS UP TO 1945



Map 3.1

Cherrapunjee with Shillong. This was a much frequented road for economic ties 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 permission of Syiem.⁸ By 1878, Shillong was formally declared a *station* under the Bengal Municipal Act of 1876. The British, over the years, also acquired large pieces of land adjoining the ceded territories, which were gradually classified into cantonment lands. While the acquired land passed into twilight zones with British Government recognising them as part of Syiem's state, but exercising sovereign rights. The boundaries of Shillong station were notified in 1896. Around 1904, the town was divided into five wards⁹ ((Map 3.1 : Growth of Shillong - Evolution of Wards).

As the district and provincial headquarters of the town expanded to accommodate the increase in population. The census of 1881 recorded the number of non-Khasis in the district at 2,225 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.¹⁰ By 1897, Shillong had started becoming important as an educational centre. The first high school was set up by the Welsh Missionaries in 1891, along with a Church at Mawkhar, working the social breakthrough in the traditional society. By the

⁸ To get Shillong in early days was indeed a trying experience. On arrival at the southern foot-hills below Cherrapunjee one could take chance to walk up the steps or walk along a circular path. 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 horse-drawn *tangas* began plying between the two towns. Stables were placed at intervals along the road to change the ponies. Much to the delight of travellers, the journey could be accomplished in one day for a 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*.

⁹ B.C. Allen, A.E. Gail and H.F. Howard (1979), *Gazetteer of Bengal and North East India*, Mittal Publications (Reprint), Delhi, p.5

¹⁰ Shah Manzoor Alam (1965), *Hyderabad Secunderabad- A Study in Urban Geography*, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad.

turn of the century, Shillong became one of the important centres for education with its boarding schools catering to the region and elsewhere.

The importance of Shillong grew with the partition of Bengal(1905). 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,¹¹ through which, the ports of 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 huge inflow of capital gave a sudden boost 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, available vacant lands in Laitumkhrach, Laban, Malki were occupied. In 1951, Shillong agglomeration had only two townships-- the municipality and the cantonment.¹² By 1961, Nongthymmai and Mawlai townships had developed and formed two additional census towns. Table 3.1 provides the township-wise population growth in Shillong between 1961 and 1991.

¹¹ Shah Manzoor Alam and W. Khan (1972), *Metropolitan Hyderabad and its Region; a Strategy for Development*. Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

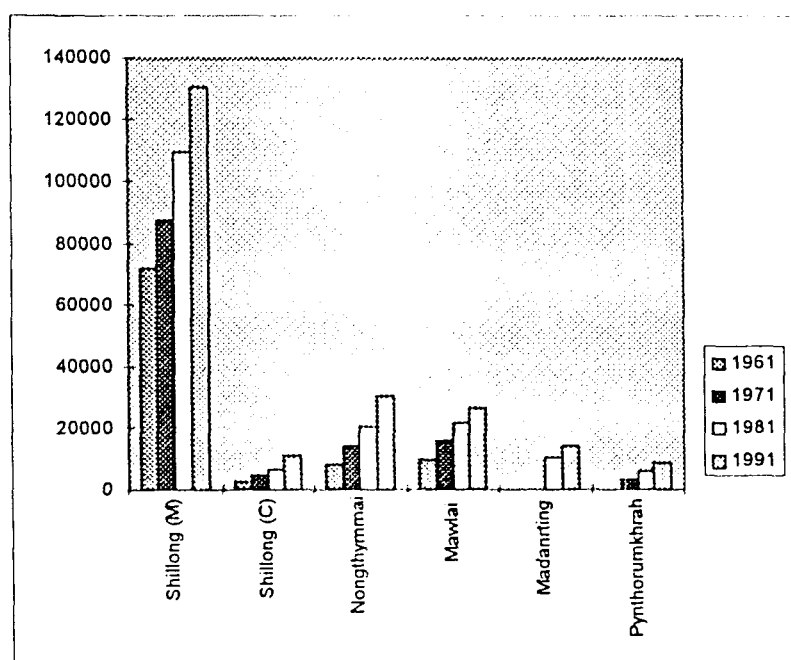
¹² B.C. Allen, A.E. Gail and H.F. Howard (1979), *Gazetteer*, op.cit.

Table 3.1
Population Growth of Shillong(1961-91)

| Urban Units | Total Population | | | | Decadal Growth | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|---------|---------|
| | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 1961-71 | 1971-81 | 1981-91 |
| Shillong Municipality | 72439 | 87659 | 109244 | 130691 | 21.01 | 22.85 | 19.63 |
| Cantonment | 2988 | 4730 | 6620 | 11075 | 58.32 | 40.66 | 67.30 |
| Mawlai | 8528 | 14260 | 20405 | 30442 | 67.21 | 40.20 | 24.39 |
| Nongthymmai | 10084 | 16103 | 21558 | 26816 | 59.69 | 33.91 | 49.19 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | NA | NA | 10711 | 14322 | NA | NA | 44.80 |
| Madanrting | NA | 3103 | 6165 | 8927 | NA | NA | 33.71 |
| Shillong U.A. | 94039 | 122752 | 174703 | 222273 | 19.88 | 42.32 | 27.23 |

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

Fig.3.1: Population of Shillong UA (1961-1991)



It is evident from the Table-3.1 that the growth of population in Shillong UA is higher in the period 1971-81 compared to 1961-71 (42.32% and 19.88%, respectively). During the last decade the momentum of growth has somewhat declined (27.23 per cent), even though two new townships (Pynthorumkhrah and Madanrting) have been added to the existing four towns. The rate of growth of the largest unit, the Shillong Municipality

has been rather slow, i.e., between 19 to 22 per cent. Despite the shifting of capital of Assam in 1972, the growth rate of 1971-81 decade was the highest.¹³ In 1991, Shillong Urban Agglomeration became a conglomerate of six urban units, i.e., Shillong Municipality, Cantonment, Mawlai, Nongthymmai, Pynthorumkhrah and Madanrting, the growth momentum of smaller townships generally being higher than the Municipality and the Cantonment Board.

Shillong was established mainly for administrative purposes. Throughout the history of its evolution, it has ascribed a certain degree of specialisation to its service functions. The population has increased at varying pace over the decades. An analysis of its demographic and economic characteristics would be meaningful in this context.

The overall position of Shillong UA within the total urban population of the state is overwhelming. Whereas the total urban population of the state constituted less than one-fifth (18.07 per cent) of the total population of Meghalaya (according to 1981 census), a disproportionately large share of the urban population of the state resided at Shillong U.A., that alone accounted for about 72 per cent of the total urban population of the State.¹⁴ The share of urban population and its rising trends which indicates a marked rise in the concentration of urban population in the city.

Growth of a city can be explained due to three probable factors: (a) due to the natural increase of the resident population, (b) due to net migration effect, and (c) due to change in the municipal boundary, the latter having no consequence since there has been no redrawing of municipal boundary of Shillong. The natural increase in the resident population of a city will not be very different from the overall process either at the state

¹³ The growth rate of 1981-91 decade has been lower, perhaps due to under-enumeration factor. However, nothing on record is available to support this view.

¹⁴ Hemlata Acharya (1979), "Urbanising Role of one Lakh city", *Sociological Bulletin, The Geographer* Vol. VIII.

level or at the national level. In case of Shillong Municipality the rate of (decadal) growth, at least during 1981-91 was sufficiently lower than the average for the state (19.63%, 32.82 %, respectively). Even if, the overall growth for the state is pegged at about 25 per cent of (natural increase), the balance 8 per cent accounting for net migration effect, the lower overall growth of Shillong Municipality is inexplicable, indicating a net out-migration. This certainly is not the case. Shillong perhaps, grew, overall, by no less than 35 per cent, even by an orthodox estate. In that case the population of the municipality would have been 147,480 in stead of 130,700, an under enumeration of 17,000 population in 1991.

The second cause, i.e., migration into Shillong city is of two types- (a) one is migration from the immediate hinterland of Shillong and (b) the other is due to the migration from distant places of inter-state origin. In the case of Shillong, the probable reason is that the first stream is not as significant due to the traditional quasi-agricultural, tribal milieu of the city.

However, from the pre-independence times, rural to urban migration has been a major process of population redistribution in the country particularly into large metropolitan cities for two reasons: (a) the metro-cities offered better employment and earning opportunities due to expansion of the informal sector and demand for personalised services and construction sectors where the rural emmigre could find some work opportunity; and (b) two, the decline in rural economy at several areas pushed the landless and the marginal farmers towards the big city with a perception of some opportunity. Most of the small and medium towns were insulated from this process. However, Shillong did attract migrants from both neighbouring areas as well as distant migrants that provided some impetus to its growth. The first impetus to intra-regional migration came due to the partition and prosperous southern areas bordering the present

Bangladesh threw out a large number of migrants due to the decimation of the local economy after the partition and many of those migrants moved to Shillong. The second impetus came after Shillong was made the capital of the newly formed state in 1972. Expansion in the government sector provided some scope for employment that attracted migrants from within the state. Coupled with this situation a large number of intra-state migrants have been moving into Shillong due to rural poverty and destitution and the Shillong emits similar impulses of attraction in the state as a metropolis does at a national scale.

Thus from a small village in 1866 to a Class-I city in 1981 the city has grown to cater to the needs of the state as an enclave of modernisation in the midst of the rural-tribal hinterland that continued without any significant change. The modern transport network and expansion of the city infrastructure have influenced the tribal social order but only to a limited extent thereby giving rise to a dualistic economic organisation.

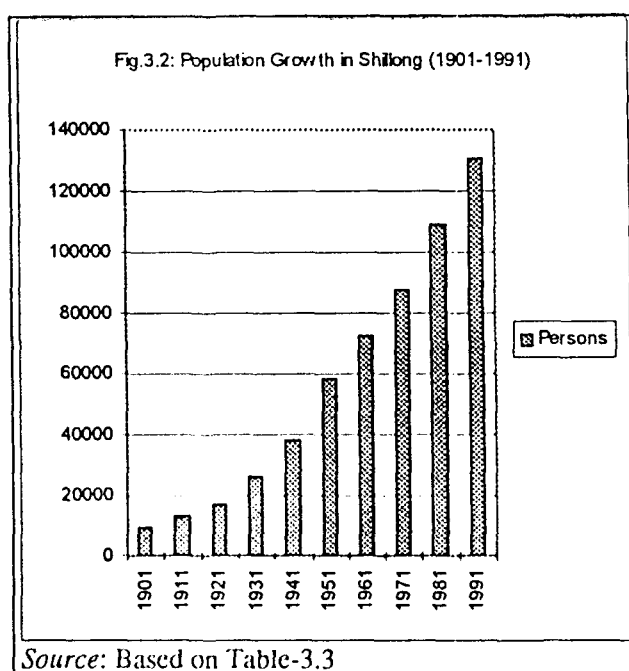
Table 3.2
Population Growth of Shillong Municipality (1901-1991)

| Year | Persons | Decadal Variation (+) | Decadal Variation (p.c.) |
|------|---------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1901 | 9621 | - | - |
| 1911 | 13639 | 4018 | 41.76 |
| 1921 | 17203 | 3564 | 26.13 |
| 1931 | 26536 | 9333 | 54.25 |
| 1941 | 38192 | 11656 | 43.93 |
| 1951 | 58512 | 20320 | 53.20 |
| 1961 | 72438 | 13926 | 23.80 |
| 1971 | 87659 | 15221 | 21.01 |
| 1981 | 109244 | 21585 | 24.62 |
| 1991 | 130691 | 21447 | 19.63 |

Source : Census of India, 1991, General Population Totals.

Table 3.2 shows the distribution and growth of population within Shillong municipality ward-wise. Population of Shillong Municipality has grown from a mere 9621

in 1901 to 130,691 in 1991, roughly 13 times in 90 years. This may look impressive but as events of last two decades indicate it is not as spectacular as witnessed in many similarly placed cities even within the region. One reason for this has been cited as under-reporting during the decadal censuses.¹⁵ The other is that largest part of the growth is accounted for in the adjacent townships and also areas that have become urbanised but are still classified as rural areas and are not included within the municipal jurisdictions.



3.5 Present Trends:

With the attainment of full statehood Shillong became the capital of Meghalaya. This gave a further boost to the growth of the city in particular as various regional institutions and headquarters of Central Government agencies for the region were located in Shillong

¹⁵ A major reason for under-reporting is that the Censuses are carried out between February 1- March 1. This being the winter months a large part of the non-tribal population that are salaried employees in state and central agencies generally are out of station on vacation. They are therefore not enumerated. Such a population is quite sizeable, so far Shillong is concerned.

Hence in last three decades or so the city has undergone a radical transformation from a hill resort to a multifunctional service centre, catering to a host of administrative and other service functions not only for the state but for the entire Northeast region, comparable next to Guwahati only. Out of the total urban population of 333,050 persons of the state (1991 census), 222,273 persons or 66.76 per cent are concentrated in Shillong urban agglomeration itself.

Most of the towns/cities are often associated with intangible values such as status, character and functions, and Shillong city is no exception to this. The functional character of the city can be outlined, however, in a prominent manner only after it attained statehood in 1972 classifying the functions in distinct manner.

3.6 Administration:

In an attempt to understand city functions the most important function that emerges is the administrative function. Being the State capital and District Headquarters the administrative function of the city remained as major one right since the period of the colonial interaction and seems to be continuing so in the near future too .

With the location of a regional market, state market and retail markets, and offices of various financial and business headquarters of the North eastern region Institution, and with rapid increase in trade and commerce, the town has emerged as an important commercial centre operating as an outlet for products of this region to various other states of North East and vice versa.

Shillong has also developed as a commercial centre, stretching its hinterland to the neighbouring states of Assam, Mizoram, Tripura etc., as an important transit point in trade and commerce. Besides, Shillong, being a major urban centre, has been offering services such as higher education and health facilities for the entire state and as a result of

which Shillong has taken the form of an institutional town, serving the entire North Eastern region and beyond as well. The establishment of North Eastern Hill University has added to the importance of Shillong as an educational centre. Presently the Shillong city has 88 primary schools, 49 Junior Secondary Schools and Middle Schools, 56 High secondary Schools, 20 colleges, 3 Vocational Institutions, one University and one specialised medical institute with post graduation level training.

As an important tourist centre and health resort Shillong has been attracting people ever since the very beginning with developed road linkages with Assam. The picturesque location of the city in a valley surrounded by peaks and hills attracts 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 'Valley of Flowers' etc. by the early travellers who were impressed by the scintillating natural beauty of the region. In the post-independence period tourism in Meghalaya though got boosted up. However after the shifting of the capital of Assam to Gauhati in 1972 and the political turmoils in Shillong during the year 1979 and thereafter has led to decline in tourist arrival.

3.7 Urban Segregation

The distribution of housing in space produces its social differentiation and specifies the urban landscape. The distribution of residential locations follows the general laws of the distribution of products and services, and consequently brings about regrouping according to the social capacity and affiliations of the citizens, that is to say, according to their income, their professional affiliations, educational level, ethnic composition, etc. Consequently resulting in social stratification in the urban system with a strong spatial

expression of urban segregation. Thus by urban segregation, one means the tendency to re-organise space into homogeneous zones along social lines.

This means that there is on one hand interaction between economic, political and ideological determinants in the composition of residential space and on the other reinforcement of segregation and a spilling-over of its expected limits or modifications of factors of occupancy according to the articulation of stratificative characteristics of the urbanising process.

The classic study by Duncan and Duncan of Chicago city brings out the distribution in residential space of the different social and occupational categories in a strongly diversified manner and states that “the greater the social distance between the groups, greater the distance in their model of residential location”.¹⁶ This tendency is again confirmed by the fact that groups with a strong index of spatial segregation are in the extreme groups both at the higher and lower levels in the scale of occupational stratification. Thus the lower is one's socio-economic level the more concentrated one is on the same space occupying the central zone of the urban area.

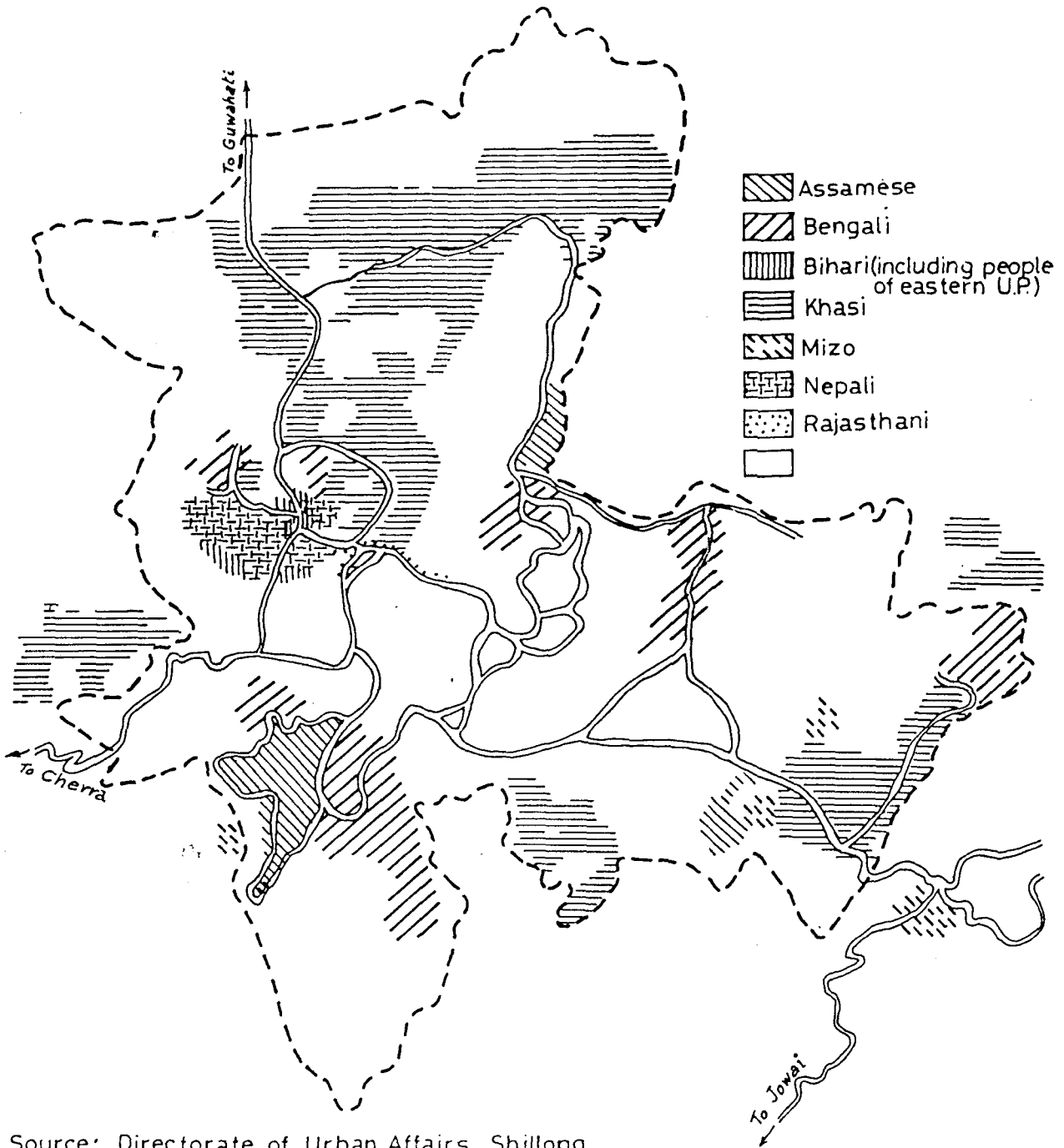
The spatial stratification, therefore, brings out certain mechanisms in the organisation of the city space:

- i. Social characteristics tend to form a spatial cluster. The closer these characteristics are the more they tend to group together in space.
- ii. The essential principle that influences the distribution of housing in space is social prestige, the expression of which is social desirability (the preference of similar neighbours) and the negative expression of social distance (rejection by differentiated neighbours).

¹⁶ M. Duncan (1963) in K.S.R.Gowda, (1972) *Urban and Regional Planning* (Mysore: University of Mysore) pp. 86- 87.

SHILLONG COMMUNITY GROUPS 1973

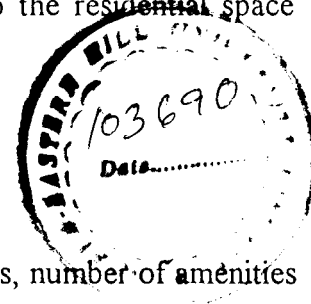
0 2 Km.



Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs, Shillong

Map 3.2

- iii. The differential distribution of income, an expression of social sectioning (positive or negative) of a given kind of work determines accessibility to the residential space desired since it is subject to the laws of the market.



Thus we can argue that variations in the income of residents, number of amenities and congestion of house create differences in residential areas. The economic condition of the people have a bearing on the residential houses. Very often people of high income group stay in good residential areas. Lachauchiere and Oakland are such areas inhabited by Ministers, Secretaries and other high officials as well as some high business class. The built up of the houses in these areas are good and spacious. Lumparing and Jhalupara on the other hand are inhabited by low income people. The residential area in this localities are poor. The slums of Mawlai and Sweeper Lane of Barabazar are directly the result of low income of their inhabitants (Map 3.2).

The number of basic amenities such as water supply, electricity and good accessibility etc. also varies greatly between one residential area and the other. The whole of Lumparing, large parts of Mawlai and some parts of Mawprem have only a few amenities and these are considered to be the low class residential areas. Motinagar, Laitumkhrah and Lachauchiere have good water supply, good educational institutions close to them and as such they are levelled as fair to good residential areas.

The degree of congestion or number of houses per unit also indicate the category of the residential type, for example, Police Bazar, Mawkhar, S.E. Mawkhar and Malki with over 48 house (1981 census) per hectare are congested wards. Similarly parts of Jail Road, Mawprem, Jaiaw, parts of Laitumkhrah and whole of Police Bazar are residentially

extremely congested. The houses in these area in general are poor in construction, old in age and small in size.

In comparison to these Laitumkhrah, Kenche's Trace, European Ward, parts of Jail Road and Shillong Cantonment with less than 20 house per hectare are considered as spaciouly built areas. Thus the residential segregation can be easily identified on the basis of general conditions such as exterior look, building materials, age of the house, locational aspect, etc.

Within the city, therefore, distinct environments are created because of the different community groups and classes which make up the urban society occupy distinct areas, having distinct occupations. All these account for a significant change in the pattern of residential segregation with the growth of the town. The residential area of the town covers 15.23 hectares, i.e., 48.47 per cent of Shillong Urban Agglomeration.

Shillong is a cosmopolitan town and has immigrants from almost all the areas of the country. But only a few social groups are conspicuous by their strength. They are the Assamese, Bengalis, Biharis (including those of eastern Uttar Pradesh), Khasis, Mizos, Nepalis and Punjabis. A brief account of their settlement pattern is given below, based mainly on the studies by Saha¹⁷. The distinct ethnic groups by their concentration in a particular locality have acquired particular characteristic which become reflective through patterns of houses, types of construction, clustering of similar linguistic groups and alike neighbours etc.. The broad settlement patterns which can be classified are :

¹⁷ K.D. Shaha (1973), "The Study of Community-wise Distribution and Growth of Population in Shillong", in *Cultural Profile of Shillong (Aimeographed)*, North-East Station of Anthropological Survey of India, Shillong, p. 7.

Assamese Settlements

Prior to independence there were only a handful of Assamese residents in Shillong, having isolated settlements in Laban, Madan Laban, Kench's Trace, and Laitumkhrah. They came to Shillong in connection with government jobs. Even today they are hardly found engaged in any other activities. Most of these migrations can be identified in two phases i.e. those who came before independence (mostly from Upper Assam,) and those who came afterwards (mainly from Lower Assam.). This can be ascribed to the good economic conditions and inquisitiveness to migrate to new areas for new jobs as well as better education being provided by the missionaries. Whereas in the post- independence period most of the migration can be reasoned as migration under political compulsion, mostly from erstwhile East Pakistan . The Assamese settlements in Shillong, today, are concentrated in Bishnupur, Kench's Trace, Motinagar (excluding Audit Estate Quarters), and Forest Colony. They are also settled in Laitumkhrah, Nongrirm Hills, Fruit Garden and Lachaumiere.

Bengali Settlements

The Bengalis came to Shillong with the shifting of the district headquarters from Cherrapunjee in 1864. In the beginning, they came as clerical staff to serve the government, and most of them were from Sylhet district of East Bengal. A large group of Bengalis also came from Hooghly district of West Bengal who were mostly Muslims and were largely businessmen. In the early years of the growth of Shillong, the major portion of the commercial activities, including transport, was in their hands. While most of the Bengalis from Sylhet settled down in Jail Road and Police Bazar, and the Bengalis from Hooghly preferred Laban area. Since then these areas have continued to be the area of attraction for new Bengali migrants to the city.

Rilbong, earlier a reserved forest under the Cantonment Authority, was acquired in 1928 by the Government and was distributed to its employees (mostly Bengalis) for residences. In Laitumkhrah proper the Bengali settlement started long before independence but in Bhagyakul and New Colony it has developed after independence. Umpling (formerly a forest land) was acquired by the Assam Government for the settlement of East Bengal refugees. Their concentration began around 1960. The Bengalis are mostly to be found today in Laban, Lumparing cum Madan Laban, Rilbong, Lower Mawprem, Sunny Hills, (SE Mawkhar and Jaiaw), Laitumkhrah and Umpling.

Bihari Settlements

The Biharis followed the British administrators as personal attendants and servants, policemen, peons and sought employment in various services. They have been coming since the early years of the growth of Shillong. With the increased demand for various services their number has been ever increasing. They have monopolised in the lower category of jobs and services like barber, cobbler, butcher, washerman, mattress and quilt maker, and in bakery. They are a predominant group, dealing in milk and milk products, tea stalls, masonry works and betel leaves, etc. Some of them, however, have taken up new jobs like that of the provision stores, drivers, mechanics and clerks. Most of them are from the north-western districts of Bihar. About 45 per cent of the Muslim population of Shillong are Biharis or belong to eastern Uttar Pradesh and most of them are in Jhalupara. The Biharis are concentrated in Bara Bazar, Garikhana, Palton Bazar and Laitumkhrah and Lalchand area.

Khasi Settlements

Though no record of the Khasis in Shillong is available for the early years, yet on the basis of the religious groups returned in the census as tribal or animist, some idea may be formed.¹⁸ In 1881 about 40 per cent of the population of Shillong were the Khasis. Their relative share decreased though it has started increasing recently from 34 per cent in 1941 to 36 per cent in 1961 and 56 per cent in 1991.

Heavy concentrations of the Khasis in Shillong are in Laitumkhrach, Malki, Mawkhar, South-east Mawkhar, Jaiaw, Mawlai and Nongthymmai. A small number of the Khasis (dealing in beef) are in Mawlai¹⁹. Except for a few jobs of the barber, cobbler, sweeper, etc., the Khasis are present in every walk of life. Quite a good number of them are in office jobs. Some of the businesses like fish, vegetables, fruits and tea tiffin supply to offices are mainly controlled by the Khasi women folk.

Mizo Settlements

The Mizo settlements in Shillong are of recent origin. With the outbreak of large scale political disturbances in March 1966 and the strict Government action thereafter, and regrouping of villages in the Mizo Hills, a considerable number of Mizos, both poor and rich alike, have left their home and have settled in Shillong. Earlier the Mizos in Shillong were negligible about 0.34 per cent of the total population in 1941 and it could rise 0.96 per cent in 1961. Today they are more than 4,000 in number, constituting more than 3 per cent of total population of Shillong. The Mizos are concentrated in

¹⁸ J.P. Singh (1979), *Urban Landuse Planning in Hill Areas- A Case Study of Shillong*, Inter- India Publication, New Delhi p 87.

¹⁹ J.P. Singh (1979), *Urban Landuse Planning in Hill Areas - A Case Study of Shillong*, Inter-India Publication, New Delhi, p. 81.

Madanring, Happy Valley, Upper Nongthymmai, Jaiaw, Nongrim Hills and Bishnupur (in the Meghalaya Police Battalion quarters).

Nepali Settlements

The Nepali settlements in Shillong started after 1864 with the movement of the Sylhet Light Infantry. The creation of the 8th Gorkha Rifles brought more Nepalis to Shillong. The Nepali herdsmen towards the end of the last century were already present around Shillong. After the First World War when many of the retired army personnel were allotted land for settlement in Jhalupara, the Nepali settlement increased significantly. Today they occupy a significant position and are present in every kinds of job-from domestic servants, manual labourers and graziers to white collar jobs. Many of them also work as porters, pony cart drivers, motor vehicle drivers casual labourers, milk and milk product sellers etc. Though their settlements are scattered all over Shillong and its suburbs yet they are predominantly in Jhalupara, Barapathar, Upper Mawprem, Palton Bazar and Nongmynsang (Lalchand Bustee). They are also present in Qoalapatti, Garikhana, Lower Mawprem, Mawlai and Nongthymmai.

Settlements of Other Groups

The other groups include migrants from southern parts mainly Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Tripura and other parts of the country, and they together account for only 6 per cent of the total population. The Rajasthanis and the Punjabis are the two other important groups. The former have concentrated settlements in the commercial areas of Police Bazar, Gauhati Shillong Road and Bara Bazar, while the latter, most of whom are sweepers, belonging exclusively to Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts of Punjab, are concentrated at Goralane in Laitumkhrah and Sweepers' Lane near Bara Bazar. The

people of other states are found scattered all over Shillong and are engaged mainly in Government jobs.

Hence on the basis of economic conditions of the inhabitants, age of the buildings, availabilities of amenities and degree of congestion, the pattern of residential segregation takes a distinctive form in Shillong which is very similar to any other urban centres in the country.

3.8 Internal Structure of Residential Areas

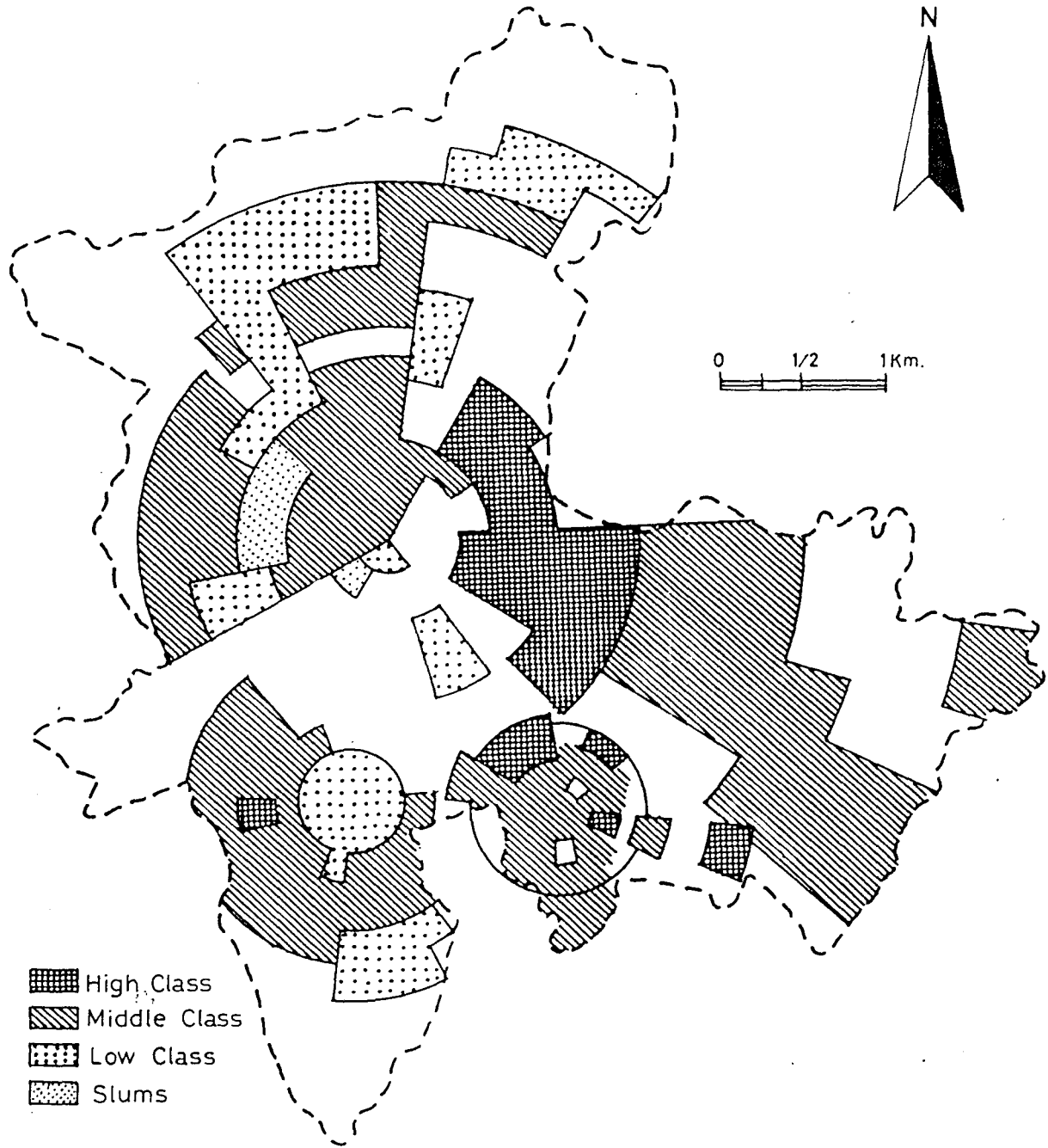
On the basis of economic conditions of the inhabitants, age of buildings, amenities and degree of congestion, it is possible to classify the residential areas of Shillong into four categories : high class, middle class, low class and slums. It is interesting to note that these residential areas in Shillong have followed some definite trends with the expansion of the town.

There are three well known classical models of city structure and growth, put forward by the American geographers and sociologists. The earliest of them is the concentric zone theory of Burgess.²⁰ The essence of this model is that as a city grows, it expands radially from its centre to form a series of concentric zones-central business district, zone of transition, independent working man's homes, the zone of better residences and the commuter's zone. As the central business district advances, the transitional residential zone begins to deteriorate and the zone of better residences begins to move outwards. The quality and cost of the houses, therefore, increases with the distance from the centre and the residential density, consequently, decreases. The

²⁰ E.W. Burgess (1923), "Growth of the City", *Proceedings of American Sociological Society*, 18, pp.85-9.

SHILLONG

INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS



Source: J.P. Singh, Problem of Hill Area Development

Map 3.3

Burgess model is based on a homogeneous surface which has a uniform case of transportation in all directions at every point.

The second model of the urban growth and spatial structure was formulated by Homer Hoyt²¹ and is known as the sector theory. According to him the distribution of residential neighbourhoods of various qualities neither have a random distribution nor form concentric circles but are edge-sided, due to differences in land values, rents and the development of transport. Modern cities grow so large that they absorb many of their smaller neighbours and these control the pattern of landuse. The multiple nuclei model of Harris and Ullman²² is the modification of the previous models.

In order to examine the internal structure of residential areas of Shillong, three population nuclei were recognised. From these nuclei concentric circles at an interval of half a kilometre were drawn and different types of residential areas were marked (Map 3.3). This shows that high class residential areas have grown in eastern sectors of the first nucleus (Police Bazar-Mawkhar), in the western sector of the second (Laban), and in the northern, north-eastern and eastern sectors of the last (Malki) nucleus. The low class residential areas also have sectoral growth. The Police Bazar-Mawkhar nucleus is dominant. The internal structure of residential areas of Shillong shows a clear combination of the sector and multiple nuclei models.

3.9 The Core-intermediate- Periphery Zonation

The spatial structure of the city as a whole also can be examined with reference to the core, the intermediate zones and the periphery. The core consists of areas centred around

²¹ H.Hoyt (1939), *The Structure and Growth of Residential neighbourhood in American Cities*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

²² C.D. Harris and E.L. Ullman (1945), "The Nature of Cities", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 242, pp. 7-17.

the city CBD (in this case European ward, Police Bazar and Barabazar). The peripheral zone consists of all the other census units of the agglomeration, outside the Municipal boundary. The areas between the core and the periphery can be called, intermediate zones. Sharp differences exist between the core, intermediate and periphery areas of the city in terms of density, and residential housing and living conditions. (The oldest slum, Sweeper Colony is situated in the C.B.D and is continuously growing in population numbers, both through natural and by migration). The density of the houses also decline in the same ratio from core to periphery. The other characteristic which show a similar declining pattern from core to periphery are percentage of workers in trade and commerce, the percentage of population in low income and middle income groups and percentage of rented houses. The city core thus acquires a special character by its centripetal pull and dominance, owing to the high concentration of workplaces, financial institutions, higher order shopping areas, transport terminals and lower order living conditions.

During the period of 1901 to 1981-91 the city area of Shillong increased from 12.81 square km., with a population of 9621 in 1901 to 27.28 square km. with a population of 2,22,220. Population growth was greater in proportion than the increase in the city area, so there was an increase in population density from 60 persons per ha. to 225 persons per ha. the intra-city density varied from 2 persons per ha. to 63 persons per ha.

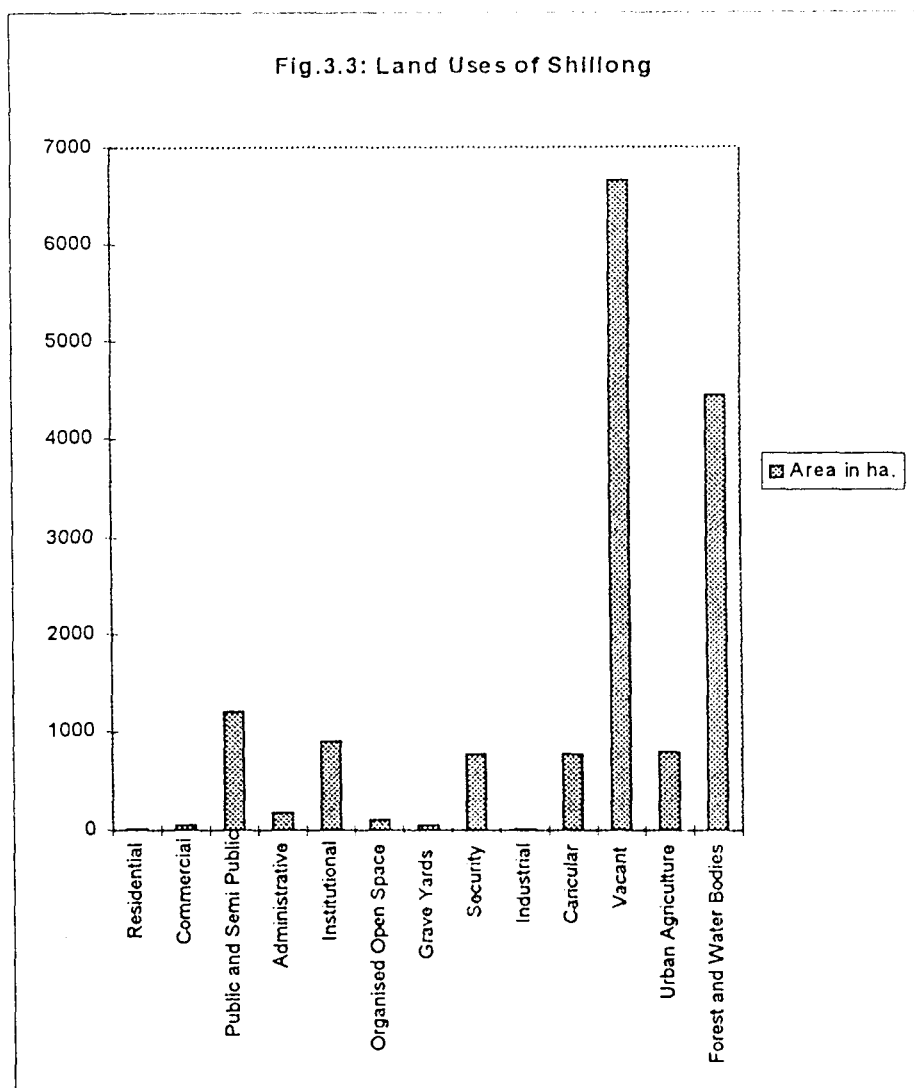
Thus with the expansion of the city, most of the fringe areas became incorporated as intermediary zones while new fringe areas developed which served as the periphery. In the beginning out of the eight slums four were at the fringe which became part of the city and consequently became incorporated within the intermediary zones.

3.10 Landuse Pattern

Quality of urban life and functional efficiency of a town is dependent on proper disposition of activities and the inter-relationship it offers between different activities. In order to understand and analyse systematically the functional relationship between various uses particularly the people, their work, living, and recreational areas, it becomes further more important to understand the available land resource and its utilisation as given in Table 3.3.

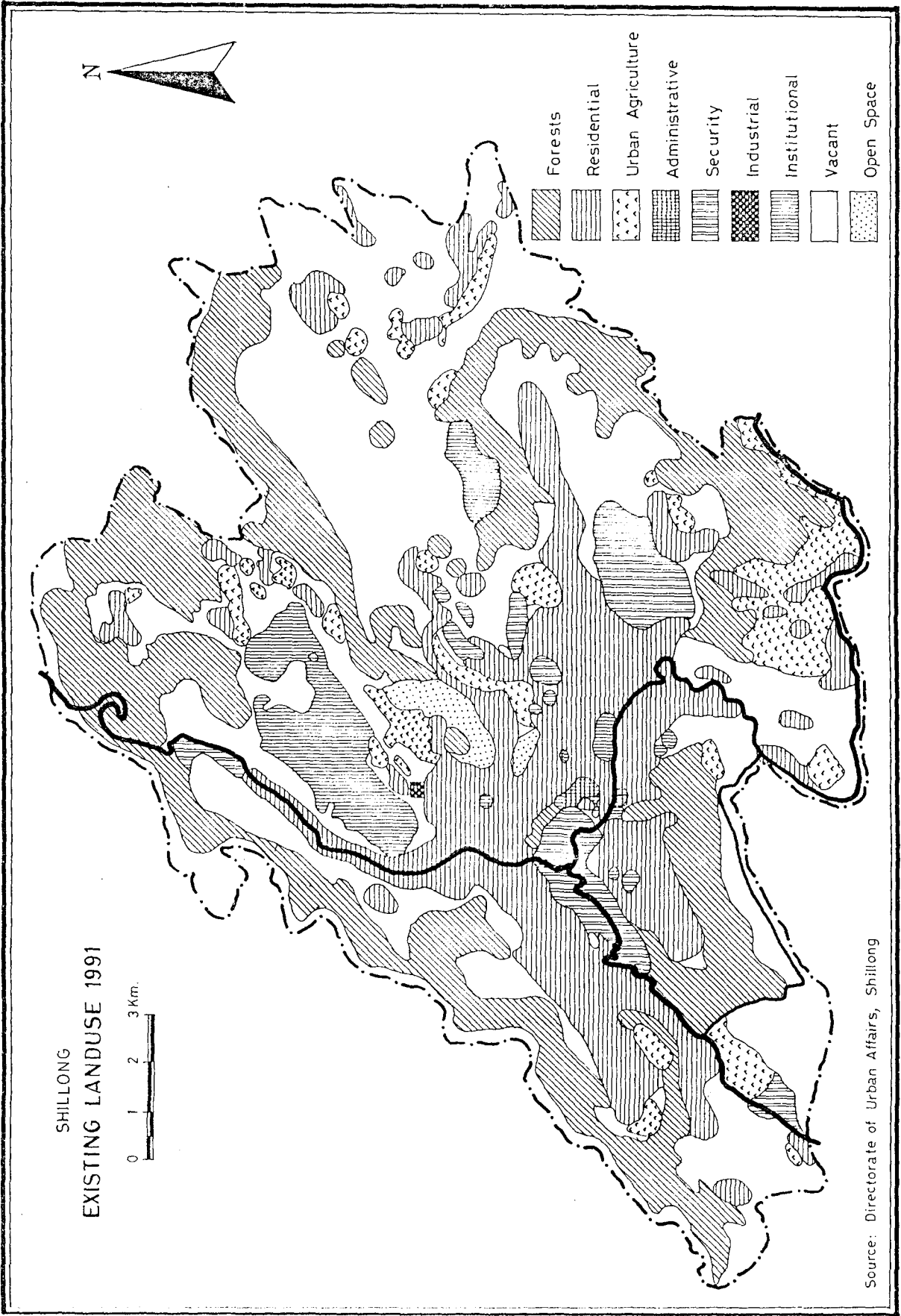
Table 3.3
Landuse of Shillong, 1991

| Land Use | Area (ha.) | Area in Percentage | Total Developed Area in Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| Residential | 15.23 | 0.09 | 48.47 |
| Commercial | 56.62 | 0.33 | 1.03 |
| Public and Semi Public | 1202.10 | 6.91 | 0.00 |
| Administrative | 177.93 | 1.02 | 2.16 |
| Institutional | 903.20 | 5.19 | 16.44 |
| Organised Open Space | 118.31 | 0.68 | 2.16 |
| Grave Yards | 61.75 | 0.35 | 1.12 |
| Security | 779.33 | 4.48 | 14.18 |
| Industrial | 10.00 | 0.06 | 0.18 |
| Caricular | 783.36 | 4.50 | 14.26 |
| Vacant | 6650.90 | 38.22 | 0.00 |
| Urban Agriculture | 803.07 | 4.62 | 0.00 |
| Forest and Water Bodies | 4451.93 | 25.59 | 0.00 |
| Total | 17400.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 |



The total area under Administrative use is 117.93 ha. or 0.68 percent of the total plan area. The administrative area is concentrated in areas around Barik, I.G.P Lower Lachumier etc. better known as Secretariat Complex, apart from state level and District level, regional offices of Central Govt. and semi-Government are also located in this area. The current trends is of expansion but there seems no attempt to decentralise away from these core areas.

Institutional areas such as educational institutions, hospitals, cultural and social institutions, religious institutions etc. cover about 903.20 ha. or 5.19 per cent of the area



SHILLONG
EXISTING LANDUSE 1991



- Forests
- Residential
- Urban Agriculture
- Administrative
- Security
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Vacant
- Open Space

Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs, Shillong

Map 3.4

only. Though Shillong is one of the main commercial centres of North Eastern Region, it has only 56.62 ha., i.e., 0.33 per cent of the total plan area under commercial use. The commercial area of the city with its core in Bara Bazar and Police Bazar, has been found to be extending along the major roads due to lack of space. Increased activities in the main commercial area has created problems of traffic jams due to increase of traffic volumes and overloaded junctions (Map 3.4 : Landuses of Shillong).

Table 3.4
Land use by degree of development

| Land Use | Area (in ha.) | Percentage to Total Area |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Developed Area | 5494.10 | 31.58 |
| Undevelopable Area | 1573.88 | 9.04 |
| Developable Area | 5075.02 | 29.18 |
| Urban Agriculture | 803.07 | 4.62 |
| Forest and Water-bodies | 4451.93 | 25.58 |
| Total Area | 17400.00 | 100.00 |

source : Directorate of Urban Affairs Shillong.

As per the Directorate of Urban Affairs, of the total area of 17400 hectares of which 5494 ha. or 31.58 per cent of the total area is developed area 1573.88 ha. or 9.04 per cent of the total area is underdeveloped owing to excessive slope and height of land 803.07 ha. or 4.62 per cent of the total area is under urban agriculture and 4451.93 or 25.58 per cent is under forest and water bodies. Of the total plan area, 5077.02 or 29.18 per cent is developable area as Table 3.4 depicts. In the entire set up, almost half of the total area is under residential use. It accounts for about 2662.78 hectares or 15.30 per cent of the total Municipal area. The residential development of the city has grown much beyond the Municipal limits, due to non-availability of buildable land within the Municipal area. At present the development of residences has appeared in all the three directions

along the major arteries, namely towards Mawiong in the North, Upper Shillong in the S.W. and towards Madanrting in the South East.

3.11 Housing:

Housing is one of the basic requirements of human life, and the condition of housing influences the quality of human life. Since housing constitutes an important component of a city, it makes significant impact on its proper functioning. Housing environment e.g. living condition within and outside dwelling units of considerable importance to the city dwellers. While site conditions, water supply, drainage road network provision of amenities such as education, health, recreation, are important aspects of external housing environment, within the house, tenure status, occupancy and structural conditions are vital aspects of internal housing conditions.

At present, the residential development of the city has grown much beyond the municipal limit, but due to undulating terrain conditions residential area have grown in a scattered manner. Lack of planning measures in their past was also an additive factor for the haphazard growth.

During the last decade, there has been tremendous pressure on land and land values have increased manifold within Municipal area. Further due to non-availability of buildable land within the municipal area the development of residence has sprawled in all three direction along the major arteries namely towards Mawiong in the north, Upper Shillong in the south west, and Madanrting in the south east.

After Meghalaya achieving the full-fledged status of state, the increase in population and pace of development in Shillong being a State capital resulted in exerting great pressure on land as a result of which development in the core area intensified both horizontally as well as vertically in the form of multistoried buildings. The high rate of

increase of population, since 1951 has created among other things acute shortage of housing due to the climate extremities, i.e., cold winter heavy rains, no pavement dwellers are found as a result irrespective of quality of the dwelling unit or housing facilities, each house hold do occupy the same. This has resulted in over crowding, in some of the areas, where 20 to 30 per cent household, having family size of 5 to 6 persons occupy only single room unit.

Most of the Residential Housing units are of Assam type usually single to two storied. This is by virtue of Meghalaya being in earthquake prone zone. However, of late due to market forces, and pressure on land, development of technology and availability of skill, multistoried R.C.C buildings are proliferating the urban form.

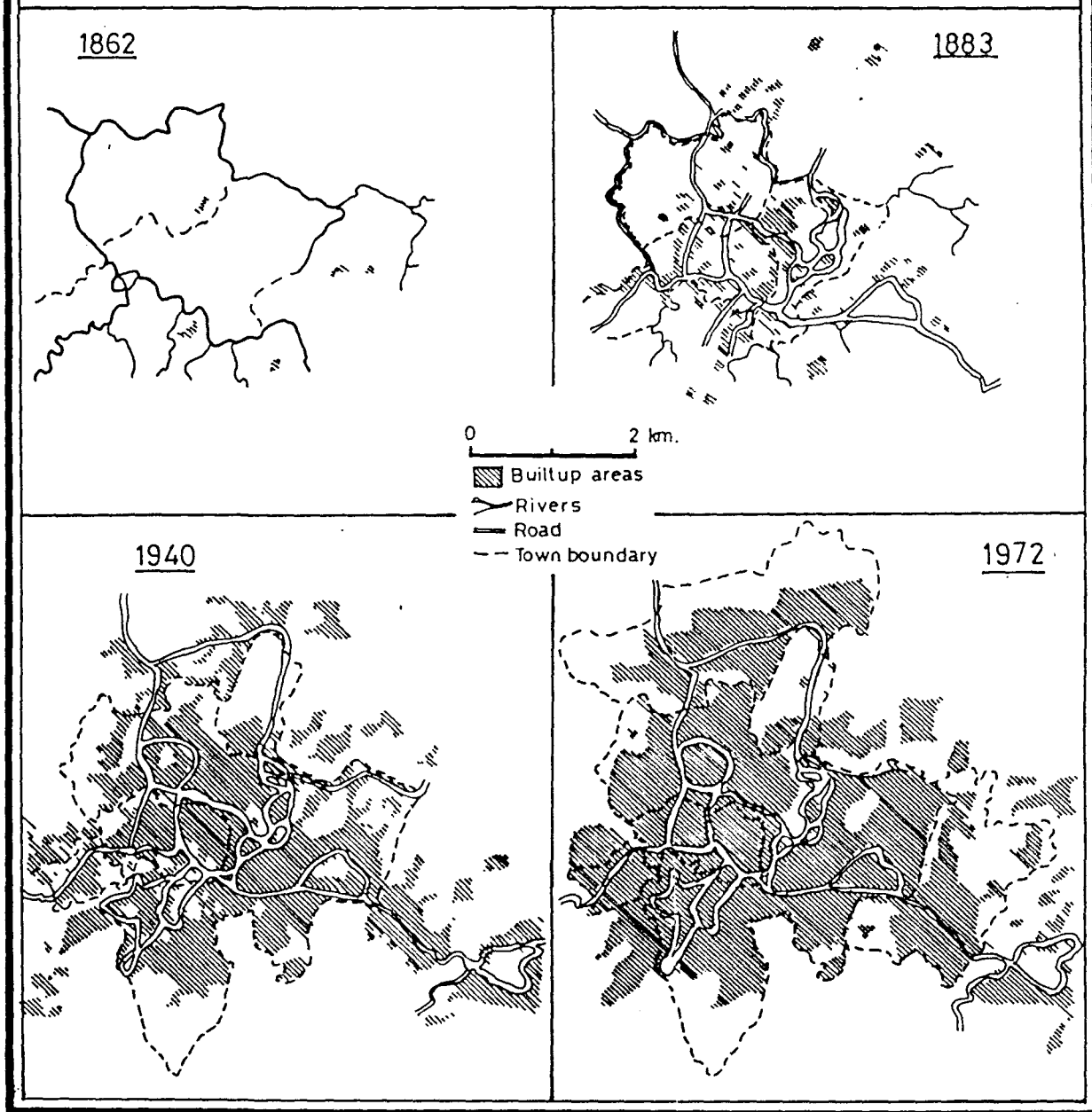
Most of the migrant population to the city depends on rental housing, whereas a nominal fraction of intra-state migrants have their own houses.

Table 3.5
Population Density in Shillong UA During 1981 and 1991

| Urban Component. | Area (in Ha.) | Population | | Population Density per Ha. | |
|------------------|---------------|------------|--------|----------------------------|------|
| | | 1981 | 1991 | 1981 | 1991 |
| Shillong (M) | 1035.996 | 109244 | 130691 | 105 | 126 |
| Shillong (C) | 184.132 | 6820 | 11075 | 37 | 60 |
| Mawlai | 613.909 | 20405 | 30442 | 33 | 41 |
| Nongthymmai | 292.993 | 21558 | 26816 | 73 | 83 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 210.841 | 10711 | 14322 | 50 | 67 |
| Madanrting | 201.938 | 6165 | 8927 | 30 | 44 |
| Shillong UA | 2539.813 | 174703 | 222273 | 68 | 87 |

The gross density during 1981 was highest within the Shillong Municipal area, i.e. 105 persons per ha. followed by Nongthymmai and Pynthorumkhrah which accounted for 73 persons and 50 persons respectively. However, on the other hand Shillong cantonment, Mawlai and Madanrting had low density of 37, 33 and 30 persons per area

SHILLONG CHANGES IN BUILT UP AREAS



Source: J.P. Singh, Problems of Hill Area Development

Map 3.5

respectively (Table 3.5). These up coming urban centres however have higher pace of intensification than Shillong Municipal area and Nongthymmai during 1991. The gross density of Shillong Municipality and Nongthymmai rose to 126 and 83 persons per ha. i.e. 19 per cent and 23 per cent increase, while in cantonment, Mawlai and Madanrting density reached to 60,41 and 44 persons per ha., accounting for 60 per cent 54 per cent and 50 per cent increase respectively. This indicates the steady development of fringe settlement than the core of the city (Map 3.5).

Table 3.6
Density of population within Shillong Municipality Areas during 1971, 1981.

| Name of the Ward | Area (Ha.) | 1971 | | 1981 | |
|------------------|------------|------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| | | Population | Density per Ha. | Population | Density per Ha. |
| Laitumkhrach | 187 | 11726 | 62 | 15620 | 83 |
| European Ward | 150 | 5626 | 37 | 7604 | 50 |
| Police Bazar | 10 | 3141 | 314 | 2629 | 266 |
| Jail Road | 142 | 5371 | 37 | 8235 | 57 |
| Mawkhar | 31 | 6800 | 219 | 8869 | 286 |
| Jaiaw | 57 | 8991 | 157 | 10207 | 179 |
| S.E. Mawkhar | 29 | 7060 | 243 | 8549 | 294 |
| Mawprem | 109 | 13113 | 120 | 18408 | 168 |
| Kench's Trace | 67 | 3659 | 54 | 6266 | 93 |
| Laban | 34 | 5882 | 173 | 5903 | 173 |
| Lumparing | 160 | 7334 | 45 | 8150 | 50 |
| Malki | 63 | 6956 | 110 | 8804 | 139 |
| Shillong (M) | 1036 | 87659 | 84 | 109244 | 105 |

Source : Master Plan of Shillong, Directorate of urban Affairs, Shillong.

3.12 Slums

The emergence of slums in Shillong is mainly due to accelerated growth rate and unplanned physical development. The pace and magnitude of intra-state migration capitulated with an influx from outside the state has created a gap between the need and the available basic amenities, resulting into the emergence and growth of slums in an increasing order. Unlike the slums in plains, the slums in Shillong is less bleak because of

its societal structure, topographical advantage and low level of industrialisation. Further the slum dwellers are not compelled to the marginal lands since the land is owned by private individuals except 3.02 sq. within the municipal area, most of the slums are developed in private land. Only in Jhalupara within Cantonment area and sweeper lane under Municipal board slums have developed. In the absence of proper development control, indiscriminate plot sub-division, devoid of proper provision for access, services and disposal system, degrading living conditions have developed in these slums most of the slum dwellers however pay rent for whatever accommodation they occupy. Slums which are usually termed as "poor man's settlement" is not a very old phenomena, in Shillong as the social system of the tribal population presents a different situation of non existence of caste and class barrier, where the cordial co-existence of people as neighbour irrespective of economic status is an unique distinctiveness of Shillong.

3.13 Concluding Statements

From the foregoing analysis of the chapter, the following broad findings can be highlighted:

1. The importance of Shillong grew with the partition of Bengal (1905), when political instability broke the economic ties with the Sylhet plains. Shillong served as the inroad in to the first rich areas of the north east connecting the entire resource base to the ports of Dacca and Calcutta. With the extension of railways in Assam, Shillong continued to thrive as a 'super imposed' urban centre.
2. Shillong was established mainly for administrative purposes. Throughout the history of its evolution, it has ascribed a certain degree of specialisation to its service, functions which seems to be continued in future too.

3. The overall position of Shillong U.A. within the total urban population of the state is overwhelming. Whereas the total urban population of the state constituted less than one-fifth (18.07%) of the total urban population of Meghalaya (according to 1981 census), a disproportionately large share of the urban population of the state resides in Shillong U.A. which accounts for about 72 per cent of the total urban population of the state.
4. The city has undergone a radical change from a hill resort to a multifunctional service city, catering to a host of administrative and other service functions not only for the state but for the entire north east region.
5. Shillong has also developed as a commercial centre, stretching its hinterland to the neighbouring states of Assam, Mizoram, Tripura, etc., as an important transit point in trade and commerce. With location of a regional market, state market and retail markets and offices of the various financial and business houses, the town has emerged as an important commercial centre operating as an outlet for products of this region to various other states of the north east and vice-versa. As an important tourist centre and health resort also Shillong has been attracting people.
6. The distribution of housing in space produces its social differentiation and specifies the urban landscape. The distribution of residential location follows the general laws of distribution of products and services, and consequently brings about regrouping according to the social capacity and affiliation of the citizens, that is to say, according to their income, education levels, ethnic composition etc., resulting in social stratification in the urban system. Thus distinct ethnic groups by their concentration in a particular locality have acquired particular characteristics.
7. On the basis of economic conditions of the inhabitants, age of buildings, amenities and degree of congestion, the residential areas of Shillong is classified in to four categories, namely, high class, middle class, low class and slums. It is interesting to note that these residential areas have followed some definite trends with the expansion of the towns which incorporated most of the fringe areas as intermediary zones, while new fringe areas developed which served as periphery.

8. Of the total area of 17400 ha., 31.58 per cent is developed, 9.04 per cent under-developed and 4.62 per cent under urban agriculture. The total area under administrative use is 117.93 ha. or 0.68 per cent of the total plan area. During the last decade, there has been tremendous pressure on land and land values have increased manifold within the municipal area. Further, due to non-availability of buildable land within municipal area the development of residence has sprawl along the major arteries of the capital.
9. The high rate of increase of population, since 1951 has created among other things, acute shortage of housing due to the climate extremities, i.e., cold winter, heavy rains, no pavement dwellers are found, as a result irrespective of quality of the dwelling unit or housing facilities, each household do occupy the same.
10. The upcoming urban centres like Madanrting, Nongthymmai, Mawlai have higher pace of intensification in comparison to Shillong municipal area. This indicates the steady development of fringe settlement, than the core of the city.

Chapter IV

Morphology of the Slums

4.1 Introductory statement

The term *form* is most commonly used in literature referring to morphology or a particular pattern of buildings and other urban infrastructures. According to Encyclopaedia Americana, “... *form* is an architectural term explaining the pattern that can be designed and planned in different spatial contexts”.¹

The term *form* has been widely used by sociologists, anthropologists and geographers to explain and analyse social, ethnic or spatial phenomena. Geographers particularly use it to explain and assess site, location and land use patterns, either in the context of rural or urban areas, or both. Thus, in the geographical context, *form* broadly constitutes the morphology exhibited by certain patterns in urban areas and the land use pattern in the rural areas. Urban forms, from a geographic perspective could mean both *representational space* as well as *representation of space*. Certain symbolisms like the *townhall* or the *church* or the *temple* is *representational space* in Lefebvrian sense, while residential segregation, slums, suburbs and middle class housing areas are products of specific production relations effectuated through the dominant mode of production in the given society, therefore, *representation of space*. The city, that itself is an outcome of the process of urbanisation involves in itself a complex spatial pattern depending upon various social, economic, historical and political conditions. Each city exhibits its own

¹ Edmund, R. Leacu, *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*. MacMillan, U.K.

morphology that is determined by sets of entities, objects, amenities and infrastructure whether location, density and design of houses or circulation systems. Urbanisation is a spatially recurrent phenomena (*production and reproduction of space*)² in both developed and the third world countries and exhibit particular pattern of spatial organisation produced by the economic conditions of the citizens, occupation types, and social and political institutions and relations. They manifest in clusters at certain specific locations within the city, creating particular and peculiar patterns.

In the present chapter an attempt is made to understand the spatial form that the city (of Shillong) exhibits in the context of the urban poor, their economic and social segregation and the resulting spatial patterns-- slums. In order to assess the existing conditions the chapter poses the following questions with regard to specific morphology of poverty:

1. Considering the size, socio-economic and cultural background of Shillong, does poverty take specific (spatial) forms of its own? It may be that the spatial manifestation of poverty is yet to take a specific form that is usually associated with large metropolitan centres, elsewhere in the country,
2. If poverty acquires specific spatial form, then is it the result of internal processes (of articulation of inequality) or externally induced processes (of inter-regional inequality)?

In the first case, it may be taking place due to heightened disparity and inequality effected by internal differentiation, i.e., rising inequality among the citizens or, as in the

² Lefebvre, Henry (1992), *The Production of Space*, Blackwell, Cambridge, U.K.

second case, it could be induced through migration of the poor from rural areas or elsewhere from the country to the city.

In understanding these questions it is assumed that, if the above conditions are not operating and yet urban poverty emerges without outside infusion (migrations), then the forms of poverty (slums) would represent a different characterisation.

The current chapter thus attempts to analyse the morphological attributes in light of the following variables:

- (i) Site and location of the slums
- (ii) Size of slums
- (iii) Morphology of the slums
- (iv) Residential density, house types and building material
- (v) Physical amenities
- (vi) Income levels.

4.2 Site and location of slums

The site and location of slums usually display marginal locational conditions and the slums of Shillong city are no exception. As outlined earlier, slums construe a physical expression of the poverty. Traditionally viewed the genesis of slums in the developed world and in the developing countries are different. The genesis also manifests in specific locational features. In the developed world, slums arise due to *residential relocation* of the poor towards the city centre or near the CBD due to expansion of suburbs to which the upper-class out-migrates and the old CBD starts deteriorating and the rentals falling, that allows the poor to in-migrate to these locations. This is the classical American situation. (Europe on the other hand, tried restoration of the city centres). The process of slum formation,

therefore, is wholly internal to the income differentiation as well as changes in land value and rentals facilitating residential relocation

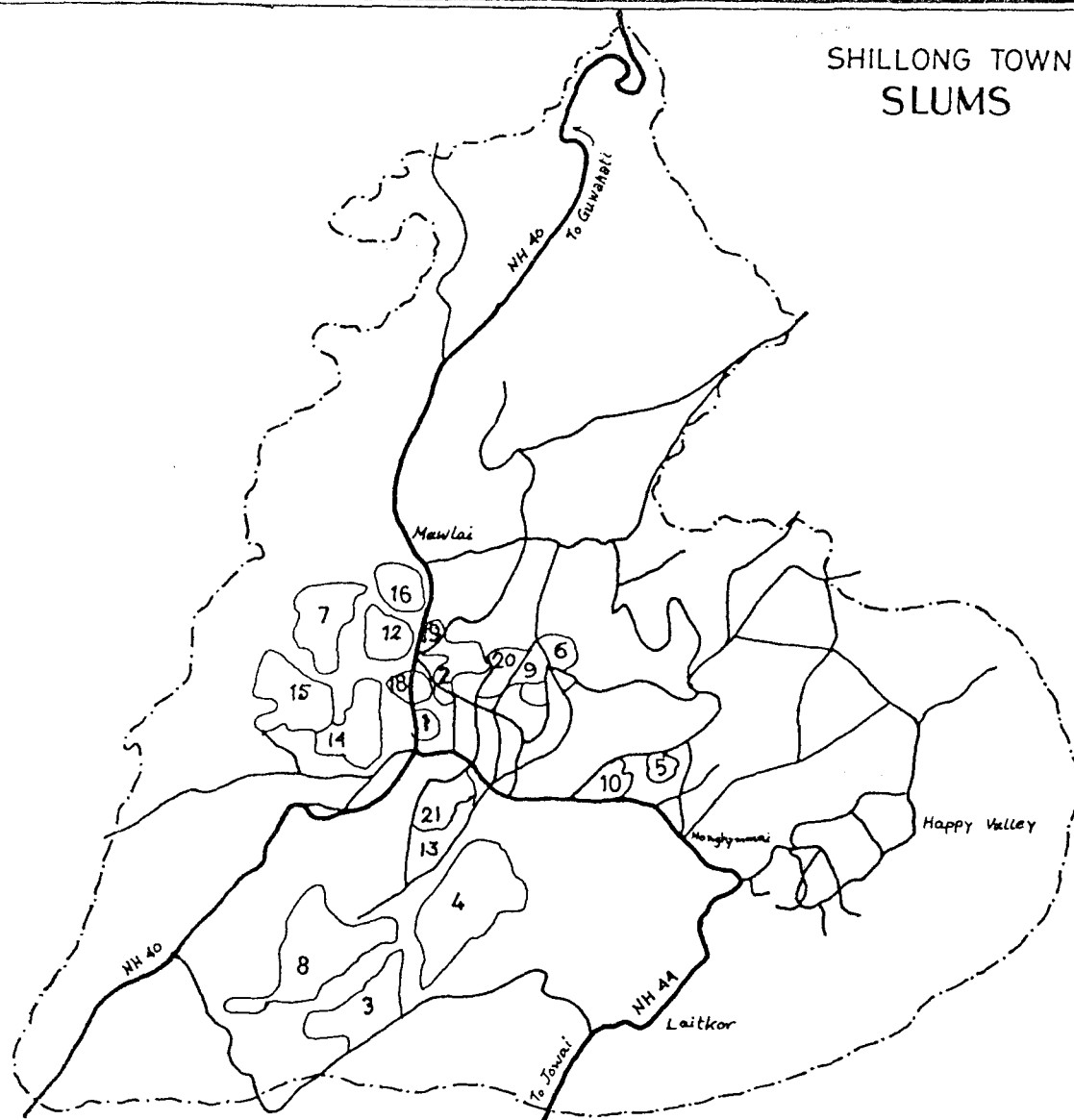
As opposed to this situation, slums in developing countries, particularly the low income, high (population) density countries, emerge due to rural to urban migration, mostly poor or landless farmers or destitutes that throng the cities where informal sectors, wage-work provide some means of survival. This process therefore, is exogenously induced and not necessarily due to internal dynamics of the urban growth. Normally in such situations, these migrants locate themselves in fringe areas of the city where rents could be lower and also along main arteries of transportation like the suburban lines, railway tracks or near railway stations or along main bus routes so that they could minimise the transportation cost to the place of work or (informal) business. Government land along railway tracks or highways are ideal for such unauthorised occupations. However, marginal sites and fringe locations over time appear in main areas of the city over a period of time when the city expands to, or beyond the outlying areas.

Slums of Shillong can be divided into three categories -- old, regular and new. No specific information is available regarding the origin and size³ of the slums and usually the age of the slum could be ascertained by the duration of the stay of the inhabitants, whereas the size could be ascertained from the present extension of the slum.⁴

³ Size usually means the total area occupied by a particular slum. Due to the geographical location the slums can not expand and some time a group from the slum dwellers choose to migrate or move to the other part of the city as per availability of land. For example, some of the Bihari migrants from Lalchand have moved to Rynjah Bustee and near Forest Colony. Most of these are new migrants while some of them are migrants over 10 to 15 years.

⁴ There were initially eight slum areas in Shillong, Jhalupara, Barapathar, Sweeper lane, Garikhana, Mawlai (near western boundary of Jail Road ward) Malki and Goralines (sweeper colony). Of these Jhalupara, Barapathar, Garikhana and Mawlai slums are fairly large. Most of these slums have grown in the older part of the city, around the CBD, i.e., Bara Bazar or near the transport depot. These slums are mostly inhabited by migrants from across various states, and therefore, reflect distinct ethnic concentrations of Punjabis and Nepalese etc.

SHILLONG TOWN SLUMS



REFERENCE

Recognised slum

1. Naspatigiri
2. Qualapati
3. Lumparing
4. Malki
5. Harijan colony
6. Polo bazar
7. Mawprem
8. Madan laban
9. Wahingdoh
10. Laitumkhrah
11. Laban
12. Jail road
13. Mawlonghdt
14. Jhalupara
15. Barapathor
16. Umsohsun
17. Paltan bazar
18. Wahapbru
19. Butchar lane
20. Anchatra compound
21. Raitsamthiah

Map 4.1

Shillong was established as an administrative town and remains till date a service city. The administrative - CBD and upper-class housing areas are serviced by low paid employees or wage labour residing in immediate vicinity of these areas. This is as expected.

As the city expanded, these slums came within the residential areas of the city and with the increase in number of migrants, became congested. The origin of the slums of Shillong can be traced to the city's development as an important economic and administrative centre for the Northeast during (1866-1947) the British period. Because of its being the headquarters of a number of offices and receiving other economic impetus being the provincial capital it attracted a large number of migrants from the rural areas -- mostly inter-state migrants. The rise in the population during the last half a century, attainment of Meghalaya as a state (1972) and high demand for housing are some of the important reasons for growth and expansion of slums in Shillong.

At present, Shillong has 24 (twenty four) declared slums with a population of 76,730 (1991 Census) that is 35 per cent of the city's population.(Table 4.1 lists the notified slums). These slums are unevenly distributed, particularly reflecting specific ethnic concentrations. Being a hill town, there is further limitations on expansion of the existing slums due to absence of land in those areas that provide incentives for creation of newer slums. (Map 4.1)

Table 4.1
List of Notified Slums

| Localities | Total Population | Number of House Holds | Average HH size |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Naspatigari | 1747 | 349 | 5.01 |
| Qualapatti | 2153 | 431 | 5.00 |
| Laitumkhrah (Goralines) | 817 | 163 | 5.01 |
| Polo Bazar | 3358 | 672 | 5.00 |
| Part of Jail Road | 2955 | 591 | 5.00 |
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 1250 | 164 | 7.62 |
| Part of Laitumkhrah | 3124 | 520 | 6.01 |
| Demsiniong | 500 | 77 | 6.49 |
| Part of Malki | 9826 | 1638 | 6.00 |
| Madan Laban | 5838 | 1167 | 5.00 |
| Riat Laban | 4323 | 720 | 6.00 |
| Part of Lumparing | 7645 | 1390 | 5.50 |
| Upper Mawprem | 7375 | 1229 | 6.00 |
| Lower Mawprem | 3113 | 518 | 6.01 |
| Washingdok | 3321 | 644 | 5.16 |
| Part of Bara Pathar | 3145 | 629 | 5.00 |
| Wanthabsu | 1300 | 236 | 5.51 |
| Part of Laban | 7062 | 1405 | 5.03 |
| Part of Lamarila | 250 | 45 | 5.56 |
| Part of Umsothun | 450 | 90 | 5.00 |
| Part of Riatsawthan | 500 | 111 | 4.50 |
| Jhalupara | 3028 | 505 | 6.00 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 3750 | 750 | 5.00 |
| Lalchand Bustee | - | - | - |

Source: Department of Urban Affairs, Govt. of Meghalaya, Shillong, 1995.

Most of the declared slums are unauthorised and are on private lands excepting a few that fall under the municipal area (Table 4.2). In general, the slums of Shillong owe their genesis to inter-state migrations largely constituting unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers from Bihar, Assam and West Bengal (of Nepalese origin) and also a large number of international migrants especially from Nepal. They locate themselves in specific *niche* areas of the economy like construction, dairy and other informal activities that apparently does not appeal to the local residents.

Table 4.2
Locational Characteristics of the Slums

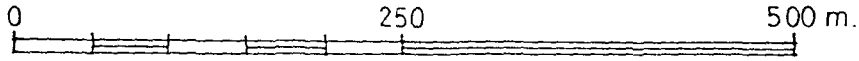
| <i>Name of the slum</i> | <i>Old/New</i> | <i>Authorised or not</i> | <i>Locational information</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Naspatigari | Old | Authorised | N.C. |
| Qualapatti | Old | Authorised | Garikhana Market & Truck Depot |
| Laitumkhrah Sweeper Colony | Old | Authorised | Laitumkhrah-MES Main Road |
| Polo Bazar | Old | Unauthorised | N.C. |
| Part of Jail Road | Old | Authorised | Behind J.R. School Compound |
| Sweeper Lanc (S.E. Mawkhar) | Old | Authorised | Near the Central Market Place |
| Part of Laitumkhrah | New | Authorised | Between the Market & Road |
| Demseniong | New | Authorised | Away from the Main Road but approachable through path |
| Malki | New | Authorised | Behind Malki Bazar |
| Madan Laban | New | Authorised | Behind Bazar |
| Riat Laban | New | Unauthorised | Behind Bazar |
| Lumparing(Upp.&L.) | New | Authorised | On Hill Side and Low Area |
| Lower Mawprem | New | Authorised | Near Barabazar Bridge |
| Upper Mawprem | Old | Authorised | Near Barabazar Bridge |
| Barapathar | New | Authorised | Far off from the main city |
| Wathabru | New | Unauthorised | N.C. |
| Laban | Old | Authorised | Partly Behind Laban Bazar |
| Part of Lama Villa | New | Authorised | N.C. |
| Part of Riatsamthiah | New | Authorised | N.C. |
| Part of Umsohsun | New | Authorised | N.C. |
| Jhalupara (Cantt.) | Old | Authorised | N.C. |
| Pynthorumkhrah | New | Authorised | N.C. |
| Lalchand Bustee | New | Authorised | N.C. |

Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs, Shillong.

Second, there is a fair sprinkling of the poor with the non-poor, largely in areas outside the designated slums. Here, the growth of the poor is not connected with the migration of the poor but the organic growth of the city without a specific residential segregation that is characteristic of classical situation of urbanisation in Europe or in the United States of America.

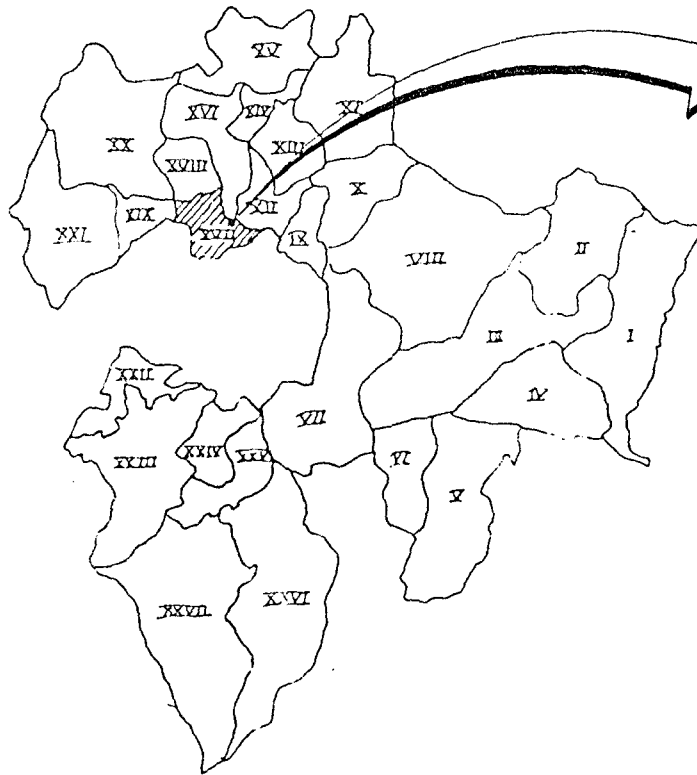
Third, the slums themselves are segregated largely along ethnic lines due to primordial bonds in the migration process itself, where one migrant from a specific ethnic background becomes instrument of migration of his/her relations/ villagers in relocating

LOCATION OF SAMPLED SLUMS (WARD - XVII)
 SWEEPER LANE SOUTH - EAST MAWKHAR



LEGEND

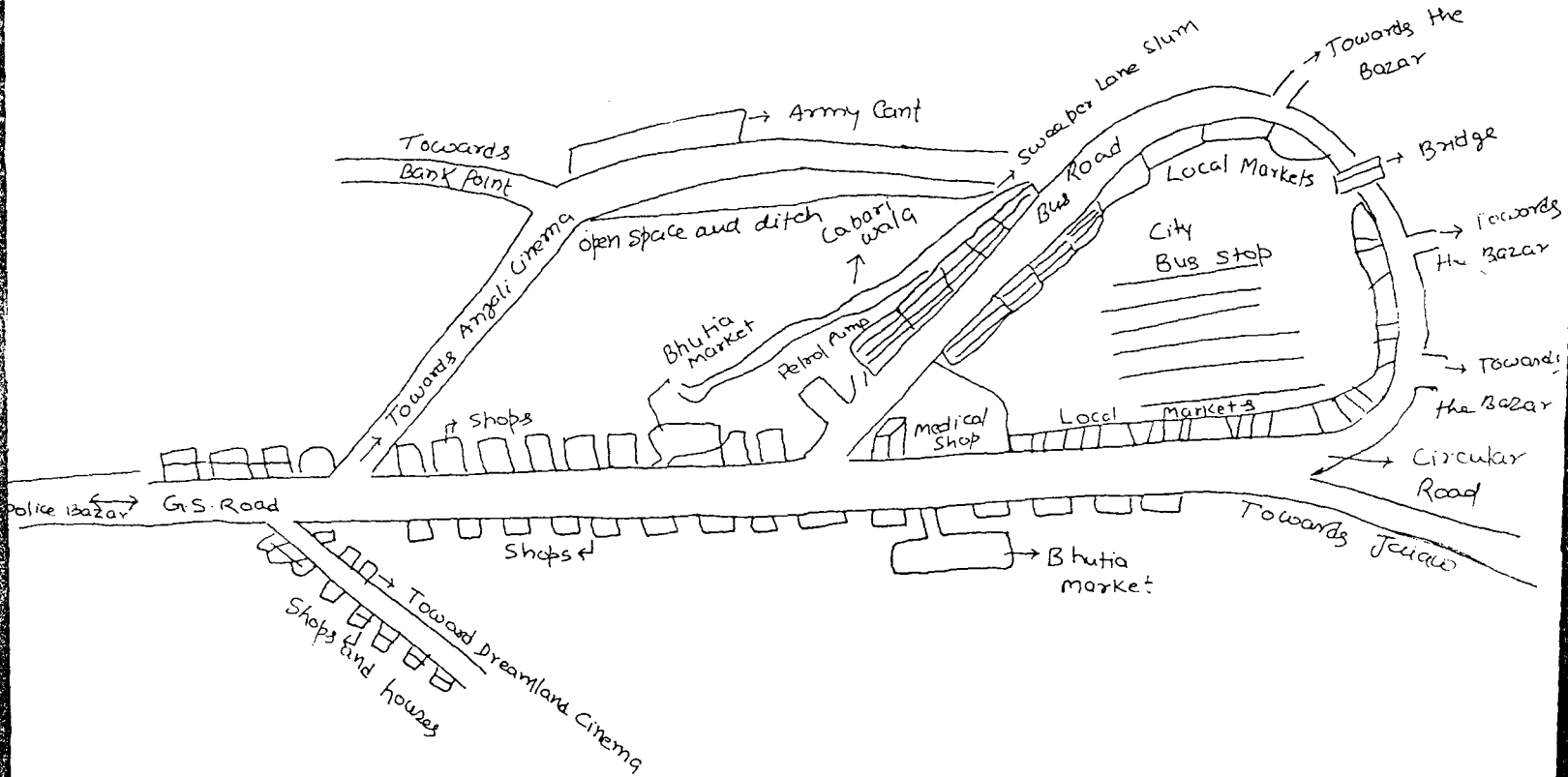
- Boundary; municipal, ward
- Roads; metalled, unmetalled, track
- ~ Streams
- ▣▣▣ Settlements
- ▣▣▣ Slums



Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs, Shillong

Map 4.2 (a)

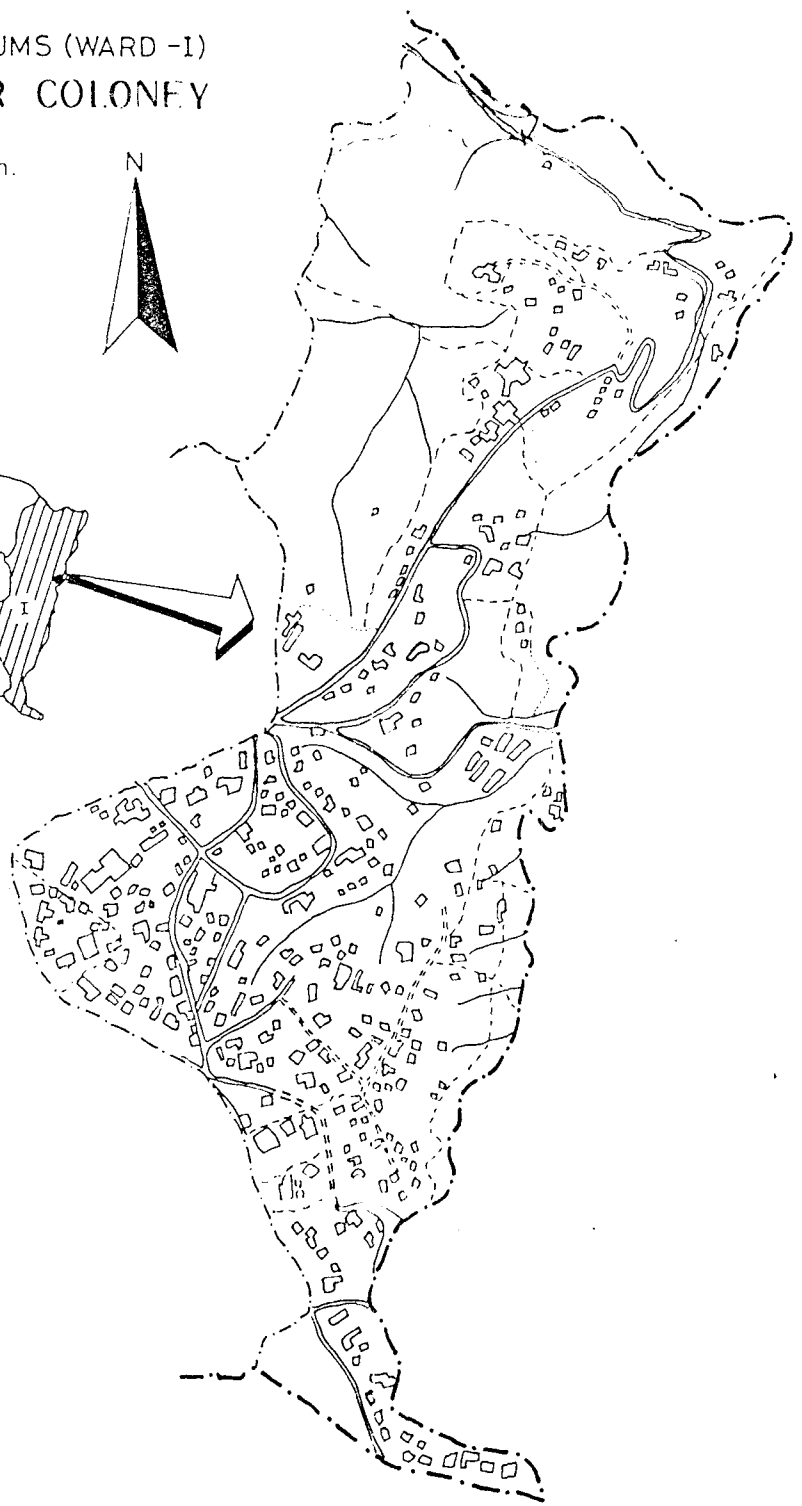
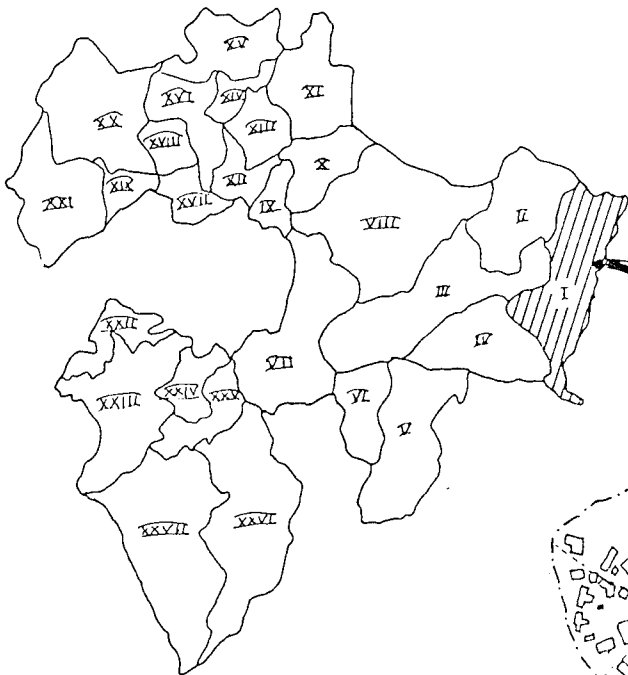
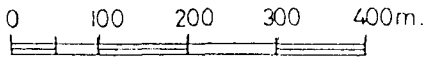
Sketch Map of the Slum - Sweeper Lane S.E. Mawkhar



Not True to Scale

Map 4.2 (b)

LOCATION OF THE SAMPLE SLUMS (WARD -I)
 LAITUMKHIRAH SWEEP PAR COLONEY



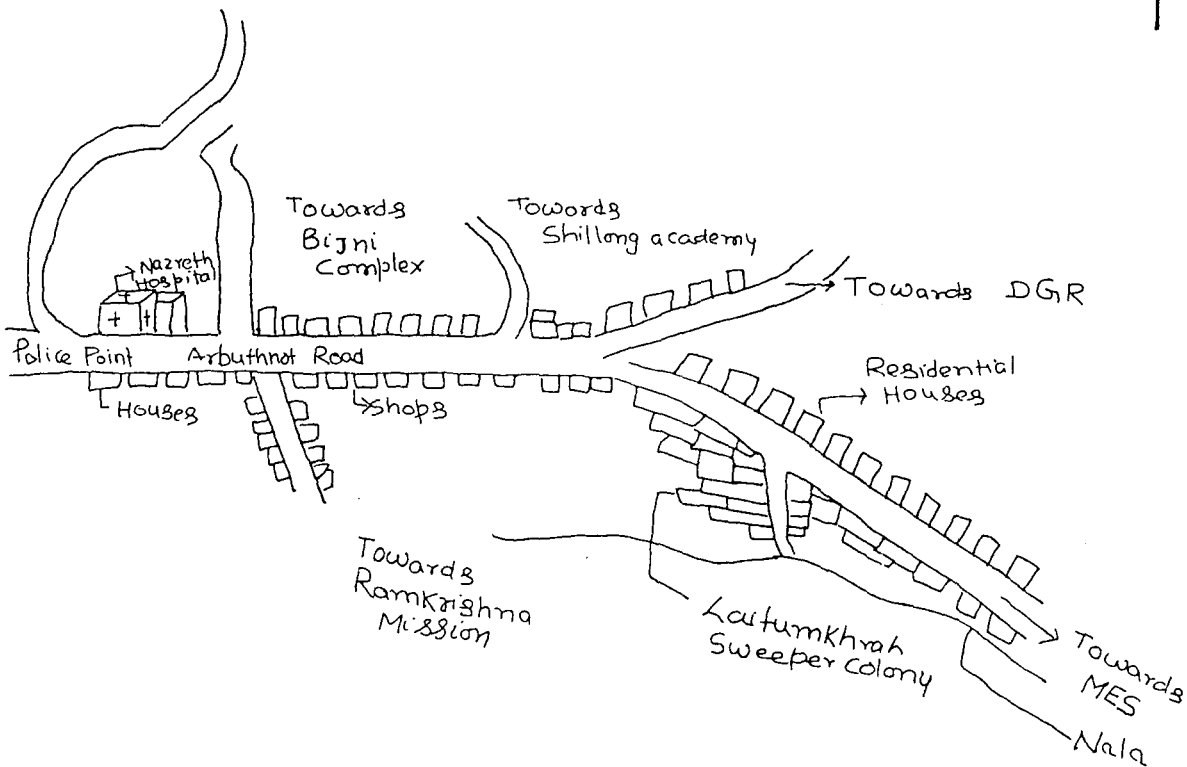
LEGEND

- Boundary-municipal, ward
- ==== Roads, metalled, unmetalled, track
- ~ Streams
- Settlements
- Slums

Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs

Map 4.3 (a)

Sketch Map of the Slum - Sweeper Colony, Laitumkhrab

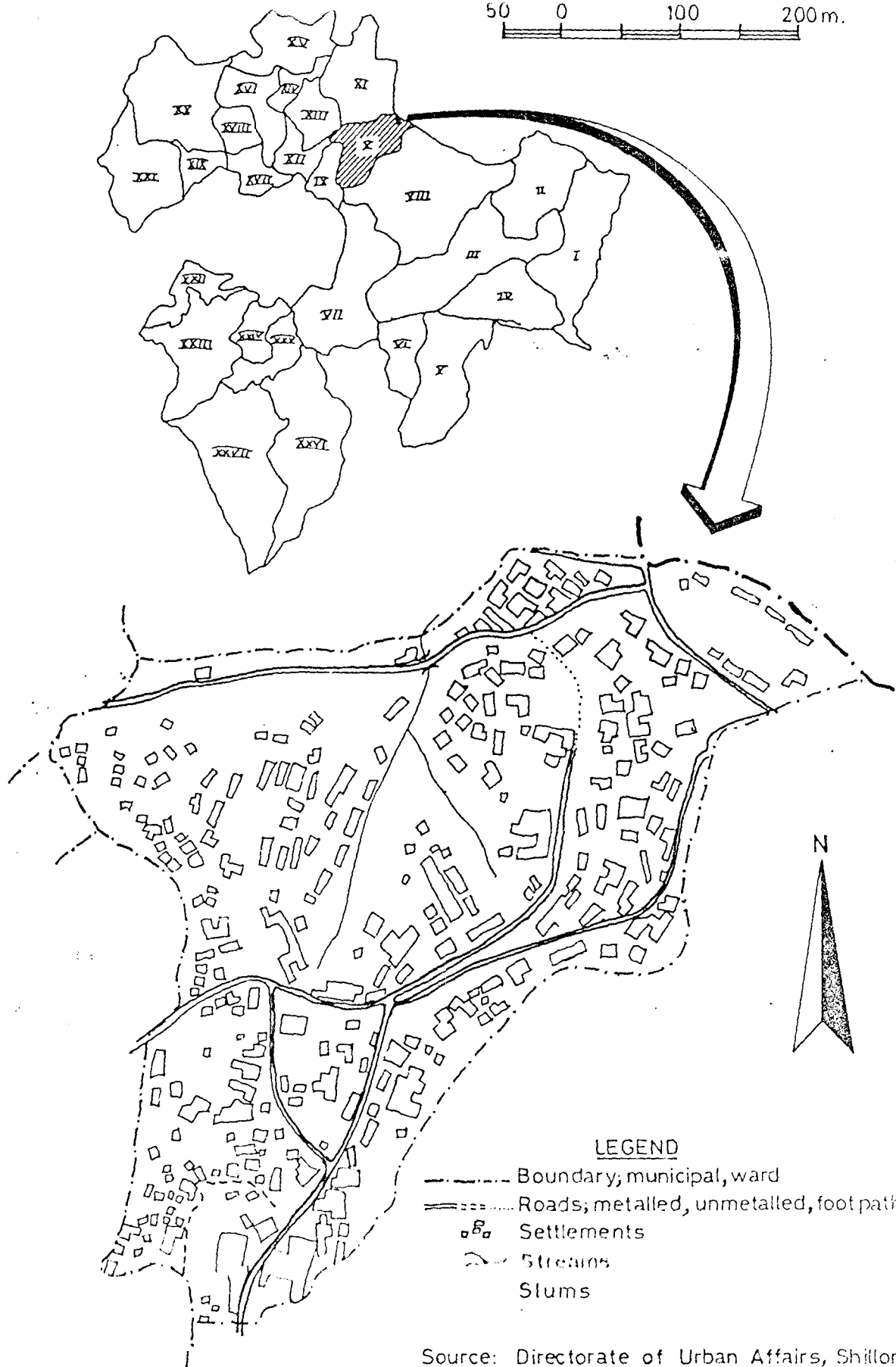


Not True to Scale

Map 4.3 (b)

LOCATION OF SAMPLE SLUM (WARD-X)
LALCHAND BASTEE, OUTSIDE W.B.

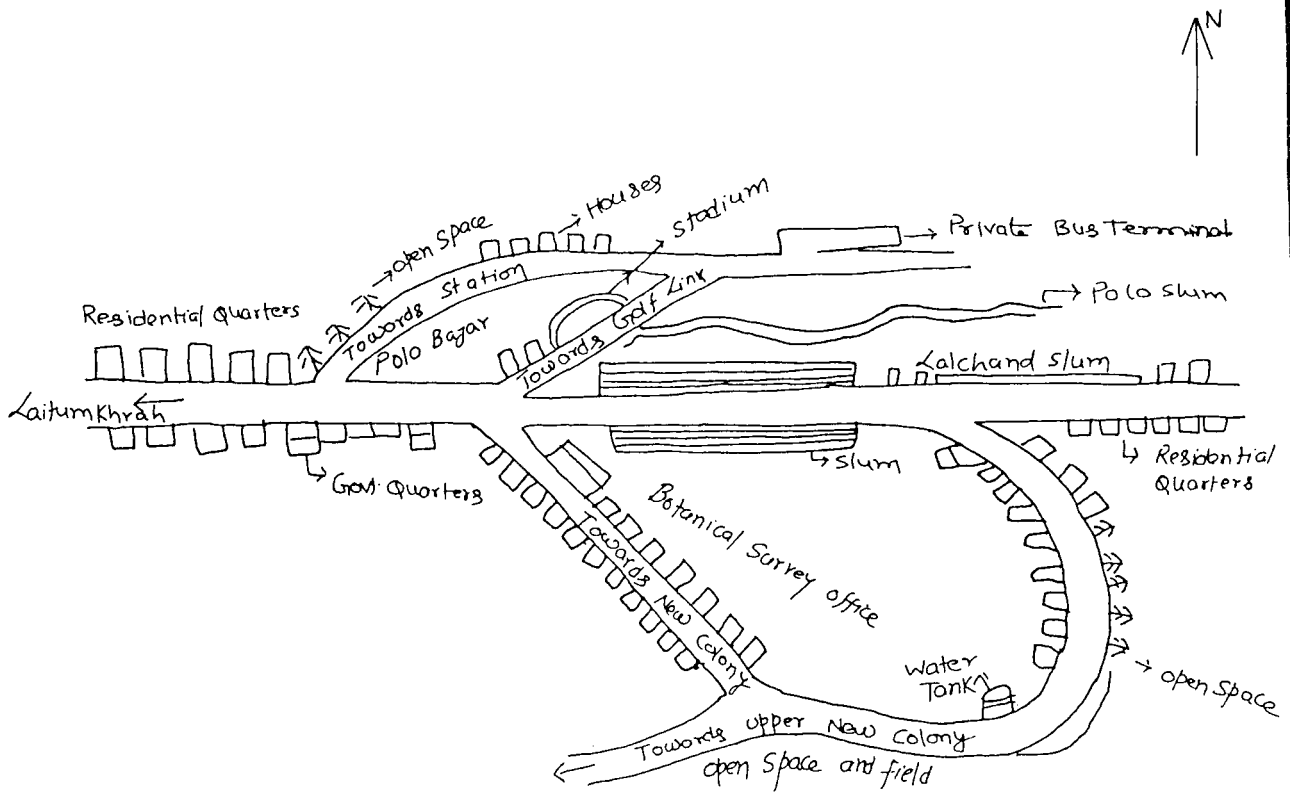
50 0 100 200m.



Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs, Shillong

Map 4.4 (a)

Sketch Map of the Slum - Lalchand Bustee

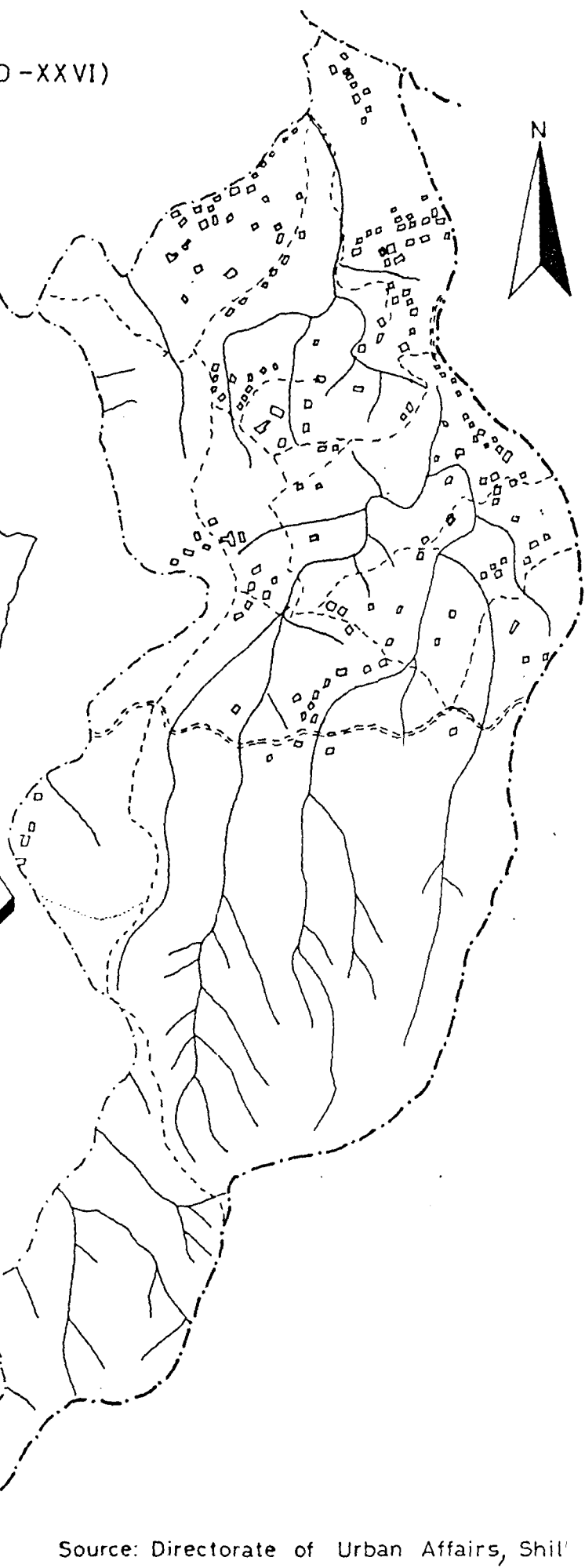
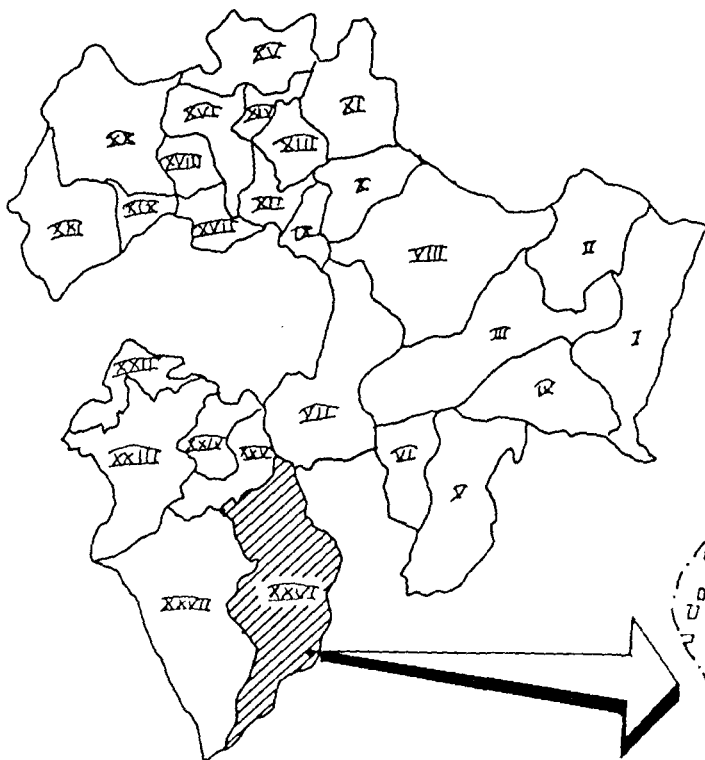


Not True to Scale

Map 4.4 (b)

LOCATION OF SAMPLE SLUMS (WARD-XXVI)
UPPER LUMPARING

0 100 200 300 400m.

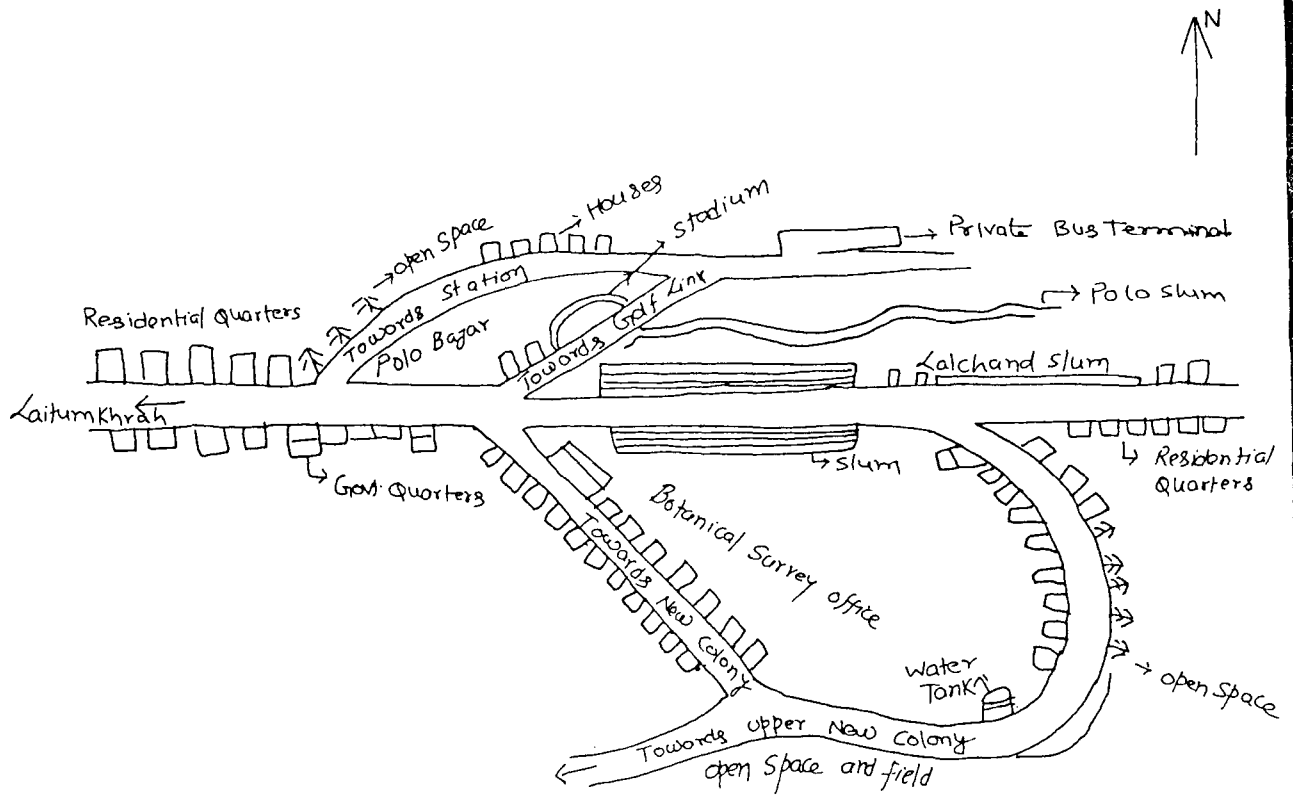


LEGEND

- Boundary; municipal, ward.
- Roads; metalled, unmetalled, track.
- Settlements
- ~ Streams
- Slums

Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs, Shillong

Sketch Map of the Slum - Lalchand Bustee



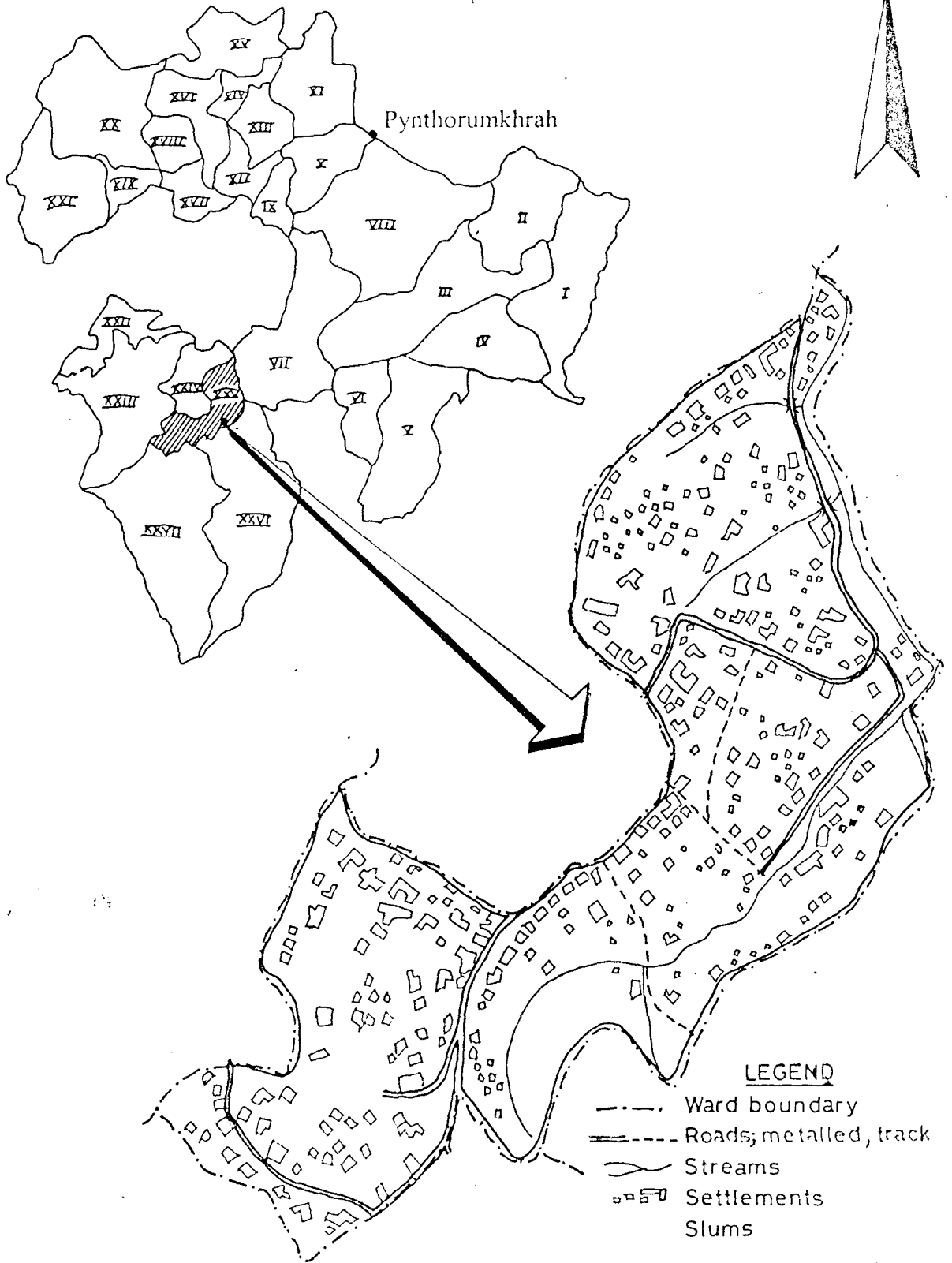
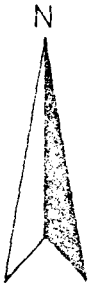
Not True to Scale

Map 4.4 (b)

1-11-2010

LOCATION OF SAMPLE SLUM (WARD-XXV)
LOWER LUMPARING

0 100 250 m.



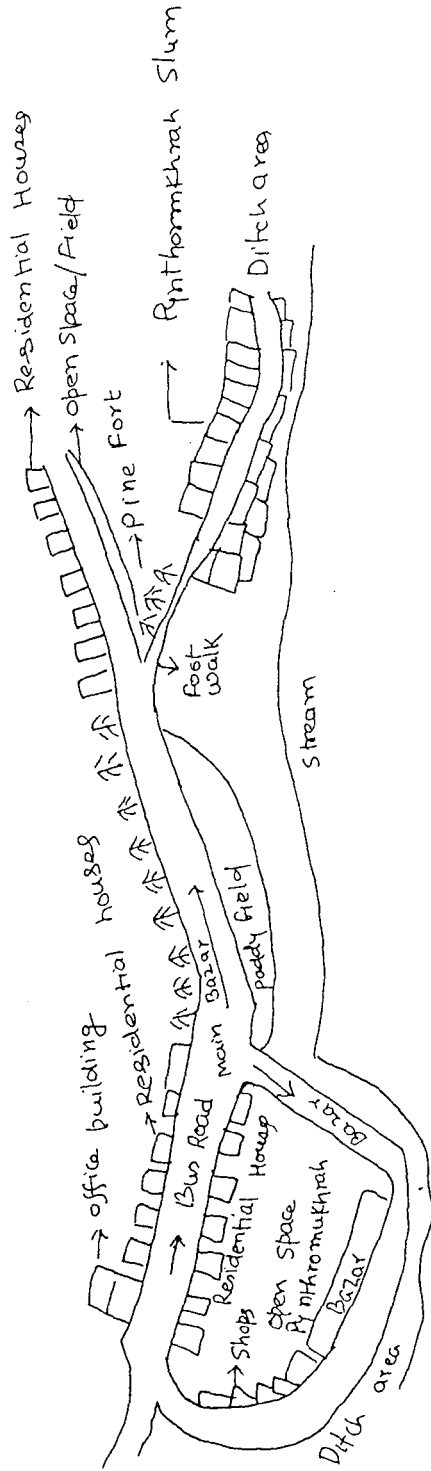
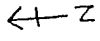
LEGEND

- Ward boundary
- Roads; metalled, track
- ~ Streams
- ▣▣▣▣ Settlements
- ▣▣▣▣ Slums

Source: Directorate of Urban Affairs, Shillong

Map 4.6 (a)

Sketch Map of the Slum - Pynthorumkhrach



Not True to Scale

to a specific slum in the city. Conversely, there is a process of relocation of households between poor neighbourhoods due to the safety perception along ethnic lines, because of the history of civic unrest in the recent past.⁵

The maps and sketch maps (Map Nos. 4.2-4.6 and Sketch Maps Nos. 4.2-4.6) gives an idea about the locational aspects of the slums.

4.3 Size of the slum

Sizes of slums depend on two factors - (a) the specific locational history of the slum, and (b) the fact, whether the slum is new or old.

New slums are generally smaller in size constituting recent migrants under classical rural-urban migration, i.e., sex selective (single male-migrant), age selective (young adults) and skill selective (semi-skilled/skilled) migrations. The size of families are small, invariably of a single individual. On the other hand, older slums include second or third generation migrants with the entire families having relocated. They also engineer migration of their kith and kin to the same location, as a result -- there is a greater potentiality of the slum to grow internally.

From the Table 4.1 it becomes apparent that a large section of the slum households consist of 4 to 5 members on an average. The study reveals that 42.5 per cent of the households are of 1 to 5 members, 48 per cent have 5-6 members, while 19.5 per cent have 7 members per household. However, there is considerable variation in size of households from slum to slum. In Lower Lumpang and Lalchand Bustee, a large section

⁵ Residential segregation along ethnic lines negates the very class characteristics of slums in general. In Indian slums (in metro-cities, e.g.) also as elsewhere, slums have been a melting-pot of diverse elements, of diverse origin, the binding factor alone being their poverty and sense of insecurity. Primordial relationships negate urban ethos. Such ethnicity related segregation of population in Shillong and to some extent in many towns in the region is an exceptional situation that smacks of a similarity with residential segregation of caste Hindu villages along caste lines, a feature of rural India and not of the urban India.



4.1 Open garbage drain close behind the squatter settlement
(Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar)



4.2 Approach path to slum settlement (Sweeper Lane of
S.E. Mawkhar)

of households are comparatively small in size but in Upper Lumparing, Pynthorumkhrah, Bara Bazar (sweeper colony) are large-sized households varying between 6 to 8 members, in these localities residential quarters vary from single to two-room hutments and the average sizes of the rooms does not exceed 10-12 sq.m. in area each. These slums present a scene of high residential density, dilapidated housing and a general unhygienic living conditions. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the slums are old and due to close physical contiguities, could not grow or expand-- their natural increase in population over the years has created a large population size in the area. A considerable section of the new migrations to the area have taken place due to consanguine factors and also because of the central location of the slums, particularly Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar (Bara Bazar) that has added further to the expansion of the slums resulting in high population density and extreme congestions.

Thus, it could be noted that in the city centre where there is concentration of employment but land is scarce, the slums have the highest density in comparison to the newly developed slums, that are small (population size) and have low physical densities. Within the overall density variations of the city, the slum density stands out. This has been explained in detail in the succeeding chapter.

4.4 Morphology of slums

The term morphology means the analysis of layout of the settlement, like house-type, streets, extension, the architecture, functionality and circulation systems etc. Usually the slums do not exhibit any planned morphology as they are the outcome of conditions of extreme deprivation, where basic minimum and bare existence is also a question. High degree of congestion and haphazard growth characterises the slums. They expand in almost any direction, as and where vacant land, ditches or patches become available.



4.4 Approach path to slum settlement (Sweeper Colony, Laitumkhrach)



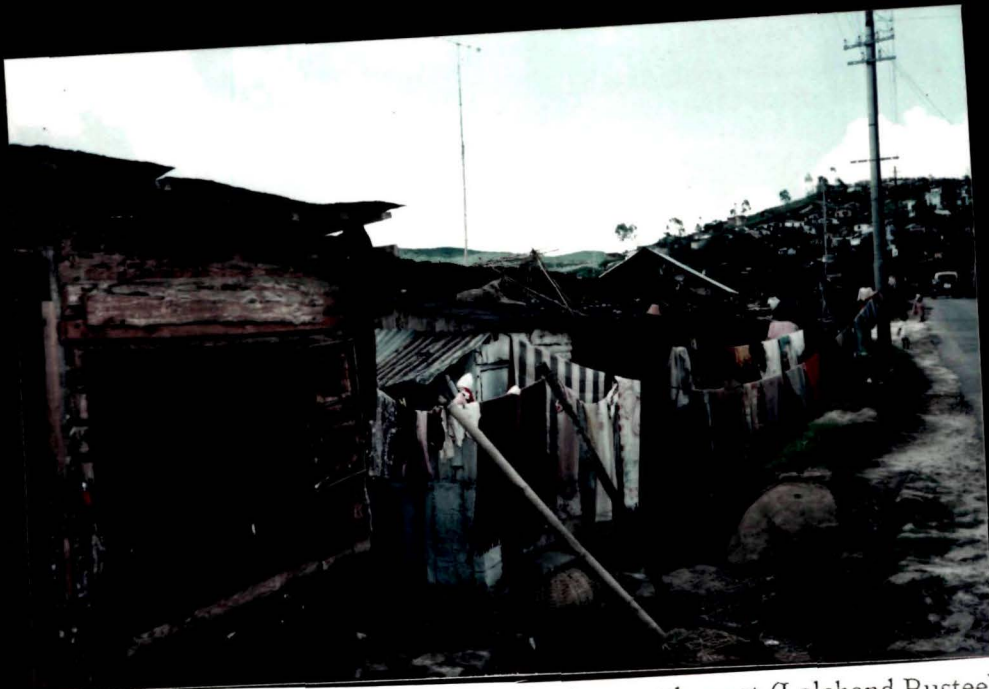
4.3 Typical dwelling of the urban poor (Sweeper Colony, Laitumkhrach)

Most slums occupy either the outskirts of the city or near the CBD and only occasionally at intermediate locations that are disputed private or government land lying vacant. Backyards of factories, alongside railway tracks, near sewerage lines are usually general areas of formation slums in most of the metropolises or big cities. Slums of Shillong also exhibit a close similarity to these characteristics. Initially these slums were outside the main township but gradually became part of the main city mainly because of geographical expansion of city. However, most of the slums occupy, comparatively marginal locations. Of the 24 declared slums, six have been taken for the detailed analysis.

Table 4.3: Sample Slums

| Name of the Slum | No. of Households | No. of Sample Households |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 164 | 16 |
| Latumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 131 | 13 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 710 | 71 |
| Upper Lumparing | 665 | 67 |
| Lower Lumparing | 695 | 69 |
| Pynthorunkhrah | 640 | 64 |
| Total 6 units | 3005 | 300 |
| Source Survey by the author, 1995 | | |

Geographical and social conditions did not permit the physical expansion of these slums despite being incorporated within the city limits -- most of this slums have been thriving in comparatively marginal and difficult locations like ditch areas, low-lands and alongside steep slopes, areas which are difficult for access. (Table 4.4 locational characteristics of sample localities) Increase in population no where led to extremely congested, situations. While S.E. Mawkhar, and sweeper lane are situated within CBD,



4.5

Congested road side slum settlement (Lalchand Bustee)



4.6

Inside of a typical slum dwelling (Lalchand Bustee)

Lalchand baste occupies most low lands which becomes flooded during the rainy season due to water logging. Similarly Pynthorumkhrah is far off from the main road with only a path marking the main communication line. Similar condition is found in upper & Lower Lumparing, where communication is only a pathway from the main Laban market, which becomes slippery and muddy during the rainy season. Only Gora line sweeper colony provide a comparatively easy access. (The reasons have been already discussed in the beginning of the chapters) Here also, conditions of congestion and unhygienic surroundings prevail. This is basically the consequence of arrival of new migrants and consequent continuous growth of the dwellings surrounding the permanent RCC buildings which serve as government quarter of the lower class of employees. These new constituents were possible because of a comparatively gentler slope alongside sweeper colony and thus expansion has taken place more or less in three directions except for the main road side. These new kachha hutments now touch the residential areas alongside which are mostly private houses owned by the local tribal and a few non-tribals as well.

Table 4.4
Locational Characteristics of sample Localities

| Name of the Slums | Slum Category Old/New (>/<25 Yrs.) | Nature of Slums Authorised/unauthorised | Locational Characters Locational characteristics |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| SL. S.E. Mawkher | Old | Authorised | Bara bazar near CBD |
| S.C. Laitumkhrah | Old | Authorised | At the Road side of Laitumkhrah MES Road (Gora Line) |
| Lalchand Bustee | New | Unauthorised | Away from the main Road near the Stream |
| U. Lumparing | New | Authorised | Along the main road |
| L. Lumparing | Old | Authorised | Approachable through a Kuchha Lane |
| Pynthorumkhrah | New | Unauthorised | Partly away from the main road and along the main road |

Source : Field Survey by the Author



4.7 Dilapidated housing condition of Khasi slum dwellers (Upper Lumpharing)



4.8 A typical Khasi house in the slum (Upper Lumpharing)

As the locational aspects along with social conditions and private land ownership do not allow uniform spatial expansion, the slums cannot be identified to any particular class or type, as the pattern varies between the bustees of Calcutta to *Jhugi-Jhopdi* and *Katras* of Delhi. There are about 24 declared slums in Shillong city. For the present study 6 slums have been selected taking the ethnic composition as the main criteria of sample selection.

Of the six, the Sweeper-lane of S.E. Mawkhar is the oldest. Though no particular date or data is available regarding origin of this slum, some of the slum dwellers are in their third generation in the area being inhabitant of the area for more than 50 to 60 years. Located in the C.B.D., this slum is absolutely unfit for habitation, with over-crowding, and usual congestion of population and almost no sanitary and public health facilities. The street lanes are narrow with rows of single and cheaply constructed tin-roofed rooms huddled together. The lane is also used as space for cooking and other daily uses like bathing and washing clothes etc. Waste water that spills on the lanes results in unhygienic conditions.

In comparison to this the other slums like Lalchand Bustee, Upper and Lower Lumparing are relatively newly developed slums. Though the dilapidated and unhygienic conditions strongly prevail in these areas as well, congestion and over crowding is comparatively less. This can be attributed to the ethnic composition and type of income and occupation of the slum dwellers. Most of the dwellings are usually single room tenements with no sanitary and water-supply facility. A great majority of such rooms are utterly obsolete. These resemble more or less to the jhuggi jhopdi colonies of the Delhi while a part of the Lalchand Bustee gives the impression of bustees of Calcutta.

To this a third category can be added for the slums of sweeper lane of Laitumkhrah, that partly is of permanent and double storied R.C.C buildings, mainly



4.9

Slum dwellings of the non-tribals (Lower Lumparing)



4.10

Location of the slum along the ditch and forest area (Pynthorumkhrah)



4.11

A tribal dwelling in the slum (Pynthorumkhrah)

Government quarters for the staff. Resembling the chawls of Bombay, some of these buildings are 30 to 40 years old and are built to standards that are utterly obsolete. The gradual decay and obsolescence have now made most of these buildings unfit for human habitation with over-crowding and congestion and the sanitary facilities fall far short of requirement.

Surrounding these buildings are temporary or semi-permanent residential structures with deteriorating sanitary conditions that have come up and are expanding further in slums. Over all, the hutments are made up of pieces of old tin-sheets, tarpolin/ plastic sheets, bamboo etc. There are no sanitary conveniences-- the areas are usually poorly-drained and the potable-water supply facility scanty. In between the hutments, there is no proper access or open space, except for foot-paths, less than a metre in width. The haphazard growth of hutments has led to most appalling sanitary conditions.

However, differences in housing conditions varies in case of the tribal occupants of the slums, particularly in the Lumparing area. Though the hutments are in dilapidated condition, the slums of Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah do bear a difference as far as sanitary conditions are considered. The reason may be attributed to less of congestion and crowding in these areas, since poverty among the tribal population of Shillong city is yet to take sharp physical manifestation in the form of slums. Thus, overall the slums of Shillong present a condition of uneven distribution with comparatively restricted growth and spread than its counter part in any other areas. (Ref. Plates)

4.5 Residential density, house types and material structure

The table 4.5 (a & b) states the residential density, per household and per person in the sampled slum areas. (Table 4.5(a & b) Residential Density Area per H.H). As the table

clearly indicates of the six slums sweeper lane of S.E. Mawkhar has minimum area, both per household and per person.

Table 4.5(a)
Residential density in selected slums (total)

| Name of the Slum | Area in sq. m. | No. of Households | Area/Household in sq.m. | Population | Area/ Person in sq.m. |
|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 1828.8 | 164 | 11.14 | 1250 | 1.46 |
| Laitumkhras (Sweeper Colony) | 1606.06 | 131 | 12.26 | 985 | 1.63 |
| Lalchand bustee | 10027.5 | 710 | 14.12 | 5153 | 1.94 |
| Upper Lumparing | 10800.3 | 665 | 16.24 | 3823 | 2.83 |
| Lower Lumparing | 10027.5 | 695 | 14.37 | 4986 | 2.01 |
| Pynthorumkhras | 10725.5 | 640 | 16.75 | 3750 | 2.86 |

Table 4.5(b)
Residential density in surveyed households

| Name of the Slum | No. of Surveyed Households | Population | Area of the Surveyed Households (sq. m.) | Area/ HH (sq. m.) | Area /Person (in sq. m.) |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 16.00 | 248.00 | 185.73 | 11.61 | 0.75 |
| Laitumkhras (Sweeper Colony) | 13.00 | 129.00 | 204.33 | 15.72 | 1.58 |
| Lalchand bustee | 71.00 | 719.00 | 1002.75 | 14.12 | 1.39 |
| Upper Lumparing | 67.00 | 531.00 | 1036.26 | 15.47 | 1.95 |
| Lower Lumparing | 69.00 | 556.00 | 890.66 | 12.91 | 1.60 |
| Pynthorumkhras | 64.00 | 511.00 | 1100.66 | 17.20 | 2.15 |

Lalchand Bustee exhibits low per person residential area though the area per household is comparatively high. This can be attributed to a number of semi-pucca and RCC houses in the area, where the residents are not essentially slum dwellers, However,

4.12(a&b) Type of house and construction materials in the slum



Building Materials are scrap tin sheets



Dilapidated housing conditions. At the sides are community toilets

low per person area establishes slum like conditions and comparatively high residential density.

In Upper Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah, area per household and area per person is more, it is comparatively less in cases of Lower Lumparing and Sweeper Colony (Table 4.5(a & b)). The reason for this can be attributed to the population compositions and residential dwelling available to them. In upper Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah a majority of the people are from nearby rural areas belonging to ST community. Being locals, most have built their own houses whereas the non-tribals are usually tenants since they cannot buy land for residential use.⁶ Consequently the residential conditions of the ST population are comparatively better.⁷

In Sweeper Colony, a number of Government quarters increase the area per person because of the permanent RCC structure but actually coming up of new shanties around the existing government accommodations, mostly by the kith and kin of the residents, the overall densities have grown and the area per person and per household is comparatively low in comparison to Upper Lumparing, Pynthorumkhrah and Lower Lumparing.

Congestion associated with unhygienic environmental sanitation conditions is one of the distinct characteristic of all slums, and slums of Shillong are no exception to this. Slum tenements are mostly made of temporary kuchha constructions of tin and wood. These are exposed to all kinds of hazards like fire and wind etc. (Table 4.6) gives the houses types in the surveyed slums. (Ref. Plates)

⁶ Under the Meghalaya Land Transfer Act(1979) the non-ST population cannot buy land in a normal (market) transaction.

⁷ In Lower Lumparing and sweeper colony (Laitumkhrah) Bengali and Punjabi, migrants constitute the majority of slum population, and thus have rented accommodation, which are often restricted to single rooms. Due to poor economic condition(income) these slum dwellers are forced to take up accommodation in areas devoid of any sanitary and basic facilities thereby further creating conditions of congestions.

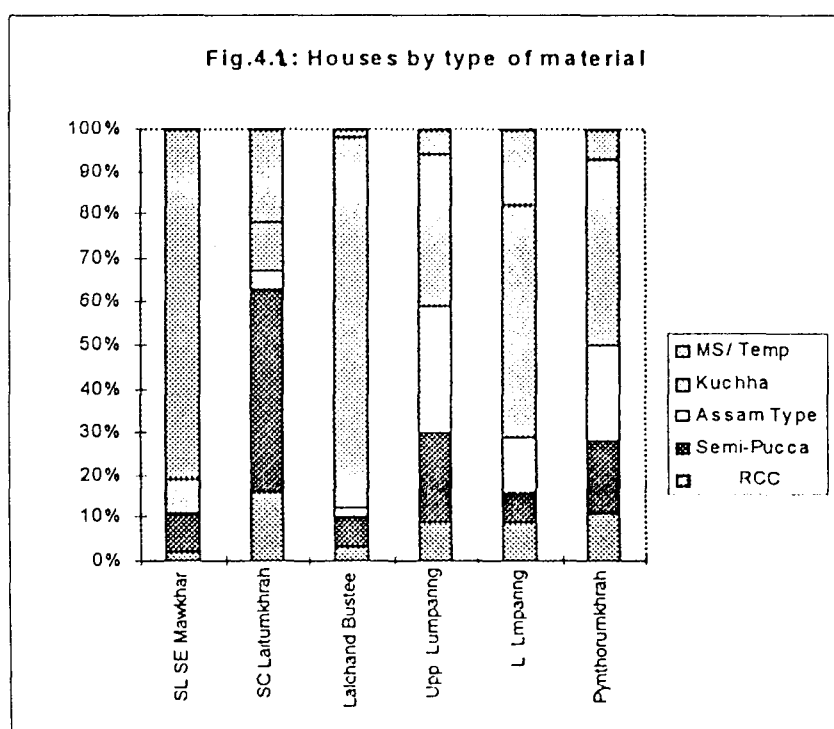
Table 4.6
Percentages of houses by types of construction material

| Localities | RCC | Semi-Pucca | Assam Type | Kuchha* | **MS/Temp |
|-----------------|-------|------------|------------|---------|-----------|
| SL SE Mawkhar | 2.00 | 9.00 | 0.00 | 8.00 | 80.00 |
| SC Laitumkhrach | 16.00 | 47.00 | 4.00 | 11.00 | 22.00 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 3.00 | 7.00 | 2.00 | 85.00 | 2.00 |
| Upp. Lumparing | 9.00 | 21.00 | 29.00 | 35.00 | 6.00 |
| L. Lumparing | 9.00 | 7.00 | 13.00 | 53.00 | 18.00 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 11.00 | 17.00 | 22.00 | 43.00 | 7.00 |

* - Kachha houses are usually made of mud walls and mud floors having thatch, tin or tarpaulin cloths as roofing.

** - Make shift type houses are those temporary hut/rooms constructed of tin, wood pieces, plastic sheets, tarpaulin, etc. These are disembarked and shifted as per need and availability of space particularly during the rainy season.

Fig. 4.1 : Houses by Types of Material



Lalchand Bustee has a maximum of 85 per cent of the houses kuchha, while a mere 7 per cent account for pucca (single-storied RCC/ Assam Type houses). The reason

may be attributed to the fact that the slum is of recent origin and is gradually being filled up by low income residents either by relocation or migrations from outside the city. The R.C.C. and the Assam Type houses are considerably old. Some of the new migrants into the slum do enter as tenants into parts of these houses. House-owners themselves reside in almost all the semi-pucca houses. Interestingly most of the house-owners belong to the Nepali community, while majority of the tenants are Bihari migrants.

Sweeper Colony (Mawkhar) is the oldest slum of Shillong located at the heart of the C.B.D. The slum represents situation of congestion and all possible unhygienic conditions in the area. As Table 4.6 shows almost 80 per cent of the dwellings are of temporary types. The rooms are usually made of tiny wood-bricks and plastic (clothes) and are arranged along both sides of the narrow lanes. The slum present a picture of total neglect, and there is absolute lack of order. As most of the slum dwellers are in their third generation, they have large families and hence, high residential congestion could be observed. Most of the hutments are self-made. Sweeper colony is strongly dominated by Sikh migrants who are usually engaged as sweeper/cleaners and work as casual labourers in Bara Bazar area. Interestingly, the dwellings along the main road are slightly better off in comparison with the hutments located in inner areas. Some of the dwellings have semi-pucca construction, while a few are of R.C.C. or of Assam types. (Ref. Table 4.6)

In comparison to this, both Upper and Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah have less percentage of kuchha houses, i.e., 35, 53, and 43 per cent, respectively. In these localities, the ST population particularly those belonging to Khasis and Garos generally

have their own residences.⁸ As majority of the houses are of Assam type and have separate boundaries, the conditions of congestion are not prominent. Since majority of the residents belong to ST community and the society is semi-egalitarian, the caste based social segregation is not a dominant factor like that of other slums. The occupation pattern in these slums varies from petty traders, vendors to casual workers. Hence, the house type and the materials used for construction varies as per the ethnic composition, occupation type and other socio-economic factors, varying from one slum to another.

4.6 Physical amenities

Access

Slums are located in marginal areas and also the colonies are very often unauthorised. Thus, there is little civic amenities that are either available or extended to such colonies. Though they exist and flourish on the fringes of an urban civilisation, contributing to its comforts and to its wealth, their existence is denied either by law or by the civic authorities. The slum thus, exists and it exists not. Though the slum represents poverty, the poverty is not entirely due to lack of income but very often the lack of amenities and civic support that lead to a degraded physical existence that only compounds the conditions of lack or inadequate income. Since the colonies are unauthorised they do not contribute by way of direct house taxes. They are not even holders of civic franchise under the existing legal provisions. Thus, they suffer a voiceless existence. The civic government cannot spend much resources in those areas since they are unauthorised.

⁸ It may be noted that in all slums whether in small or middle order cities or in metropolitan cities all residents are not necessarily poor. Very often either exorbitant land prices or artificial restrictions in the land market prevents many who otherwise could buy/ construct their own accommodations. In case of Shillong it appears that restrictions on land acquisition by the non-STs could be atleast one reason that many, not-so-poor also live in slums or in slum-like conditions.

Prior to launching of the central scheme of EIUS⁹ in 1972 under the Twenty Point Programme no civic amenities were available. The scheme at least provided some succour to the authorised colonies thereafter though.

Table 4.7
Percentage of households by types of access

| Slum | Metalled Road | Lane | Footpath | Kuchha Road* | Seasonal Lane | Total |
|------------------|---------------|------|----------|--------------|---------------|-------|
| SL. S.E. Mawkher | 2.6 | 17.3 | 2.3 | 59.2 | 18.6 | 100 |
| S.C. Laitumkhrah | 2.6 | 20.6 | 22.3 | 46.6 | 7.9 | 100 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 0.9 | 23.6 | 4.7 | 49.3 | 21.5 | 100 |
| U. Lumparing | 8.9 | 29.2 | 17.6 | 28.0 | 16.3 | 100 |
| L. Lumparing | 3.1 | 19.2 | 9.7 | 42.3 | 25.7 | 100 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 4.3 | 32.7 | 16.1 | 33.7 | 13.2 | 100 |

Note : The percentage of accessibility of the sampled households have been calculated on the basis of locational aspects like location near metalled road, foot-path, along lane, along kuchha road, etc.

* - The seasonal parts basically refers to foot-tracks which changes every season particularly during the rains.

In case of the six slums studied, as is evident from table-4.8, less than 10 per cent of the households have a physical access directly to a metalled road, i.e., by way of their location along an existing road. Less than 30 per cent have access to separate lane and the rest have to manage with either a footpath or kuchha roads often unsuitable for safe movements.

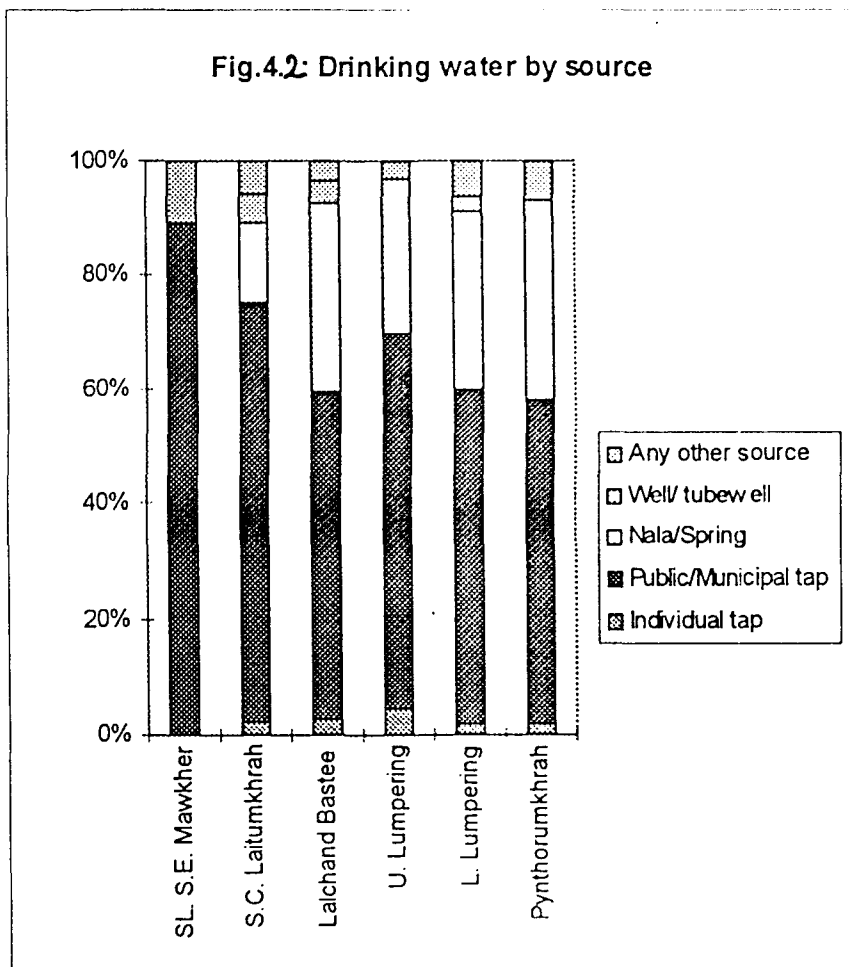
⁹ EIUS, Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums

Table 4.8
Availability of Drinking Water

| Name of the locality | Individual tap | Public/Municipal tap | Nala/Spring | Well/ tubewell | Any other source |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| SL. S.E. Mawkher | 0.18 | 89.23 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.59 |
| S.C. Laitumkhrach | 2.46 | 72.68 | 14.22 | 4.83 | 5.81 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 2.58 | 56.89 | 33.27 | 3.84 | 3.42 |
| U. Lumparing | 4.53 | 65.22 | 27.24 | 0.12 | 2.89 |
| L. Lumparing | 1.83 | 58.22 | 31.24 | 2.58 | 6.13 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 1.98 | 56.68 | 35.37 | 0.00 | 6.97 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Fig 4.2 : Drinking Water by Source





4.13 Source of drinking water in the slum



4.14 (a & b) Cooking cum bath space of the slum dwellers



Congested bath-cum-cooking space

The minimum facilities, like potable water, sanitation and electricity are woefully inadequate in all the localities surveyed. Cesspools of waste water stagnate in most of the areas. As evident from the table 4.8 and Fig. 4.2 that depict the availability of drinking water facilities of the six slums, Lalchand bustee and Lower Lumparing have the least drinking water facility. In any case, individualised water supply does not exceed, per cent of the households in all the slums covered. Most of the slum dwellers in these areas collect water either from the public tap (which has either irregular, scanty or unreliable supply) or from the small *nalas* and springs from a distance away from their residences.

The condition is even more precarious as far as internal sanitation is concerned (Ref Plates). Table 4.9 (a & b) deals with locality-wise percentages of various modes of WCs available for the slum residents. In localities other than the two Lumparing areas the percentage of households without any access to sanitation exceeds 50 per cent. Only in the Lumparings the of households without any bath or latrine accounts for 26.80 per cent and 23.63 per cent respectively.

Table 4.9(a)
Sanitation

| Name of the Slum | Bath & Latrine | | Only Latrine | | Only Bathroom/Separate Place for Bath | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------|--------------|---------|---------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| | Inside | Outside | Inside | Outside | Inside | Outside | None |
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 0.9 | 2.6 | 1.8 | 2.8 | 1.3 | 2.7 | 87.2 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 2.7 | 4.8 | 6.8 | 10.4 | 1.9 | 5.8 | 67.6 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 1.4 | 5.9 | 1.7 | 8.5 | 2.6 | 9.3 | 70.6 |
| Upper Lumparing | 1.2 | 10.4 | 2.3 | 15.6 | 5.3 | 8.6 | 56.6 |
| Lower Lumparing | 2.3 | 12.5 | 9.7 | 21.6 | 8.4 | 18.7 | 26.8 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 0.97 | 14.3 | 4.7 | 28.9 | 6.3 | 21.2 | 23.63 |

Source: Based on fieldwork by the author

Table 4.9(b)
Sanitation (WC)

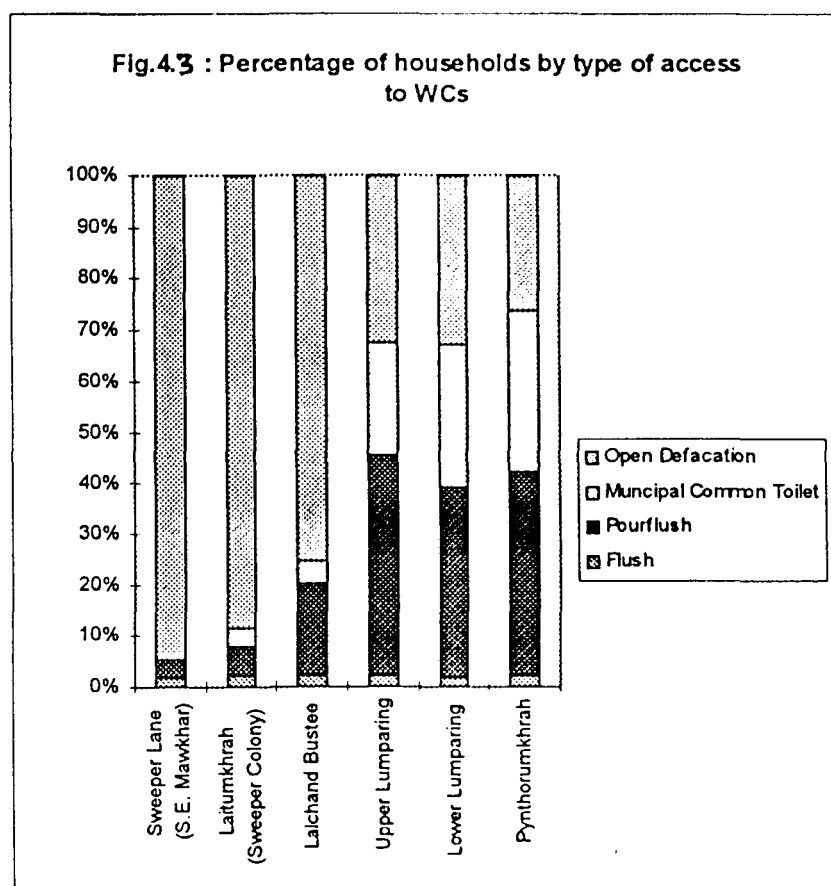
| Name of the slum | Type of WC available | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| | Flush | Pour-flush | Municipal Common Toilet | Open Defecation |
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 1.8 | 3.7 | 0* | 94.5 |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | 2.1 | 5.8 | 3.8* | 88.3 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 2.3 | 17.9 | 4.4* | 75.4 |
| Upper Lumparing | 2.2 | 43.4 | 22.1 | 32.5 |
| Lower Lumparing | 1.9 | 37.3 | 28.1 | 32.7 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 2 | 40.3 | 31.2 | 26.5 |

Source: Based on fieldwork by the author

Note : In Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) slum, the common Municipality toilets are not used by the slum dwellers because of lack of maintenance and resultant extreme unhygienic conditions ref. Plate No. 4.7.

* - These are kachha latrines (toilets temporarily constructed outside each house or may be common for 2/3 households. These are usually constructed near the drain/nallah or stream and does not need pourflush system.

Fig 4.3 : Percentage of Household by Types of Access to WCs





4.15

Condition of community toilets in the slum



4.16

Kuchha toilet in the slum

In three slums, i.e., Sweeper Lane (Mawkhar), Sweeper Colony (Laitumkhrach) and Lalchand Bustee, the level of open defecation is more than 75 per cent. In the other three the level is around 30 per cent. Less than 2 per cent of the households have relatively modern WCs within the residences. This may be accounted for by those non-poor within the slums. About one-third of the households have access to common municipal latrines, that generally construe a health hazard due to lack of maintenance and general neglect.

Only 15 per cent households in Lalchand Bustee and about 40 per cent in Lumparing have separate kitchens within the residence -- otherwise the single room dwellings themselves are used for cooking food also. This attracts additional hazards of smoke to women and children who are exposed for a longer duration.

It is however interesting to note that almost in all the surveyed slums electricity connection is there. (Table 4.10). Though most of these are single connection and are illegal but a majority of the hutment do have them. The connections are taken from the poles and other mines passing through near the area for connection lines in the city.

Table 4.10
Access to power connection

| Name of the Slum | Percentage of Household Having Electricity Connection | | | Nature of Connection | | Street Lights along Roadside/Street/Footpath/Lane (%) | |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------|---|------|
| | Single Point | 2-4 Points | Morethan 4 Points | Legal | Illegal | Yes | NA |
| Sweeper Lane (Mawkhar) | 68.2 | 27.1 | 4.7 | 8.7 | 91.3 | 5.3 | 94.7 |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | 56.3 | 28.9 | 14.8 | 22.7 | 77.3 | 6.8 | 93.2 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 63.1 | 28.3 | 8.6 | 10.4 | 89.6 | 3.8 | 96.2 |
| Upper Lumparing | 42.1 | 20.6 | 37.3 | 29.9 | 73.1 | 6.3 | 93.7 |
| Lower Lumparing | 59.2 | 30.3 | 10.5 | 31.8 | 68.2 | 5.9 | 94.1 |
| Pyntorumkhrach | 38.7 | 51.4 | 9.9 | 16.6 | 83.4 | 6.7 | 93.3 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author



4.17 Shop cum living quarter in the slum



4.18 Inside of a slum dwelling

Most of the slum households have access to electric power as seen from Table 4.10, about half of them having a single point connection. However, 70 to 90 per cent of the households have illegal access from the overhead lines that construe a fire hazard and are unsafe. Around 90 per cent of the residents have no access to lanes or footpaths provided with street lighting.

The need for open space or places of community gatherings whether of religious or secular type is essential to slum life, due to the congestion, over-crowding and dense living conditions to which the dwellers are subjected to days on end, particularly for women and children who are confined to the limited spaces of their tenements. As evident from the Table 4.11, there is almost no specific space marked for community celebration and gathering except for Sweeper Colony, Laitumkhrah where a Gurudwara serves as a centre for such gatherings on religious occasions. Absence of skilled labour~~s~~ also restricts presence of any craft or training centres in the slums. There are no open spaces or playgrounds whatsoever in the localities. In upper and lower Lumparing, there are two community centres run by the ULB that serves as creches as well as for community gatherings, meetings and for craft training for adolescent girls of the locality.

Table 4.11
Access to community space

| Name of the slum | No. of Vocational Training Centre | No. of Anganbadi/Handicraft Centre | No. of Community Halls/Clubs/Centre |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sweeper Lane (Mawkhar) | Nil | Nil | Nil |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | Nil | 1 | 1 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 1 | Nil | Nil |
| Upper Lumparing | Nil | Nil | 1 |
| Lower Lumparing | Nil | Nil | 1 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | Nil | Nil | Nil |

Note : 1. In Laitumkhrach Sweeper Colony one tailoring-cum-knitting centre is run by two ladies only. The slum also has a Gurudwara which serves as a community space during the time of festival.

2. In Lalchand Bustee one MES carpenter runs one room shop-cum-training centre and teaches some of the Bihari youths.

3. Lower Lumparing has a Shiva temple which is occasionally thronged by the Bengalis and Nepalese particularly at the time of festivals.

4.7 Income level of households

The slums of Shillong have grown in core and periphery of the municipal fringe areas. These slums unlike those of other big metropolis are not the product of industrialisation, but is the outcome of socio-economic conditions and migration in to the city. Consequently, a large section of the slum-dwellers who are interstate migrants, are usually engaged in the informal-sector that have insecurity of tenure or earning. The average income, therefore, does not exceed Rs. 1500 while a large section fall below that. Mostly daily-wage earners, the slum-dwellers are caught in perpetual indebtedness and vicious cycle of poverty and deprivation. The income levels however, vary from one slum to another and also depends upon the ethnic composition of the slums. From Table 4.12, one could ascertain the average income of the residents¹⁰. As the table reveals there exist variations in the income levels between the slums. While in the Sweeper Lane (S.E.

¹⁰ The standard poverty line as per 1991 is Rs. 11850/- per annum or Rs. 1000/- per month per household.

Mawkhar) 65.82 per cent of the population fall below the poverty line i.e. 18.2 per cent having income below 1/2 poverty line, i.e., below Rs. 500 and 47.61 per cent having income upto income of Rs. 1000 only. Most of these groups are new migrants (migrated less than- 10 years earlier) mostly unskilled who are engaged in unorganised sector. At the same time about 30 per cent of the slum dwellers (29.85) and 4 Per cent (3.33) have an average income of Rs. 1000 to 1500 and above 1500 respectively. This can be explained as improvement in the standard of living of the slum dwellers, who are usually older migrants and have managed to get into the organised and semi organised sectors getting an assured income and regularity of job.

Next to Sweeper Lane Lalchand Bustee has higher percentage of slum dwellers under 1/2 poverty line i.e. below Rs. 500 per month (17.21 per cent) and within the poverty line of Rs. 1000 per month (42.21 per cent) respectively. The reason for this is more or less the same as that of sweeper lane. Being new migrants into the area, and absence of secured job often leads to the unorganised sector, where these slum dwellers are mostly under paid and have uncertainty of regular employment as well.

In comparison to these two slums, Sweeper Colony of Laitumkhrach, Upper and Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrach show a considerably better position. In Laitumkhrach Sweeper Colony, almost 44 per cent show income levels above the poverty line. This is because of their employment in the government/organised sector (Mostly in group C and D). While 38 per cent show income between Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1000/- per month. These usually are the new migrants who are yet to find jobs and are mostly unskilled and therefore engaged temporarily in the unorganised sector.

In Lower Lumparing, Upper Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrach, the nature of job like vendors or drivers helps the slum dwellers to have income around Rs. 1000 to Rs. 1500 per month and consequently a slightly better economic position in comparison to

their counterparts in the two slums of Sweeper Lane and Lalchand Bustee. Among the Khasis, holdings of small agricultural land or small shops also helps for a comparatively better income, while among the Garos and Jaintias the number of young girls working as helping hands in the non-tribal houses in the city contributes towards a better economic position of the households. It is noteworthy that almost all the slums a small percentage (ranging between 2-8 per cent) of population has income above Rs. 1500 per month, which can be explained as these groups moved above the poverty line through a better occupation and consequently stable and regular income. Further, another reason could be more number of earning members in the family helping to maintain a better economic position.

Table 4.12
Level of household income (Rs. per month)

| Name of the slum | Percentage of income class to total households | | | |
|-------------------|--|----------|-----------|-------|
| | <500 | 501-1000 | 1001-1500 | >1500 |
| SL. (Mawkhar) | 18.21 | 47.61 | 29.85 | 3.33 |
| S.C. Laitumkhrach | 12.65 | 38.23 | 43.81 | 4.31 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 17.21 | 42.21 | 38.53 | 2.05 |
| U. Lumparing | 9.82 | 31.63 | 51.83 | 6.72 |
| L. Lumparing | 10.23 | 29.76 | 56.89 | 3.12 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 7.61 | 23.83 | 61.12 | 7.44 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author.

Note : The income figures are approximate as most of the slum dwellers were hesitant to reveal their actual income. Also due to occupation in the informal sector and irregular income patterns only average income has been calculated here depending upon the respondent and participant observation.

Fig.4.5 indicates that the slum-wise income distribution is differentiated between the tribal localities like Upper and Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah vis a vis the non-tribal localities like the two sweeper colonies and Lalchand Bustee since the modal values are different and the intra-slum income distribution is skewed in the former group. This validates the ethnicity consideration even in the light of income distribution.

Fig.4.6: Cummulative income distribution

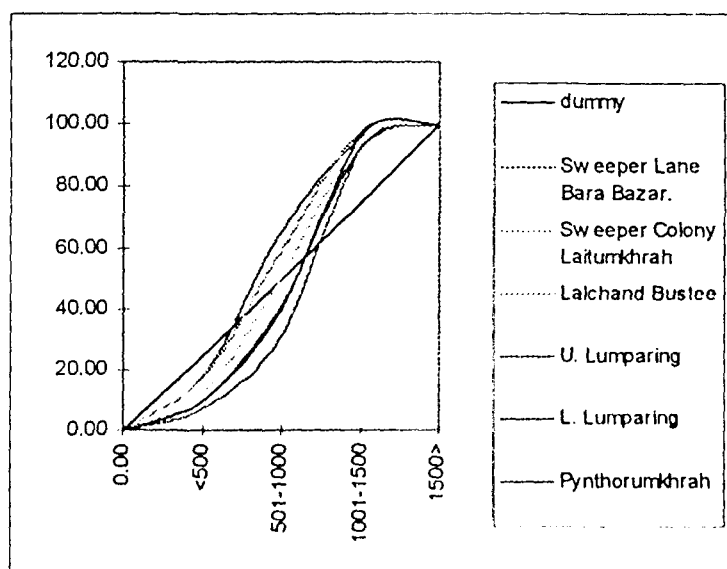


Fig.4.6 indicates the income distribution cummulatives against an egalitarian line of distribution and confirms the position earlier.¹¹

¹¹ This is not a Lorenz Curve but is useful in observing the cummulative distribution and comparison between slums.

4.8 Summary of findings:

From the analysis on the forms of poverty in Shillong city the following conclusions can be made,

1. The site and location of slums usually display marginal locational conditions and slums of Shillong city are no exception to this. At least 35 per cent of the city's population reside in the slums. These slums are unevenly distributed particularly reflecting specific ethnic concentrations. Geographical and social conditions do not permit the physical expansion of these slums, and despite being incorporated within the city limit most of these slums have been thriving in marginal and difficult locations like ditch areas, low lands, and along the side of steep slopes, areas which are difficult to access.
2. Two types of slums are prominent in context of Shillong city - old and new. New slums are generally smaller in size constituting recent migrants who have small family size (often individual), while the older slums are bigger in size and usually have second or third generation migrants with entire families having got relocated.
3. As the geographical locational aspects along with social conditions and private land ownership does not allow uniform spatial expansion, the slums cannot be identified to any particular type. The pattern varies between the Bustees of Calcutta to Jhuggi-Jhopdi and Katras of Delhi.
4. General congestion associated with unhygienic environmental sanitation conditions prevail in the slums of Shillong city. The tenements are mostly made of temporary kachha construction made of tin and wood and are exposed to all kinds of hazards. However, the house type and the material used for construction varies with the ethnic composition, occupation type and other socio-economic factors among and within the slums.
5. The minimum facilities like potable water, sanitation and electricity are woefully inadequate, though with the launching of EIUS Scheme (Environment Improvement of

Urban Slums) some relief to the slums have occurred. However, differences in sanitation condition varies between the slums and is very much different between the tribal and the non-tribal segments of the slum dwellers.

6. A large section of the slum dwellers who are inter-state migrants, are usually engaged in informal sector that have no security of tenure or earning. The average income therefore does not exceed Rs. 1500 per month while a large section fall below the poverty line. The degree however, varies from one slum to another and among and within the different ethnic groups. The tribal occupants of the slums have a comparatively better position, thereby indicating that poverty is more externally induced than growing in the city.

Chapter V

Social and Economic Composition of the Poor

5.1 Introductory Statement:

The current chapter deals with the social and economic composition (content) of the poor in slum localities of Shillong. Designing of appropriate alleviation programmes hinges on recognition of the social and economic background and reasons of the target group. It is gradually recognised that the poor cannot alone be distinguished from the non-poor on the basis of an income or consumption standards alone, rather a host of non-economic parameters often determine the specific debilitation of the group.¹ Questions, therefore, are often asked -- who are the poor ? Are they migrants ? What ethnic background do they belong to ? What occupation or trade do they come out from ? Are they educated or illiterate ? Do their children get schooling ? How do they figure in terms of health and nutrition ? This chapter deals with such issues relating to the urban poor of Shillong in order to understand the underlying content or the processes which regulate such living conditions that these slums exhibit particularly in the context of social and ethnic differentiation and the associated occupations.

In order to answer ~~to~~ these questions the following indicators have been taken in to consideration for analysing the poverty conditions of the slum-dwellers.

- (i) Migration
- (ii) Rural-urban background of the slum-dwellers.

¹ Report of the Working Group, Planning Commission (1993), *op.cit.*

- (iii) Age-sex composition
- (iv) Ethnicity and language
- (v) Education and literacy status
- (vi) Social disabilities
- (vii) Religion
- (viii) Occupations
- (ix) Women in slums
- (x) Status of children (nutrition, health, education)

5.2 Migrants in the slum

In the six slums studied migrants constitute 59.7 per cent of the households. Migration to cities is largely with a motive of economic benefits, either employment or some other form of self-employment activities in the informal sectors. A very large section of migrants is of inter-state origin and belong to low level socio-economic pursuits². Migration of individuals or families has relationships based on the caste, kinship, language and religion etc.. These networks play an important role in the recruitment of migrants to jobs and the choice of locality for residence. Caste and kinship relationships are pronounced in choice of residence in specific localities among all migrants. They are stronger among the lower castes due to a perception of insecurity and discrimination.³ The majority of the migrants usually have acquaintances in the city to which they migrate and interestingly, the occupation of the acquaintance has a bearing on the occupation of the migrant as well, e.g., they may belong to the same caste/ traditional profession or the acquaintance has a greater access into a specific *niche* occupation to which he can

² Most of the interstate migrants are Scheduled Castes and have predominantly rural background, having migrated more under the impact of push factor than pull from their place of origin.

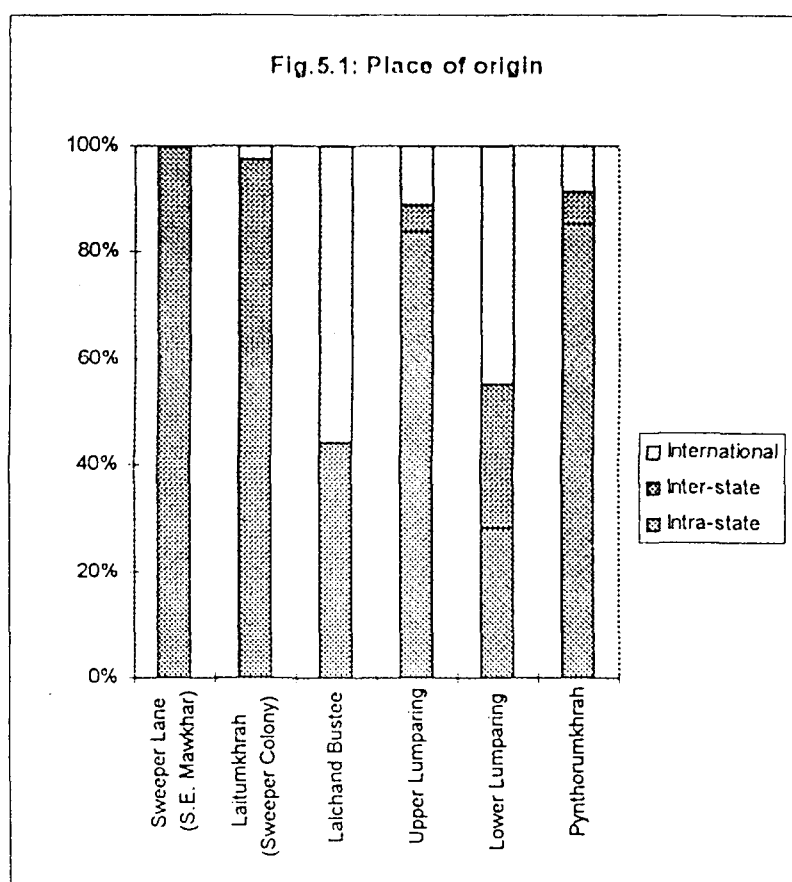
³ The travesty of Indian caste system though much reprehensible also provided security to its members in times of difficulty as observed even among the higher castes. These alliances worked as a mechanism of insurance in premodern times. Even today there are caste "sabhas" that promotes various welfare measures, but lately has taken a turn for political leveraging.

introduce the new comer. Of all the migrants, 84.5 percent are males and only a mere 15.5 percent are females. This is indicative of the sex selectivity of migration. More than 70 percent of the migrants belong to the age group of 15-49, that indicates recent migration from other states. This may be attributed to both pull and push factors (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1(a)
Place of migration

| Name of the Slums | Intra-state | Inter-state | International |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 0 | 99.92 | 0.08 |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | 0 | 97.37 | 2.63 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 0 | 42.72 | 53.8 |
| Upper Lumparing | 79.2 | 4.58 | 10.42 |
| Lower Lumparing | 24.91 | 23.67 | 39.17 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 80.94 | 5.75 | 8.04 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author



Shillong, because of its historicity; is cosmopolitan and so is the case with its slums. Keeping in mind the vast ethnic diversity of the city as well as its slums, the choice of the selection of the slums was based on the ethnic diversity, i.e., to accommodate the specificities as well as the generalities of the ethnic diversity. For example, the Sweeper colonies of Mawkhar and Laitumkhras are examples of specificities, where the migrants from Punjab that accompanied the British army during World War II were settled to assist in municipal services. The Lumparing is largely tribal dominated, whereas the Lalchand Bustee and Pynthorumkhras are mixed colonies of Nepalese, Bengalees, Biharis and the tribals.

Table 5.1(b)
Place of migration

| Name of the Slums | Khasi | Garo | Jaintia | Punjabi | Bihari | Bengali | Assamese | Nepali | Others |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|---------|--------|---------|----------|--------|--------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 87.98 | 2.13 | 0.00 | 9.81 | 0.08 | 0.00 |
| Laitumkhras (Sweeper Colony) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 76.82 | 12.72 | 0.00 | 7.83 | 2.63 | 0.00 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 3.19 | 31.62 | 12.57 | 3.23 | 45.91 | 7.89 |
| Upper Lumparing | 40.26 | 28.51 | 10.43 | 0.00 | 0.56 | 8.07 | 3.16 | 3.21 | 7.21 |
| Lower Lumparing | 11.25 | 9.86 | 3.80 | 0.00 | 1.86 | 51.13 | 2.53 | 7.32 | 31.85 |
| Pynthorumkhras | 51.85 | 19.23 | 9.86 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 11.02 | 0.94 | 1.83 | 6.21 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

As shown in the Table 5.1(b), inter-state migration is more dominant than the intra-state migration. A perusal of the table clearly brings out that in the total migration pattern two states namely Punjab and Bihar strongly dominates the scene with the percentage of 87.98 and 31.62 respectively. While in the case of international migration, Nepal strongly dominates with the percentage of 45.91, followed by Bangladesh.

Interestingly, intra-state migration is still low, though rural to urban migration can be traced. Except for migration from the Khasi Hills (within which the city is located),

other areas show a lower percentage of 28.51 and 10.48 respectively, thereby indicating that the push factor is not a serious issue in the rural urban stream.

Duration of Residence

Table 5.2
Duration of residence

| Name of the Slums | <5 | 5 to 10 | 10 to 15 | 15 to 20 | More than 20 |
|------------------------------|-------|---------|----------|----------|--------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 6.20 | 12.30 | 14.40 | 24.80 | 42.30 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 12.30 | 18.40 | 26.20 | 21.60 | 22.50 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 10.81 | 21.72 | 28.53 | 23.28 | 15:66 |
| Upper Lumparing | 13.21 | 28.25 | 34.91 | 19.85 | 3.18 |
| Lower Lumparing | 8.12 | 19.36 | 27.32 | 39.45 | 5.75 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 9.81 | 22.33 | 29.85 | 34.59 | 3.42 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Table 5.2 indicates the duration that the migrants have settled in Shillong. Across the localities, the recent migrants (within the past five years) constitute between 6 to 15 per cent of the total migrants. Those who migrated between 5-10 years ago constitute between 12 to 30 per cent. Only in the two sweeper lane one finds a sizeable proportion of migrants who have settled for over 20 years or more -- thus, many are in second or third generation. The other four localities the migrations have been within the past 20 years or so.

Reasons for migration

A good proportion of migrants, 76 percent, came to Shillong in search of employment. Others migrated along with parents or on account of marriages etc. Migration on account of marriage and moving with parents was more among females than males. This can be

well understood from the Table 5.3 exhibits a strong tendency of migration mainly for economic reasons.

Table 5.3
Reasons for migration

| Name of the slum | Moved with parents | Marriage | Family moved | Employment | Studies/ Business | Transfer | Unspecified |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------|------------|----------------------|----------|-------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 9.34 | 3.30 | 2.19 | 76.37 | 1.10 | 0.85 | 6.85 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 10.42 | 3.12 | 1.04 | 78.13 | 0.00 | 2.08 | 5.21 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 7.06 | 3.53 | 3.53 | 75.29 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 8.35 |
| Upper Lumparing | 10.22 | 6.83 | 9.81 | 59.32 | 3.12 | 1.89 | 8.57 |
| Lower Lumparing | 7.32 | 9.32 | 15.32 | 61.32 | 1.85 | 1.86 | 31.10 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 8.79 | 5.21 | 9.61 | 59.32 | 5.95 | 2.30 | 9.82 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Migration by rural-urban origin

The analysis of rural-urban background of the people helps to understand the nature of the migrants inhabiting the slum area. It becomes evident from the Table 5.4 that almost 89 percent of the respondents are from rural areas and only 11 percent are from urban areas, establishing that inter-state migration particularly from rural to urban areas in case of Shillong. The reason for these migration can be the existing conditions of poverty and deprivation to a large extent which acts as a push factor to force them out of their place of origin. Caste factor can be taken as another indicator that plays a dominant role in social structure of non-tribals in the slums⁴, while some of the migrants could have migrated due to earlier acquaintance in the area or in search of new avenues and better life.

⁴ Most of the migrants from rural areas belonging to lower and backward class and caste groups are considerably poor (some of them below the poverty line) settle in these slums. Religion, caste, language and ethnicity play an important role in these selection of areas of slums for their settlement. Most of these slums are at the fringe of Municipal area in other cities.

Table 5.4
Migration by background of settlement

| Name of the Slum | Rural-urban | Urban-urban |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 95.10 | 4.90 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 91.00 | 9.00 |
| LalchandBustee | 88.90 | 11.10 |
| UppedLumparing | 82.40 | 17.60 |
| LowerLumparing | 66.70 | 33.30 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 83.40 | 16.60 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Most of the slum dwellers are inter-state migrants (dominated by two states of Punjab and Bihar), constituting almost 81 percent of the total migrants, while 10.5 percent belong to the neighbouring states like Assam, Tripura and West Bengal. Only a mere 3.5 percent of the respondents belong to intra-state category, i.e., from within Meghalaya. This once again emphasises the fact that to a very great extent poverty is induced from outside in a stronger form in comparison to growing *in situ* though poverty among the local tribal group inhabiting the city areas is very much evident.

5.3 Age and sex composition

The analysis of age-sex composition gives a picture of number of dependants in a particular population, i.e. number of children, adult and old people, or in other words, number of able adult, work force and their dependants. This also reflects the balance of different age-group in the area. Here the population has been put into six age classes, i.e., three classes of children under age 15, the adults between age 15 to 50 and the elderly above the age 50 years.

Table 5.5
Age Composition

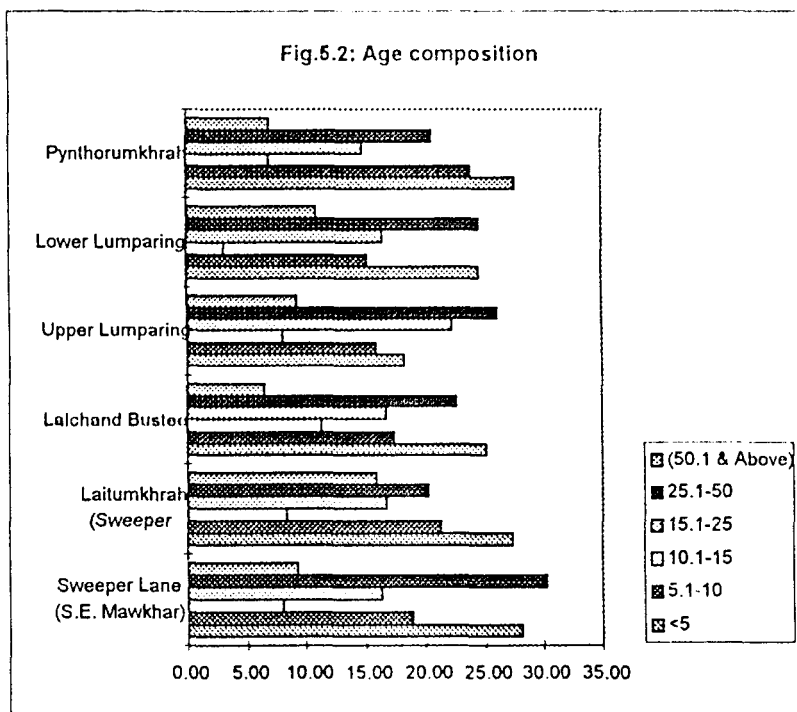
| Name of the Slum | <5 | 5.1-10 | 10.1-15 | 15.1-25 | 25.1-50 | (50.1 & Above) |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 28.20 | 18.90 | 8.00 | 16.30 | 30.20 | 9.30 |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | 27.40 | 21.40 | 8.30 | 16.70 | 20.30 | 15.90 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 25.20 | 17.40 | 11.30 | 16.70 | 22.70 | 6.60 |
| Upper Lumparing | 18.20 | 15.90 | 8.10 | 22.30 | 26.20 | 9.30 |
| Lower Lumparing | 24.60 | 15.20 | 3.20 | 16.50 | 24.60 | 10.90 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 27.60 | 24.00 | 6.90 | 14.80 | 20.70 | 6.90 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

It becomes evident from the Table 5.5 that out of total population of the slums studied, 21.2 percent are in the age group of 1-5 years, 17.8 percent in the age group of 5-10 years, 8.9 percent in the age groups of 10-15 years, 19.2 percent in the age-group of 15-25 years, 24.2 percent in the age group of 25-50 years and 8.7 percent are in the age group of 50 years and above⁵. This reveals that the population consists of more number of children and old people than the adult work-force. Of the total population, 47.9 percent are children, i.e., they are in the age group of <15 years and 8.7 percent of the population fall under the old age-group, i.e., they are in the age group of 50 years and above. Only 43.46 percent of the population are in the age group of 15-50 years. This imbalance in the age-group leads to an imbalance in the economy of the household and results in stagnation of their economic condition. Early marriage, high birth rates and lack of family planning practice in the slums are some of the factors of such imbalances that could affect the welfare of the household and keep them stuck in poverty and deprivation. On the other hand, the age structure is not very different from the age pyramid of any developing country in India, especially in the rural areas. There is considerable opinion that the demographic profiles of Indian slums are not very different from those of the rural

⁵ Children below 1 (one) year is also included in the age group <5 years.

areas and distinctly different from the urban non-poor -- a contrast in metaphor of spatial differentiation.



If the age composition of the population of the city, as a whole is taken into account, we find that 37.85 percent are in the age group of 1-14 years. 28.3 percent in the age group of 15-50 years 4.80 percent are in the age group of 50 and above.

Similar type of age structure can be seen in the slums of other cities of India. On the basis of survey conducted by Bharat Sevak Samaj in Delhi slums, it is found that 42 percentage of slum population is in the age group of 1-15 years, 51.4 percent in the age group of 15-54 years.

Sex-composition

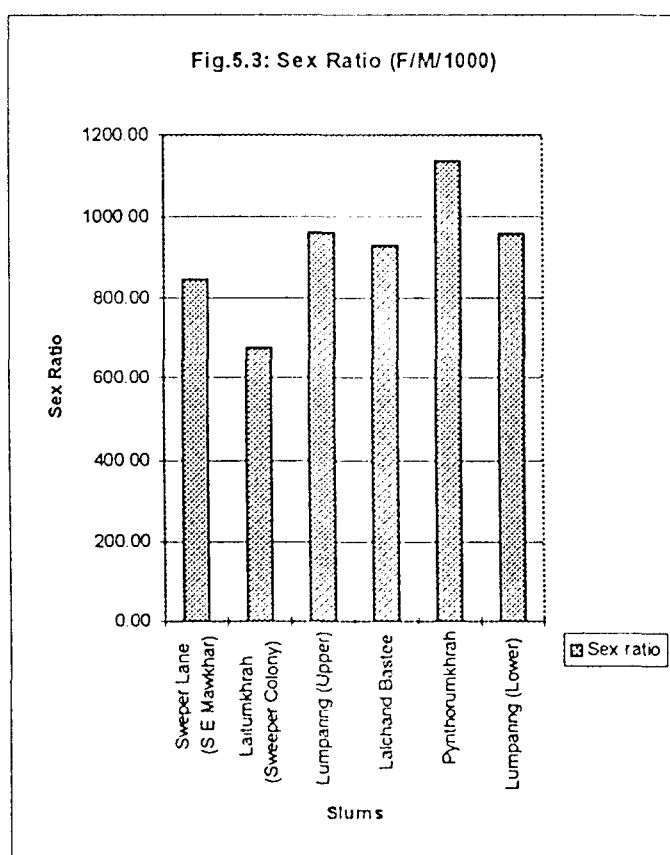
A population that has more of females than males, there is dependency on part of females on the males and may indicate out-migration of male population, and more women headed households. If it consists of more males than females, it indicates recent migration where the male members have migrated leaving their family members behind (Table 5.6).

Table 5.6
Sex composition

| Name of the Slum | Sex ratio | Male | Female |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E.Mawkhar) | 845.02 | 54.20 | 45.80 |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | 786.00 | 56.00 | 44.00 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 677.85 | 59.60 | 40.40 |
| Lumparing (Upper) | 964.29 | 52.00 | 48.00 |
| Lumparing (Lower) | 960.78 | 51.00 | 49.00 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 1136.75 | 46.80 | 53.20 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Fig. 5.3 : Sex Ratio (F/M/1000)



The sex ratio is found to be lower in the slums of Shillong than in the general population of the city, except in Pynthorumkhrah. It is found that the number of females per 1000 males is 931 whereas in general it is only 977. As evident from the Table-5.6, percentage of male and female vary between 50.60 and 49.40 percent, respectively. The percentage of men is comparatively higher in Lalchand Bustee and Laitumkhrah Sweeper Colony indicating new migrations. In other slums, Sweeper Lane, S.E. Mawkhar, Upper and Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah, percentage of women is more. While in case of Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar, natural increase and in-migration of females due to marriage can be taken as a cause for the comparatively higher number of females per 1000 males in the slums. Similar situation prevails in Lower Lumparing where migration of women due to marriages make up a consideration size. The situation is different in case of Pynthorumkhrah and Upper Lumparing. It may be noted that these localities are dominated by local tribal population following matriliney and a general preference for the female child⁶, this customarily makes the female child more important and unlike the patriarchal family structure female relatives are kept along in almost all the families. A higher number of female per 1000 male which is 1137 in Pynthorumkhrah makes the situation different in comparison to other slums. The reason can be the out-migration of males particularly of the non-tribals (Bengalis and Nepalese) to other areas in search of job or for business reason leaving behind their families.⁷

⁶ This kind of situation is also found in the slums of other cities of the country. A survey by Bharat Sevak Samaj of Old Delhi Slums reveals that 55.70 percent of its population of females while only 44.30 percent are male in the sampled slum population.

⁷ Among the non-tribal slum dwellers a large group of male migrants have been reported who have taken up jobs like driving or work in motor garages and usually come home once a month or so. Most of these people stay in the work sites leaving behind their families (mainly females) who work as domestic help or take up casual jobs.

5.4 Ethnic Composition

As evident from the earlier analysis the slums of Shillong have a clear differentiation on ethnic lines. This element of ethnicity is important in the backdrop of a tribal - non-tribal divide. This divide often forms the basis of differences in language, culture, socio-economic patterns of the population of the city as well as that of the slums.

Table 5.7
Linguistic Composition

| Name of the Slums | Hindi | Punjabi | Bengali | Nepal i | Assamese | Oriya | Tripuri Chakma | Khasi | Garo | Jaintia |
|------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|------------|----------|-------|-------------------|-------|-------|---------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 10.49 | 87.51 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Latumukhrah (Harijan Colony) | 18.85 | 79.21 | 1.21 | 0.38 | 0.35 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Lalchand bastee | 38.45 | 1.82 | 8.68 | 45.73 | 3.32 | 1.36 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Upper Lumpharing | 7.43 | 0.85 | 15.93 | 0.32 | 1.85 | 0 | 1.28 | 58.61 | 8.78 | 3.99 |
| Lower Lumpharing | 8.53 | 0.69 | 63.21 | 1.86 | 2.31 | 1.81 | 0 | 18.52 | 1.23 | 1.32 |
| Pynthormukhrah | 0.39 | 4.63 | 22 | 36 | 0 | 0 | 1.31 | 23.36 | 12.31 | 0 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Language is the most binding force in any community. It is found more dominantly among the slum dwellers mostly because of their strong tendency to cluster and concentrate in places where they have a common linguistic affinity.⁸

As Table 5.7 depicts two most prominent groups that became evident are the Punjabis and Biharies occupying the three slum areas namely, Sweeper lane (S.E. Mawkhar), Sweeper Colony (Laitumkhrah) and Lalchand Bustee. Of the three S.E. Mawkhar has almost 88 percent Punjabi slum dwellers forming the cluster of Punjabi migrants in the state.

⁸ It is generally found that the slum dwellers of a particular area consists of mostly one linguistic group and speak the language of the region from where they have migrated. This tendency of identifying themselves with the kith and kin keeps them together in the cultural context as they get segregated continuously from the other linguistic groups occupying the area.

This is closely followed by Laitumkhrah Sweeper Colony which has 80 percent of Punjabi population. Besides these two areas concentration of Punjabi migrants are nominal in the other four sampled slums varying between 4.63 percent in Pynthorumkhrah to 0.69 percent in Lower Lumparing. Most of these slum dwellers belong to Scheduled Caste category and are engaged in fourth grade jobs predominantly in the informal sector.

Next to Punjabi migrants, the Bihari and the Nepali population shows a strong concentration in Lalchand Bustee. While the Bihari constitute almost 38.45 percent, Nepali population makes up for about 45.73 percent. Besides Lalchand Bustee, both Bihari and Nepali slum dwellers can be traced in other slum areas in varying proportions.

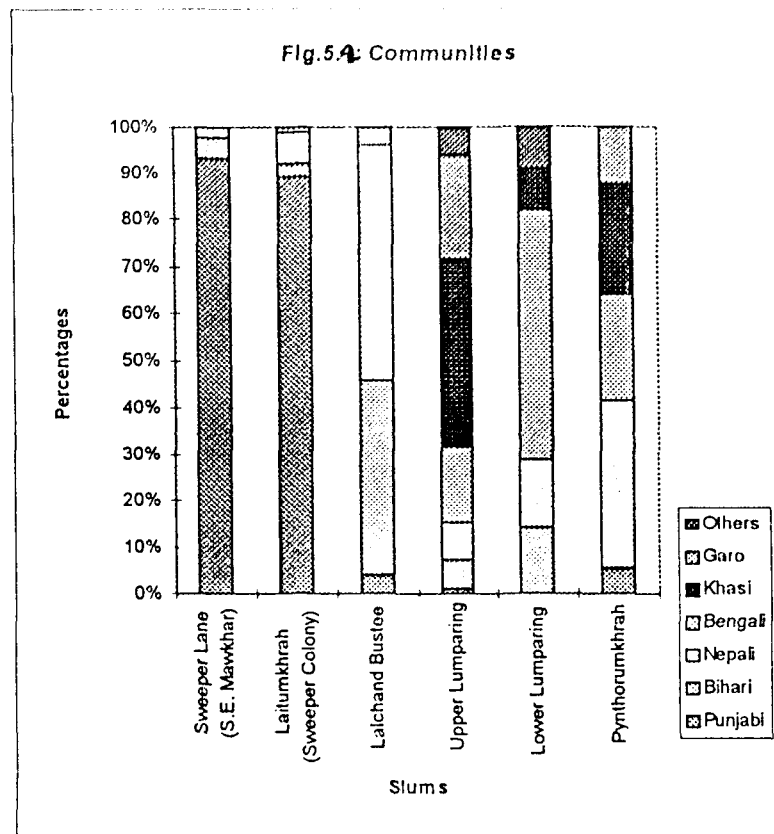
Next to these three slums, a strong concentration of Bengali population is found in Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah which is as high as 63.21 percent and 19.21 percent respectively. As such Bengali population is distributed in varying percentages ranging from 1.21 to 15.93 percent in almost all the selected sample slums except for Sweeper land of S.E. Mawkhar.

Table 5.8
Community

| Name of the Slum | Punjabi | Bihari | Nepali | Bengali | Khasi | Garo | Others |
|------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------|--------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 93.00 | 5.00 | 2.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 89.00 | 3.00 | 7.00 | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 4.00 | 42.00 | 50.00 | 4.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Upper Lumparing | 1.00 | 6.10 | 8.20 | 16.20 | 53.29 | 9.21 | 6.00 |
| Lower Lumparing | 0.00 | 14.30 | 14.60 | 53.10 | 8.90 | 0.00 | 9.10 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 5.28 | 0.00 | 36.20 | 22.52 | 23.52 | 12.40 | 0.00 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Fig. 5.4 : Communities



It is noteworthy that the tribal local population of Khasi, Garo and Jaintia also show a strong tendency of clustering and concentration similar to their non-tribal counterparts and try to be within the close linguistic affinity. They are prominent in three selected sampled areas, namely, Upper and Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkrah, while they are either nominal or negligible in other sampled slum areas.

Hindi however continues as a common language in most of the slums. Thus, these ethnic identities has led to a marked area identification even among the slum dwellers. This also indicates the fact that slum culture which is prominently taking shape in Shillong city is predominantly occupied by non-tribal section of the population, who have and continue to migrate to the area more under the impact of push factor from their place of migration.

It is noteworthy that ethnic concentration is associated with the nature of occupation of the slum dwellers ,i.e., income levels as well as the caste factors. Both these parameters decides the expansion of the slum size.

5.5 Literacy and Education

Slum-dwellers are generally educationally backward. The evaluation of educational level of the people, could help in assessing their ability to participate in the socio-economic life of the city. For the purpose of analysis the population has been divided into five groups on the basis of the level of education.

Table 5.9
Literacy and education

| Name of the Slum | Illiterate | Primary* | High school** | College | Other Technical | Total |
|------------------------------|------------|----------|---------------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 82.2 | 11.3 | 4.9 | 0 | 1.6 | 100 |
| Part of Laitumkhrah | 41.1 | 23.3 | 9.5 | 8.6 | 17.5 | 100 |
| Laitumkhrah (Harijan Colony) | 70.2 | 10.8 | 16.3 | 0 | 2.7 | 100 |
| Lumparing (Upper and Lower) | 65 | 18.1 | 8.2 | 4.7 | 4 | 100 |
| Lalchand Bastee | 65.5 | 24.2 | 3.4 | 4.5 | 2.4 | 100 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 67.1 | 19.4 | 3.8 | 7.6 | 2.1 | 100 |

* - Classes from I to V, ** - Classes from VI to X

Source : Field Survey by the Author.

As the Table 5.9 shows the educational level of the sampled population of the slums of Shillong city, it is found that 28.7 percent have some sort of educational level and 77.3 percent of the population falls under the category of illiterate. Among the educated 18 percent have education up to primary level, 5.4 percent upto the High School level, 3.6 percent up to between Class X and XII and only 1.7 percent have education above HSLC. This proportion however varies from one slum to another thereby fluctuating the percentage rate of the illiterate to as high as 82.2 to 70.3 percent (e.g.

Sweeper lane and Sweeper colony). This variation is perhaps due to poverty and lack of interest on the part of the parents and absence of proper facilities. The overall educational level which is reflected in the table indicates that a whopping 60 percent and above fall under the category of illiterate, about 20 percent under only literate and 5 percent having education upto High School while only 0.5 percent beyond that.⁹ The variations between the slums may be due to the new migrants who are mostly illiterate and unskilled having migrated mostly for economic reasons. However, it can not be totally ignored that even among the older residents of the slums a large section continued to be illiterate and despite introduction of adult education etc. there attitude and position do not show any change because of economic constraints and social stigma. Consequently they continue to reel under stagnation, social backwardness and perpetual poverty condition.

5.6 Religion and social backwardness:

The slum dwellers reflect a significant diversity in terms of their religious affiliations and faiths. Table 5.11 reveals a predominance of four religious groups, namely the Sikhs, the Hindus, the Christians and the Muslims. However unlike typical Indian slums where religious adherence is not a serious factor, in Shillong it is quite important, i.e., most of the slums have a dominant religion as reflective of the ethnic plurality and segregation.

The slums of Shillong show a predominance of two religious groups i.e. the Sikhs and the Hindus, while Muslims and Christians constitute a very nominal proportion. Like the caste factor religion in the slums of Shillong show a strong ethnic affinity and

⁹ It is noteworthy that some kind of educational backwardness is found in the slums of other cities in India. In Delhi slums, 32 percent of the slum population are literate, 68 percent are illiterate, while the percentage of literacy among women is only 20 percent (Hunter, 1964).

concentration. Unlike caste, religion does not have such a strong watertight segregation among slum dwellers.¹⁰

Table 5.10
Religion

| Name of the Slum | Hindus | Muslims | Sikhs | Christians | Buddhists | Others |
|------------------------------|--------|---------|-------|------------|-----------|--------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 42.31 | 0.10 | 57.30 | 0.29 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 35.32 | 0.87 | 63.81 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 72.63 | 11.38 | 3.13 | 5.31 | 1.89 | 5.66 |
| Upper Lumparing | 38.32 | 0.68 | 0.89 | 58.38 | 0.00 | 1.73 |
| Lower Lumparing | 69.32 | 15.81 | 2.10 | 4.83 | 0.85 | 7.09 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 21.85 | 1.32 | 0.00 | 73.85 | 0.00 | 2.98 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Few other religious groups can be traced showing the dominance of only two religions in the area¹¹. Cases of converts to other religion or inter-religious marriages are rare and are usually not revealed because of social values and community actions. As most of these slum dwellers belong to a rural background they continue to carry with them the rural values and actually form a rural pocket within the urban area in such contexts.

Most of these inter-state migrants belong to Scheduled Caste category forming the lower stratum of the society in the place of their origin. These slum dwellers are mostly engaged in the informal sector and continue to reside in the rural poverty pockets in the urban area, identified through a strong ethnic segregation.

¹⁰ Mostly the high caste groups try to maintain a conscious distance from the scheduled caste population in the slums and therefore prefer the fringe of the residential areas. Though a major section of these high caste group fall well under the poverty line they usually rent the accommodation in the near by houses and try to maintain a distinct cultural value. These segregation however, varies from one ethnic group to another, for example Nepalese do not follow such trends while it is very strong among Biharis, U. Pits and to some extent the Bengalees.

¹¹ It is extremely interesting to note that in the Indian context the lower caste/ scheduled caste person can change his/her religion but cannot be free from his caste identity and the social stigma. Social segregation based on such customs therefore plays a very strong role beyond religious identity in the greater Indian culture.

Very nominal percentage of 0.64, 0.94 and 0.52 of others consisting of other caste can be traced in Lalchand Bustee and Upper and Lower Lumparing. This can be attributed to domination of caste factor, poverty conditions as well as social discrimination associated with the lower caste more strongly than those of the high castes in the plains¹².

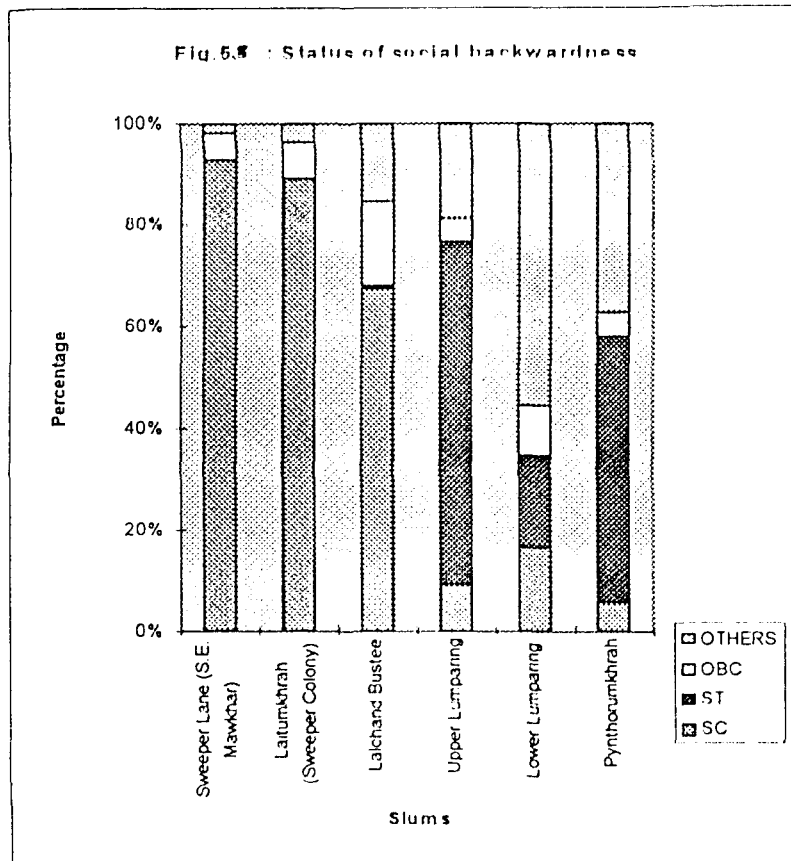
Table 5.11
Social backwardness

| Name of the Slums | SC | ST | OBC | OTHERS |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 92.81 | 0.00 | 5.37 | 1.82 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 89.34 | 0.00 | 7.08 | 3.58 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 67.32 | 0.80 | 16.50 | 15.38 |
| Upper Lumparing | 9.23 | 67.50 | 4.59 | 18.68 |
| Lower Lumparing | 16.48 | 18.40 | 9.82 | 55.30 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 5.85 | 52.40 | 4.43 | 37.32 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

¹² Most often social strictness and segregation, landlessness and consequent poverty conditions compels the scheduled caste population to migrate out to escape the vicious circle, particularly in states like Bihar and U.P., where caste system plays a dominant role in identifying social and economic position vis-a-vis the higher caste groups.

Fig. 5.5 : Sources of social backwardness



As evident from the table 5.11 and earlier analysis, a large section of the slum dwellers belong to the Scheduled Caste category followed by the Other Backward Castes (OBC) which ranges from 92.81 per cent to 16.50 per cent, respectively. It is also worth mentioning that a particular ethnic concentration exhibits highest concentration of Scheduled Caste population i.e. almost 93 per cent of the Punjabi migrants fall under this category followed by the Bihari migrants. The nature of job and the living condition (as discussed in the previous chapter) further substantiates these facts.

However, one has to mention that a considerable section of these migrants may be now falling under the non-migrant category as they are in their third generation in the area and might be well above the poverty line. But, closeness to kith and kin, caste factor,

language affinity and the nature of job as well as the living patterns binds them to these slums.

As already discussed besides these two caste groups of scheduled caste and OBC both scheduled and others comprising of high caste form a very nominal proportion in the slum. While the former condition may be explained as a low proportion of scheduled tribe migration into the slums the later is basically an effort of conscious segregation among the slum dwellers themselves.

A comparatively better education/literacy status helps these higher castes to be engaged in a better occupation and a comparatively better income, which further leads to a kind of conscious segregation between them.

5.7 Occupations

The occupational composition of the slum dwellers gives a picture of the economic conditions of the people inhabiting that particular area. As discussed in the preceding sections, the ethnic and the caste composition indicate that mostly the slum dwellers belong to the lower stratum of the social structure and are backward in their educational/literacy status. Having migrated from the rural areas, these slum dwellers lack any kind of formal training and therefore, seek occupation in the formal sector. Such occupations generally demand physical labour, long working hours and are extremely insecure and yield only low wages.

Table 5.12
Occupations

| Name of the Slums | Organised Jobs | | Wage Labour | | | Informal Sector | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------|----------|--------------|------------|
| | Govt. | Private | Skilled | Semi-Skilled | Unskilled | Vendors | Artisans | Agri-Workers | Unemployed |
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 10.52 | 23.31 | 5.99 | 14.63 | 20.66 | 1.82 | 0.81 | 0.00 | 22.26 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 14.69 | 27.45 | 5.19 | 12.84 | 19.25 | 1.02 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 19.56 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 12.68 | 21.06 | 6.24 | 10.43 | 19.20 | 16.32 | 1.10 | 0.81 | 12.16 |
| Upper Lumparing | 17.42 | 32.03 | 4.66 | 8.33 | 10.66 | 2.38 | 3.50 | 15.68 | 5.34 |
| Lower Lumparing | 11.99 | 27.02 | 6.37 | 10.27 | 12.23 | 6.91 | 5.21 | 2.84 | 17.16 |
| Pynthorunkhrah | 14.01 | 19.56 | 6.32 | 15.82 | 13.99 | 1.86 | 0.36 | 17.21 | 10.87 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

As evident from the table 5.12, a very large section have occupation under the informal sector and unskilled labour categories while a considerable section can be marked as unemployed (accounting for 22.26). This clearly indicates that there is almost a total absence of assured income as labour demand in this sector is considerably low compare to supply which leads to continuous competition and unemployment among the slum dwellers and often leads to minimal wage conditions. This condition of unemployment and under-employment is more predominant among the new migrants in comparison to the older migrants mainly because of lack of know-how, and lack of credibility. At the same time a sizeable section belongs to the government or semi-organised sector jobs, indicating that these slum dwellers having a longer stay and better acquired skills , have moved above the poverty line and thereby have improved upon their living conditions. The proportion however varies from one slum to another indicating the economic stagnation and backwardness of the different ethnic groups inhabiting these slums. While highest number of slum dwellers as unskilled and semi-skilled mostly working in the private sector is found in the three slums namely, Sweeper

Lane of S.E. Mawkhar, Sweeper Colony of Laitumkhrah and Lalchand Bustee (20.66, 19.25 and 19.20 percent respectively), it is lower in the other three slums with Upper Lumparing having the lowest of all. From a quick perusal of the earlier tables (Table Nos. 5.1(a & b), 5.2) it can be reasoned that in the former of three slums the trends of recent migrations is maximum and therefore one can say that most of these new migrants who lacked skilled knowledge and being new to the area any credibility constitute a dominant segment of the workers in the unorganised or private sector. In contrast to this, in the slums of Upper Lumparing, Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah, the nature of occupation, longer duration of stay and above all the tribal component having community linkages, traditional knowledge of craft and comparatively educationally in a better position under the missionary influence have a lesser percentage of population in the unorganised sector thereby having a better economic condition.

However, old slum-dwellers present a better condition of living than their newer counterparts who strive for a bare existence. Thus, economic backwardness leads to low standard of living, inadequate food availability, poor health condition and housing in these slum areas. There seems to be a dominant correlation between occupation, income and slum conditions. In words of Oscar Lewis, "The apparent association between economic occupation and standard of living forms the very basis of slum life".¹³

5.8 Head of the household

The structural aspect of the family in the slum areas reflects role differentiation, in power, responsibilities and rights and duties among the members of the family. Members of the family play different role on the basis of their sex and age. As the table indicates, there are

¹³ Oscar, Lewis : The Study of Slum Culture, in *On Understanding Poverty*, Moymton (ed.), Oxford Press, 1985, p. 87.

‘ six categories in each the position/status both economic and social have been identified. It becomes clear that this varies from one slum to another and is regulated largely by the particular ethnic group. While among the non-tribal, patriarchal family system invariably makes the eldest male member as head of the household, among the tribals particularly the Khasis, the practice is just the opposite, i.e., customarily female member become the head of the household.

However, it is interesting to note that economic position, i.e., whether a member particularly head of the household is a earning member or not greatly influences the decision making capacity and consequently the position of the head of the household may change under such circumstances, i.e , a younger earning family member may become the head of the house hold . It was found that a number of households are headed by female member, who are either widow, divorcee or separated. Among the non-tribal slum dwellers the percentage of such households varies between 3.30 in Sweeper Lane in S.E. Mawkhar to 3.62 in Lalchand Bustee and 7.83 in Lower Lumparing. Another category of female head of household who are not main earner is also indicated which shows the notional acceptance of female member (who are usually aged) as head of the household.

In comparison to this both in Upper Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah, the percentage of female headed household is impressive ranging between 43.60 to 36.71 in the main earner category and 2 to 4.40 in non-earner category. In both the slums, the

population composition is dominantly tribal whose social practice makes it a necessity for perpetuating the system of female-headed households.¹⁴

Table 5.13
Head of the household

| Name of the Slum | M(ME+ HH) | F(ME+ HH) | M(NE+ HH) | F(NE+ HH) | M(ME+ NHH) | F(ME+ NHH) |
|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 61.20 | 3.30 | 18.20 | 0.20 | 6.10 | 11.00 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 66.50 | 3.40 | 10.80 | 1.90 | 5.00 | 12.40 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 58.50 | 3.62 | 15.80 | 0.32 | 8.66 | 13.10 |
| Upper Lumparing | 29.73 | 36.71 | 12.38 | 16.82 | 2.36 | 2.00 |
| Lower Lumparing | 55.46 | 7.83 | 17.31 | 1.02 | 10.34 | 8.04 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 21.40 | 43.60 | 8.42 | 18.40 | 3.78 | 4.40 |

M(ME+HH) = Male, main earner and head of the hh, F(ME+HH) = Female, main earner and head of the hh, M(NE+HH) = Male, does not earn but head of the hh, F(NE+HH) = Female, does not earn but head of the hh, M(ME+NHH) = Male, main earner but not head of the hh and F(ME+NHH) = Female, main earner but not head of the hh.

Source : Field Survey by the Author

5.9 Women in slums

Age at marriage

As far as the marital status of the respondents is concerned almost 90 percent of the respondents were married, while only 1.5 percent were widowed, and about 8.5 percent of the total respondents were unmarried. Among most of the non-tribals marriages for girls are arranged by the parents or other elderly kin members of the family, while the daughters very rarely exercise their own opinion in selection of marriage partners.

¹⁴ On interviewing by the author it is found that irrespective of ethnic composition, it was felt that the head male member of the household is expected to work and earn for the family, while the women is confined to the domestic chores. The women are usually submissive to their husbands and their dependence on the male members of the family is considerable. Though the women work along with their husbands and contribute to the economy of the family they do not enjoy equal status. Since among the non-tribals slum dwellers family is of patriarchal type and male domination appears to be evident.

The practice of early marriage, particularly in the age group of 15-17, can be seen among the non-tribals. As the table 5.13 reveals, that the general tendency of early marriages is highest in Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar, which is 18.57 or almost 19 percent below the age of 15 and almost 46 percent within the age group of 18 years. One can say that in this slum almost 60 percent girls are married and have their first or even second pregnancy before even becoming an adult, i.e., before attaining the age of eighteen. More or less similar conditions prevail in the Lalchand Bustee. The age at first pregnancy is highest between the age group of 15 to 20 years and considerably low above that i.e. above the age group of 21 years. The situation however varies between the slums and to a great extent among the different ethnic group inhabiting the slums. In Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar and Laitumkhrah Sweeper Colony the percentage of early pregnancy among the women the age group of 15 to 16 years is highest which is 43.1 and 38.21 percent respectively. The reason for this can be early marriage, illiteracy and lack of any family planning measures.

Next to these two slums Lalchand Bustee has almost 35.23 percent of women falling in the age group of 15 to 16 years at their first pregnancy. The lower percentage in comparison to the other two slums may be due to new migrations where family is usually not relocated and therefore actual figure is not assessable.¹⁵ The reasons for early marriage appears to be poverty and traditional beliefs.

¹⁵ Mostly newly wed wives or pregnant wives are left behind by the new migrants because of socio economic reasons and only those having one or two children or slightly elderly women are accompanied.

Table 5.14
Age at marriage

| Name of the Slum | <15 | 16-18 | 19-21 | 21 & above | Total |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------------|-------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 18.57 | 45.86 | 33.32 | 2.25 | 100 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 15.23 | 47.81 | 32.86 | 4.1 | 100 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 12.81 | 41.02 | 42.56 | 3.61 | 100 |
| Upper Lumparing | 5.86 | 30.85 | 47.31 | 15.98 | 100 |
| Lower Lumparing | 2.86 | 39.51 | 46.26 | 11.37 | 100 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 3.85 | 38.25 | 43.81 | 14.09 | 100 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

As table 5.14 reveals that the average age at marriage varies between 15 to 18 years in general, though there may be variation between one ethnic group than the other occupying the slums.

Age at first pregnancy

Table 5.15
Age at first pregnancy

| Name of the Slum | 15-16 | 17-18 | 19-20 | 21 & above |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 43.1 | 31.25 | 22.68 | 2.97 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 38.21 | 41.63 | 16.81 | 3.35 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 35.23 | 38.71 | 19.81 | 6.25 |
| Upper Lumparing | 11.26 | 31.85 | 47.86 | 9.03 |
| Lower Lumparing | 8.27 | 21.23 | 53.85 | 16.65 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 9.83 | 34.83 | 42.21 | 13.13 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

The concept of family planning is very much limited. Early marriage and lack of family planning measures therefore leads to early pregnancy. As the table reveals age at first pregnancy is highest between the age group of 15-20 years and considerably low above that, i.e., 21 years. The situation however varies between the slums, and to a great extent among the different ethnic groups. In Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar and

Laitumkhrach Sweeper Colony, the percentage of early pregnancy among women within the age group of 15-16 years is highest accounting for 43.1 percent and 38.21 percent respectively. The reason for this can be poverty, consequently early marriage of girls, illiteracy and lack of any family planning measures¹⁶.

Next to these two slums, Lalchand Bustee has almost 35.23 percent of women falling under the age group of 15-16 years at their first pregnancy. The lower percentage in comparison to the other two slums may be due to new migrations where family is usually relocated, and therefore actual figure is not possible to assess¹⁷.

Also the Nepali population who though get married early (around 16-17 years) usually have child birth after 3-5 years. This may be taken as one of the major reasons which depicts a considerably higher percentage of women getting pregnant around 18 years of age. In comparison to these three slums, Upper Lumparing, Lower Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrach present a different picture having higher percentage of women at their first pregnancy in the age group of 19-20 years and above (ranging between 53.86 in Lower Lumaring, 47.6 in Upper Lumparing and 42.21 percent in Pynthorumkhrach respectively).

As already discussed, social practices, late marriage and better literay position enable the women in the slums to have a comparatively better control of their marital life vis-a-vis their counterparts. ?

¹⁶ Slum dwellers were hesitant to reply to such queries. It was found that generally men did not practice any family planning measures. Some of the women however, were using Copper T, Contraceptive Pills, while a few had Tubectomy.

¹⁷ Mostly newly wed or pregnant wives were left behind by the new migrants and only those having grown up children or slightly elderly ladies are accompanied.

Health and nutrition

Slums due to their unhygienic conditions are centres for diseases, illness and high infant mortality. Slums of Shillong city are no exception to this, and diseases like Malaria, Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Intestinal disorders, fever cough and cold, Typhoid, Influenza etc. are some of the diseases which strongly prevail in these areas. Being married at early age and early pregnancy usually make the women of the slums weak and therefore chronic in some disease or the other or have perpetual anaemia. The societal practice and the customary position of women in the household makes her suffer at both the ends, i.e., poverty condition does not permit enough nutrition for them and household chores along with outside work (as domestic help, casual labour, etc.) further adds to their drudgery. As evident from the table almost in all the slums a considerable section of women are malnourished, highest being in Lalchand Bustee which is 43.41 percent. In an average 40 percent and above women suffer from malnourishment, while 30 percent have chronic anaemia. It is not unusual therefore that almost 30 percent of the women in almost all the slums suffer from some chronic disease or the other.

Lack of medical facilities, uncaring attitude, social stigma and economic constraints further adds to the perpetual illness conditions of these women. Further as a result of these number of pregnancy related deaths are high among them particularly the younger one who suffer due to lack of medical care and proper nutrition (reference Table 5.16). Of the total number of 52 pregnancy related deaths, 23 fall under the age group of 15-16 years which accounts for more than 50 percent or half of the actual number followed by 16 in the age group of 16-17 years. Slum wise also Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar has the highest number of pregnancy related deaths followed by Lalchand bustee and Sweeper Colony of Laitumkhrah . Unhygienic conditions, traditional system of

child birth and poor health conditions of these women can be taken as a major cause of such condition¹⁸

Table 5.16
Health and nutrition of women

| Name of the Slum | Malnourished | Chronic Anemia | Chronic Diseases | Handicapped | Blind |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|-------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 41.62 | 32.85 | 23.17 | 2.21 | 0.15 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 40.62 | 28.57 | 26.63 | 3.5 | 0.68 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 43.41 | 29.85 | 25 | 1.63 | 0.11 |
| Upper Lumparing | 38.21 | 29.85 | 28.82 | 1.58 | 1.54 |
| Lower Lumparing | 43.31 | 31.09 | 21.82 | 0.87 | 2.91 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 41.81 | 28.62 | 24.78 | 2.85 | 1.94 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Table 5.17
Pregnancy related maternal deaths

| Name of the Slums | Actual Deaths | 15-16 | 17-18 | 19-20 | 21 & above | Total |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|------------|-------|
| Total No. of Deaths | 52 | 23 | 16 | 9 | 4 | 52 |
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 14 | 66.21 | 18.15 | 9.83 | 5.81 | 100 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 7 | 67.38 | 21.52 | 8.81 | 2.29 | 100 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 12 | 56.32 | 33.56 | 6.31 | 3.81 | 100 |
| Upper Lumparing | 6 | 48.52 | 34.67 | 12.65 | 4.16 | 100 |
| Lower Lumparing | 7 | 52.34 | 33.89 | 8.63 | 5.14 | 100 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 6 | 42.53 | 34.25 | 19.98 | 3.24 | 100 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

While most of male members have habits of drinking and smoking the female members chew tobacco and pan which further adds to their diseases and ill health conditions.

Thus the slums of Shillong city bear close resemblance with slums on any other part of the country. The content or the social structure in the slums depicts the important

¹⁸ Most of the women who work in the unorganised sector as domestic help or casual labourers and are compel to work even at their advance stage of their pregnancy as a concept of maternity leave do not exist. This occasionally leads to accident, pregnancy related complications and consequent deaths.

components which are inter-dependent and interact upon each other, giving a fabric of social institution and associations. However, majority of the slum dwellers continue to be interstate rural migrants the local tribal population are yet to be affected on a large scale showing prominent segregation through the process of change have already set in these societies and therefore a small section becomes noticeable in the slum of Lumparing, a phenomenon, almost new in the egalitarian, casteless tribal social system, showing therefore a prominent change in the relation of production.

5.10 Child health

Table 5.18
Health of children

| Name of the Slum | Malnourished | Chronic Anemia | Spastic/mentally handicapped | Physically Handicapped | Accident victims |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 51.85 | 33.91 | 3.65 | 7.76 | 2.83 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 49.83 | 40.62 | 1.85 | 5.86 | 1.84 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 50.83 | 40.87 | 0.83 | 4.91 | 2.56 |
| Upper Lumparing | 50.95 | 40.93 | 3.95 | 2.88 | 1.29 |
| Lower Lumparing | 51.63 | 39.86 | 1.89 | 4.87 | 1.75 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 49.95 | 40.85 | 3.92 | 2.96 | 2.32 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

The rate of infant mortality is also very high. As most of the women in the slums get married in their teens, i.e., within the age group of 14 to 16 years and consequently attain motherhood before 18 years, the child mortality rate continues to be quite high. Women often suffer from chronic anaemia and frequent pregnancy make them further week and diseased. Lack of proper health facilities and hygiene further compounds the situation and often delivery deaths are also reported.

5.11 Schooling of Children

Slums are generally educationally backward and slums of Shillong city are no exception to these. Most of the slum dwellers particularly women are either illiterate or are only literate. However they are keen to send their children to school although often very sharp segregation is made between male and female children. There are a large number of school drop outs as well.

Table 5.19(a)
Schooling of children

| Name of the Slum | School Going Children (Regular) | | School Drop Outs | | Never been to School | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 8.23 | 4.38 | 19.83 | 26.22 | 15.23 | 26.11 |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | 12.63 | 5.52 | 13.52 | 25.12 | 17.23 | 25.98 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 11.53 | 4.3 | 14.83 | 25.73 | 18.23 | 25.38 |
| Upper Lumparing | 18.56 | 13.25 | 18.25 | 21.65 | 13.65 | 14.64 |
| Lower Lumparing | 18.63 | 9.9 | 16.28 | 23.65 | 12.31 | 19.23 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 16.58 | 14.07 | 20.67 | 18.32 | 14.29 | 16.07 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Table 5.19(b)
Children in schools & drop-outs

| Name of the Slum | School Going Children (Regular) | School Drop Outs | Never been to School |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 12.61 | 46.05 | 41.34 |
| Laitumkhrach (Sweeper Colony) | 18.15 | 38.64 | 43.21 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 15.83 | 40.56 | 43.61 |
| Upper Lumparing | 31.81 | 39.9 | 28.29 |
| Lower Lumparing | 28.53 | 39.93 | 31.54 |
| Pynthorumkhrach | 30.65 | 38.99 | 30.36 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

On a general survey it was found that majority of the slum dwellers were willing to send their children to school but showed a strong preference of sending male children only. At the same time it was felt that the children cannot be sent to school because of poverty reasons, due to lack of necessary facilities, while some considered children as an extra earning hand for the family.

The keenness on sending male child to school while depriving the female child can be attributed to the following reasons.

- (1) In most of the families where both parents work grown up female children are kept at home to look after their younger siblings.
- (2) In families where the mother works as domestic help or so, the female child is often taken along for an extra hand, and.
- (3) Distance of the school as well as economic conditions does not permit education for all and naturally biases towards the male child strongly dominates.

Thus educational institutions in the city and a few school in the nearby areas of the slums have not been able to motivate large number of slum children and their parents. Further the formal requirements like uniform, fees, books, etc. can not be afforded by the slum dwellers. The nature of occupation and earnings of the parents and living conditions of these childrens further restricts them to go to city schools and therefore the ill maintained government primary and secondary schools are the only option left for them.

Concluding Statement

The analysis of the chapter indicates the following findings -

1. The slums of Shillong city constitutes of a very large section of interstate migrants accounting for almost 59.7 percent of the total slum population in the city. Migration to city is mostly with a motive of economic benefit either employment in organised sector or some form of self employment activities in the informal sector. Both migration and nature of occupation is strongly dominated by factors like caste, kinship, language and religion and varies between different ethnic groups and localities.
2. Intra-state migration is still low and is mostly from rural areas. Almost 89 percent of the migrants inhabiting the slum are from rural areas and only 11 percent are from urban areas. The inter-state and intra-state migrations are indicative of age and sex selectivity. More than 70 percent of the migrants belong to the age group of 15-50 years and are predominantly male, indicating recent migration, a very high dependency ratio and low economic output.
3. The slums of Shillong city has a clear differentiates on ethnic lines forming the basis of differences in language, culture and socio-economic patterns. Language is the most important binding force among the slum-dwellers and there is a strong tendency to cluster and concentrate in places having common linguistic affinity.
4. Slum dwellers are generally educationally backward. A very high percentage (77%) of them are illiterate, while a very nominal percent (5.4%) have education up to high school level. The degree however, varies between one slum to another and is mostly determined by ethnic segregation and nature of occupation.
5. A large section of the interstate migrants inhabiting these slums belong to either Schedule Caste or OBC, whereas only a nominal portion belong to high caste. This is indication that mostly socially and economically deprived section are the migrants as an impact of the push factor in their place of origin.
6. Religion in the slums of Shillong city show a strong ethnic affinity and concentration predominance of two religion, namely Sikh and Hindus is found in the slum, while Muslims and Christians are almost negligible.

7. A large proportion of the slum dwellers are engaged in the informal sector, as they mostly lack any kind of formal training and education. Consequently extremely insecure conditions, low income and perpetual poverty and stagnation prevails in these slums, particularly among the different non-tribal ethnic groups.
8. The structural aspect of the family in most of the slums, does not occurred a equitable position to the women. Though women work along with their husbands and contribute to the economy of the family, they do not enjoy equal status. Early marriages, illiteracy and social backwardness strongly predominates majority of the women in the slums of Shillong city. The health condition of the women also indicates perpetuation of anaemia and other discases along with conditions of malnourishment and under nourishment.
9. The health conditions of the children in the slum to large extent are that of malnourished or undernourished. Due to poverty lack of proper care and unhygienic living conditions, a large proportion of children suffer from conic illness like diarrhoea, asthma, pneumonia etc.

Thus, the content of the social structure in the slums depicts the important components which are interdependent and interaction upon each other, giving a fabric of social institution and association.

Chapter VI

Structural Roots of Poverty

6.1 Introductory statement:

In this chapter an attempt is made to identify the structural roots of urban poverty in the Shillong that reflects the middle-sized Indian city with a strong service function orientation and its genesis in a colonial backdrop. It also is reflective of the 'pluralisation' as a product of modernity, i.e., break down of traditional kinship bonds at one hand, and on the other, the continuity of residential divide on ethnic lines - a feature quite typical of the contradictions manifest in Indian *urbanism* as counterposed to *western urbanism* that typified 'secularisation' and 'homogenisation' as processes of building a civil society - consciously discarding the primordial bonds that was hallmark of all pre-modern societies.

However, the main objective of the chapter remain exploring the apparently hidden relationships and processes that engender poverty and assist in its continuance in cities typified by Shillong.

Genesis of poverty in urban areas, especially in developing countries like India has three broad foundations :

- (i) Poverty that is generated due to the major economic and social relationship defined by the dominant *mode of production* and *relations of production* and thus, poverty as 'produced space' in the form of slums or slum-like conditions¹.

¹ Henri Lefebvre, (1992), op.cit.

- (ii) Poverty, that is generated in an urban situation due to the structural relationship of a city within a city system, i.e., the *dominant or dependent* relationship of the city with other cities in the system, especially in developing countries where inter-city relations are stronger than city-hinterland relations.²
- (iii) The third causal foundation is the relationship of the city with its defined economic space, i.e., the hinterland. In this relationship when city has a strong economic base but a weaker hinterland, it becomes cause for *transference* of rural poverty to urban poverty through the migration of the poor. If, both the city and the hinterland have weak economies, the city does not grow and there is no impetus of rural to urban migration. The healthiest relationship is, of course, when both the city and the hinterland have strong economic bases that, however, does not exist in most of the developing world. In the case of Shillong the relationship is apparently of the first type.³
- (iv) The fourth fundamental relationship is the *intra-city economic relationships*, typified by economic and social stratification, the economic base of the city, as well as process indicators that lead to analysing the reduction or enlargement of the poverty segment as the city grows over time.

It is the last set of relationships that is the main focus of the chapter here. However, an one-point survey has a limitation - it is difficult to grasp the process indicators. This limitation is to be admitted and accepted within the frame of a time of the specific study.

The study thus attempts to study issues in context of the following intra-city relationships :

- i) Ethnic plurality
- ii) Migrants and the slums
- iii) Education, occupation and income classes

² For example, the position taken in "dependency paradigm". See, Andre Guder Frank (1968), *Development and Underdevelopment*, Cambridge, UK.

³ The position taken by A.R. Desai, op.cit..

- iv) Indebtedness among the poor
- vi) Position of the child in the slum

6.2 Ethnicity and social plurality

Like the city itself slums exhibit considerable ethnic and social plurality. The village is largely homogeneous. The relationships within the rural habitation is largely defined by consanguinity and kinships. The city, on the other hand, is defined by non-kinship based professional relationship-- a bond developing out of vocations and objectives of progress-- not just a survival strategy and containment.⁴ Thus, the modern city upturned certain fundamental basis of the societal structure of the ancient and pre-modern societies, i.e., the rural society of the yore and even , those of the cities of pre-modern societies. Thus, the traditional rural society (village) was undifferentiated, the pre-modern (medieval European cities, for example) were differentiated on vocational lines (guild system)⁵ and the modern city, differentiated by the class structure, i.e., localities based on income level and wealth. To this extent, the phenomenon of slum itself is a product of such a process of economic and social differentiation.

Formation of class differentiated society also by definition rejects any other primordial allegiances. Thus, the expectation is that once differentiated at one level, the slums themselves (within) must be homogeneous, i.e., religion, caste or language could be no more a barrier. But in case of Shillong, the structural differentiation is at two levels-- at the primary level of income/class differentiation (that engenders slums) and at the secondary level of

⁴ Luis Wirth (1908), *The Nineteenth Century American City*, New York.

⁵ Lewis Mumford(1970, PB), *The culture of cities*, op.cit.

ethnic differentiation. This is by no means, exceptional but is not common or a totally unexpected situation.⁶

The study deals with six slums (out of 24 notified), namely, SE Mawkhar Sweeper Lane, , Sweeper Colony Laitumkhrah Lalchand Bustee Lower Lumparing, Upper Lumparing and Pynthorumkhrah. Almost all the slums are differentiated on the basis of ethnicity. Sweeper colonies (both SE Mawkhar and Laitumkhrah), Punjabi migrants form the majority. Nepalese and Biharis are the major component of population in Lalchand Bustee. Lower Lumparing has a mixed population of Khasis and Bengalis, whereas at Upper Lumparing, the Khasi dominate. In Pynthorumkhrah, the Khasis, the Jaintia and the Garos are in sizeable numbers.

Table 6.1
Ethnic Origin (in per cent)

| Name of the Slums | Punjabi | Bihari | Nepali | Bengali | Khasi | Garos | Others | Total |
|------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| Sweeper Lane (S.E. Mawkhar) | 93.00 | 5.00 | 2.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Laitumkhrah (Sweeper Colony) | 89.00 | 3.00 | 7.00 | 1.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Lalchand Bustee | 4.00 | 42.00 | 50.00 | 4.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Upper Lumparing | 1.00 | 6.10 | 8.20 | 16.20 | 40.10 | 22.40 | 6.00 | 100 |
| Lower Lumparing | 0 | 14.30 | 14.60 | 53.10 | 8.90 | 0 | 9.10 | 100 |
| Pynthorumkhrah | 5.28 | 0 | 36.20 | 22.52 | 23.60 | 12.40 | 0 | 100 |

Source : Field survey by the author.

Socially these slum dwellers confine to isolate themselves with almost little or no interactions with the tribal population. Interactions with non-tribal population is there but is confined to a thin line only. Marriage and other social interactions are restricted within their

⁶ Even slums of New York have pronounced features of ethnicity, e.g., the Black, the Irish and the Italian slums of Brooklyn and Bronx etc.

own social set ups or are negotiated from the place of their migration. Though cases of social mix up, rituals and marriages between one slum area and the other is found, caste and language factor play a dominant role, for example, a Bihari migrant would not prefer any interactions with a Punjabi migrant though both of them may be slum dwellers. A strong bond of caste and kinship, plays a dominant role, particularly among the new migrants who carry with them the village or rural area, in their social practices. Hence one can say that the slums of Shillong is no way different from any other slum in the country.

Mostly men are addicted to alcohol and gambling, this kind of addiction affects the economic conditions as whatever little money is earned is mostly spent on such things affecting their families leading to continuous suffering and drudgery.

In the background of this, Table 6.2 indicates the distinct ethnic concentration of the slum dwellers vis-à-vis their literacy and education status.

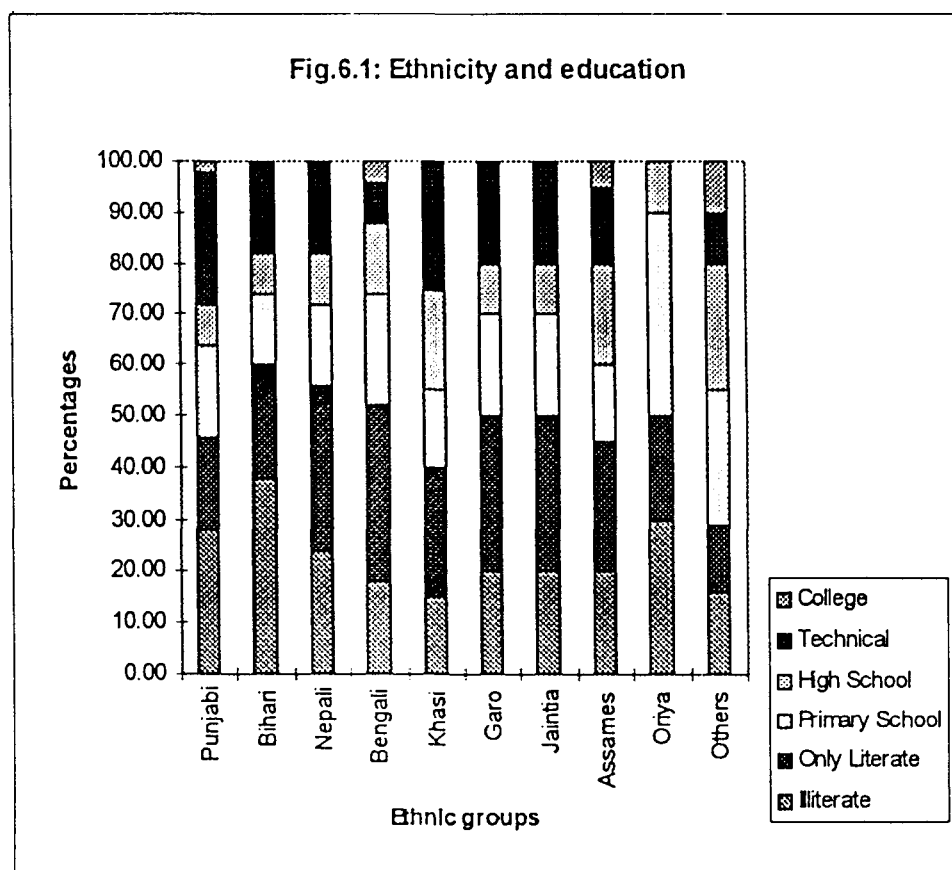
Table 6.2
Literacy and education by ethnic background

| Ethnic Categories | in per cent | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| | Illiterate | Only Literate | Primary School | High School | Technical | College |
| Punjabi | 28 | 18 | 18 | 8 | 26 | 2 |
| Bihari | 38 | 22 | 14 | 8 | 18 | 0 |
| Nepali | 24 | 32 | 16 | 10 | 18 | 0 |
| Bengali | 18 | 34 | 22 | 14 | 8 | 4 |
| Khasi | 15 | 25 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 0 |
| Garo | 20 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 0 |
| Jaintia | 20 | 30 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 0 |
| Assamese | 20 | 25 | 15 | 20 | 15 | 5 |
| Oriya | 30 | 20 | 40 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Others | 16 | 13 | 26 | 25 | 10 | 10 |

Source : Field survey by the author.

Literacy and Education

Literacy status indicates the economic as well as the social status of any society in any given area, particularly in terms of development of standard of living and occupation. Usually poverty and literacy status is directly related and is taken as a measuring gauge to indicate progress/development, and has been frequently used by sociologists to indicate the status of the poor in their slum studies. In the present study literacy status have been taken as an indicator to identify whether poverty in terms of ethnicity occupation, and migrant or non-migrant status create differentiation in the degree of literacy status in the slums of Shillong city.



As table 6.2 indicates, as many as seven categories have been taken in to consideration to compare the literacy status of the slum dwellers. The categories are compared with the ethnic concentration and occupation structure as well as the migration status found in the different sampled slums in the city. On the basis of scheduled interview the literacy status, i.e. whether, illiterate, only literate, or educated up to primary level high school level, college, University or technical has been taken into consideration. As the table indicates, varying degree of percentages are found in each category which differ greatly from one ethnic group to another. While among the ethnic groups the percentage of illiterate vary from as much as 38 percent among the Bihari slum dwellers to as low as 15 per cent among the Khasis., The Bihari slum dwellers, usually concentrated in Lalchand Bustee area, are engaged in menial jobs, particularly as cobbler, petty vendors or as casual workers and daily labourers. Their jobs therefore does not allow them to go for any formal educational training, mainly due to economic reasons as small children are often seen as helping hand to the family. The nature of job and the caste factor for generations have been a hindering factors and continues to be so even after change of place. Hence, the indigenous knowledge or technology has often been passed on from one generation to another without any form of formal education. Thus it is not unusual that the rate of literacy is minimum among them in the slums of Shillong.

The slum-dwellers inhabiting Sweeper Lane of S.E. Mawkhar and the Sweeper Colony of Laitumkhrah come next as far as illiteracy percentage is taken in to considerations. As much as 28 per cent of the sampled households come under the illiterate category while only 8 per cent of households fall under education up to high school (category). A

considerable section (26 per cent) fall under the category of the technically educated⁷. This may be due to the fact that a considerable number, of people are engaged as driver and handyman or as helpers in small repairing workshops, garage and alike institution.

Like the Bihari slum-dwellers, the Punjabi slum-dwellers are also engaged in menial jobs that further restricts their access and ability to get education. Often the children are taken as extra helping-hand and are engaged either at the house to look after the younger siblings or help in other domestic chores, or work as child labour in small shops, garages or as domestic helps. All these put together, contributes to the large section of the people being illiterate among the Punjabi slum-dwellers.

The percentage of illiterate vary among the Nepalese and Bengali, from 24 percent to 18 percent illiterate indicating a slightly better position than those of the Bihari and the Punjabi slum dwellers. The nature of job and the caste factor like the others affect these percentages, as these people are usually engaged as drivers and vendors, and have a comparatively better economic sustenance capacity than their counterparts, i.e., the Bihari and the Punjabi slum-dwellers. A comparatively small family size and late marriages can also be taken as influencing factor in their attitude and willingness towards formal education.

The proportion of illiterates and only literates also varies largely between the Oriyas, Assamese and others. Among the non migrant section, the occupational pattern varies from being agricultural labour to small land holders, while a section is also engaged as petty-traders and vendors. Though percentage wise the Oriyas and Assamese show a very high

⁷ Technical education means those having some form of technical education or training irrespective of the level of education.

percentage as illiterates. However, due to their small total number, they do not contribute as an important segment of the illiterates among the slum-dwellers

It is interesting to note that in comparison to all these slum-dwellers, i.e., the Punjabis, Biharis, Nepalis, Bengalis, Oriyas and others, the Scheduled Tribe population, i.e., the Khasis, Jaintias and Garos have lesser percentage of people as illiterates. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the slum-dwellers have migrated to the city more because of the pull factor than that of push factor, indicating a comparatively better economic condition, than the other slum-dwellers belonging to different ethnic groups -- thereby being able to provide formal education. Another factor may be that despite a large number of family members the living conditions are comparatively better than their counter-parts, perhaps more because of missionary influences.

A majority of the slum dwellers do not show interest towards formal education mainly because of paucity of resources. If one glances through the Table 6.2, it becomes evident that, illiteracy is comparatively high among the groups engaged in unskilled jobs, having irregular income, and generally fall under the category of new migrant, thereby lacking familiarity with the urban ethos of the city in terms of exploring more earning avenues. This is evident from the foregoing table which indicates direct relation between literacy and job availability as well as migrant and non-migrant aspects.

A major section of these illiterates usually belong to new migrant groups and are usually adult therefore indicating similar kind of situation even at their places of migration. A large section of the illiterates are women that further explains the reason of high illiteracy among these migrants, as social and customary practices is of neglecting the girl child, and early marriage, the dowry systems that prevails among the various castes, and thereby

restricts the women from getting formally educated. Even after marriage, early child birth and very often working as an extra hand to meet the family expenses further degenerates her social position and hence, they get deprived even of the adult education benefits.

Under such conditions it becomes clear that, the literacy status of the slum dwellers represent various degrees, and that the alien new migrants have non-formal occupation pattern, irrespective of the ethnic identity and presents a picture social backwardness and suffer under conditions of poverty and illiteracy.

Ethnicity and income classes

Table 6.3
Ethnic background of income classes

| Ethnic categories/ hh income per month | in per cent | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| | <Rs.500 | Rs.501-1000 | Rs.1001-1500 | Rs.1500 -2000 |
| Punjabi | 9.31 | 41.62 | 39.22 | 9.85 |
| Bihari | 5.57 | 60.71 | 27.80 | 6.82 |
| Nepali | 3.40 | 37.81 | 47.23 | 11.56 |
| Bengali | 5.66 | 33.67 | 54.28 | 8.39 |
| Khasi | 0.89 | 19.66 | 58.77 | 20.68 |
| Garo | 1.21 | 21.66 | 59.25 | 17.88 |
| Jaintia | 1.77 | 24.51 | 59.22 | 14.50 |
| Others | 3.22 | 19.91 | 66.32 | 10.69 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

From the Table 6.3, it becomes clear that the slums are categorised distinctly on ethnic lines and that a particular ethnic group dominates the population composition of a particular slum, showing characteristics of concentration and clustering. The slums of Shillong do depict a slightly different picture and therefore, needs a closer understanding of the structure of poverty.

One way to identify the different aspects of the living standard of the slum dwellers is per capita income. As per 1991 poverty line definition which is around Rs.12,000 per household per annum. To get an insight in to the income conditions four categories have been used ranging from below Rs. 500 to above Rs. 1500 to 2000 per month per household.

As the table indicates highest concentration is found in the two income categories which is in between Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000 and Rs. 1001 to Rs. 1500. Of all the ethnic categories Bihari migrants form the maximum percentage of 60.71 in the Rs. 501 to Rs. 1000 range followed by the Punjabi migrants accounting for 41.62 percent in the same income group. Besides, the Biharis and Punjabis, Nepalese and Bengalis form a significant proportion of 37.81 and 33.67 percent each in this group. It is noteworthy that both the tribals and others (Table 6.3) constitute a small proportion in this class.

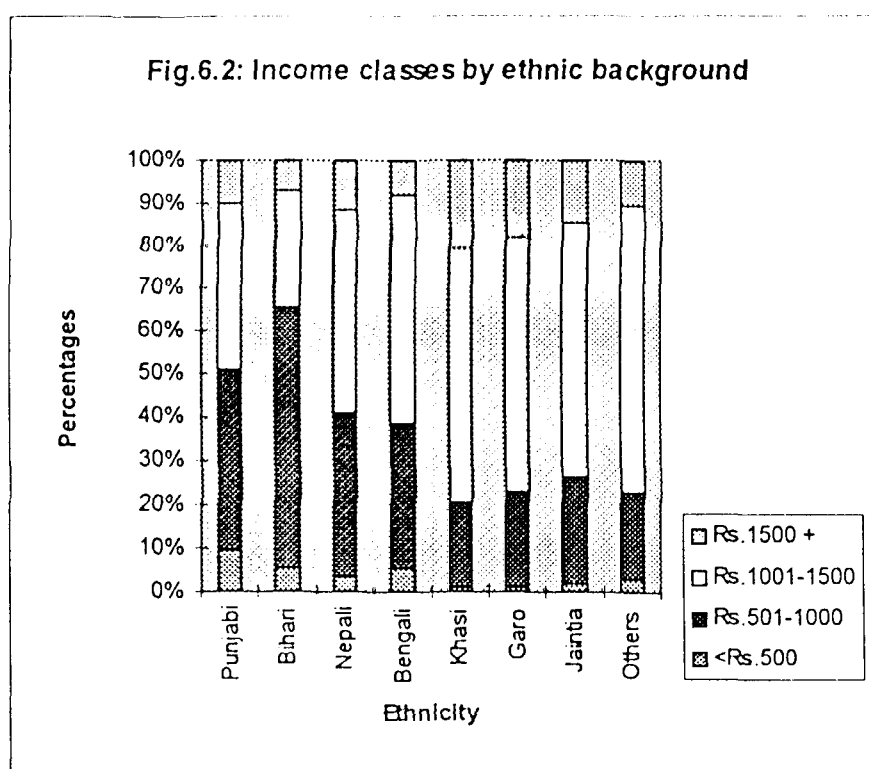
In contrast to this in the category of Rs. 1001 to Rs. 1500, it is the others who form the highest percentage of 66.32 followed by the tribal slum dwellers, Bengalis, Nepalis, Punjabis and lastly the Biharis (Table 6.3, col.3). More or less the same pattern can be observed in the next higher class of households having monthly income of Rs. 1500 and above.

6.3 Migrants among the poor and reasons for migration:

Migration and social backwardness

The pattern can be explained as a consequence of new migrations particularly among the Biharis and Punjabis. Most of these migrations are due to push factors and the migrants are social backwards, belonging to either scheduled castes (SC) or other backward castes (OBC) (Table 6.4). Being at the lower strata of the society most of the new migrants lack any formal

training and are unskilled and illiterate at large. This restricts their mobility to better job conditions, secured income and better living conditions. Hence, a very large group continue to be under the poverty line. Whereas, the older migrants and the non-migrants are at or above the poverty line. The reason can be that due to a longer period of stay in the area, better income opportunities and skill, some of the slum dwellers might have moved above the poverty line. Moreover, the tribal slum dwellers who generally have moved to the city more due to pull factor have either their own house (varying between one room hut to a slightly larger accommodation) or a piece of land at the outskirts of the city. This comparatively improves their conditions vis-à-vis their counterparts.



As table 6.4 indicates majority of the migrants belong to SC followed by the OBC. Of the total migrants (205 actual household number) 5.32 percent belong to SC and 8.51 percent to OBC. Of these the new migrants to the city forms the largest section of almost 64 percent (63.85%) in comparison to all the migrants. Of the non-migrants, 67 per cent belongs to the ST category and 29.23 per cent in the SC category. It is interesting to note that both among the migrants (new and old) and non-migrants the others (higher castes) form a small proportion. This can be explained as high castes prefer to reside outside the slum area, or for the fact that the occurrence of poverty among these castes could be substantially less which generally agrees with the explanatory position long held.

Table 6.4
Migration status by background of social backwardness

| Categories | Total No. of households | ST | SC | OBC | Others |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Non-migrants | 95.00 | 66.33 | 29.23 | 3.78 | 0.66 |
| Migrants | 205.00 | 25.36 | 59.32 | 8.51 | 6.81 |
| New Migrants (<5 Yrs) | 68.00 | 18.52 | 63.85 | 10.81 | 6.82 |
| Migrants (5-20 Yrs) | 88.00 | 13.65 | 57.23 | 19.85 | 9.27 |
| Migrants (>20 Yrs.) | 49.00 | 9.85 | 56.95 | 20.85 | 12.35 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Another distinction can be marked among the migrant and the non-migrant slum dwellers in terms of their ethnic background. As Table 6.5 indicates inter-state migrants like Punjabi, Bihari and Bengalis form a considerable section in the slums of Shillong city. Whereas intra-state migration is low and the percentage of tribal slum dwellers (constituting

of Khasi, Garo and Jaintia) is small ranging between 16.52 and 3.88 respectively. The size of the other migrant groups is also considerably small.

Table 6.5
Migration by ethnic background

| Ethnic Categories | Non-migrant | Migrant | <5 Yrs. | 5 - 20 Yrs. | > 20 Yrs. |
|------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| No. of hhs/ percentage | 95 | 205 | 33.17 | 42.93 | 22.9 |
| Punjabi | 26.28 | 39.63 | 38.05 | 48 | 52.28 |
| Bihari | 10.05 | 24.21 | 29.25 | 24 | 22.61 |
| Nepali | 3.1 | 7.38 | 8.62 | 10.53 | 12.31 |
| Khasi | 49.1 | 16.52 | 9.28 | 5.08 | 4.55 |
| Garo | 4.42 | 5.28 | 5.34 | 4.29 | 2.84 |
| Jaintia | 5.63 | 3.88 | 4.1 | 4.28 | 2.48 |
| Others | 1.42 | 3.1 | 5.36 | 3.82 | 2.93 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

The difference is also noticeable between the old and the new migrants and the migrants and non-migrants. At the level of non-migrants, the local tribals form the majority and the situation is vice-versa for their counterparts.

From the analysis so far, it becomes clear that there exists a distinction between migrant and non-migrant population in respect of their socio-economic conditions, occupation pattern and living standards inhabiting the slums of Shillong city. It can be said that non-migrants enjoy a better position vis-à-vis the migrants. This is reflected through indicators like literacy, indebtedness and occupation structure etc.

Table 6.6
Literacy and education among the migrants

| Categories | Non-migrant | Migrant | More than 20 Yrs. | Between 5-20 Yrs. | Less than 5 Yrs. |
|---------------|-------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Illiterate | 7.4 | 30.11 | 29.25 | 13.24 | 18.96 |
| Only Literate | 11.1 | 25.71 | 27.84 | 25.14 | 31.89 |
| Primary | 29.62 | 20.25 | 18.02 | 31.21 | 26.73 |
| High School | 25.92 | 5.10 | 10.11 | 10.16 | 12.93 |
| College | 7.40 | 9.11 | 5.07 | 4.08 | 1.73 |
| Technical | 18.51 | 7.59 | 9.71 | 16.17 | 7.76 |
| University | 0.00 | 2.13 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Table 6.6 indicates that among the non-migrants only 7.4 per cent are present in the illiterate category. This is in vast contrast to the migrants where almost 40 per cent of the total population constitute of illiterates, which reflects economic constraints and other associated factors that restrict the slum-dwellers in getting literate. However, it would be note worthy to point out that there exists a difference between illiterates and only literates and it can be clearly marked among the old and new migrants into the city -- while the old migrants show about 14 per cent (13.24) of the population as illiterate, the new migrants show a higher figure of 19 per cent (18.96%). The difference can be attributed to the fact, that the older migrants having migrated to the city for more than 20 years or so, might be in a comparatively better economic position than the new comers, by means of exploring more than one source of earning and undergoing a psychological and attitudinal changes under the urban influence and thus realising the need of basic literacy, so as to compete in whatsoever way in the urban informal sector.

In comparison to this, the new migrants, entering the city mostly from the rural areas across the states being pushed from the places of migration (this groups) carry with them the

myths and values of rural set up. Lack of secured economic occupation, irregular income leaves no option but to engage most of the family members (even small children) as helping hands to meet the two square meals and manage a bare existence.

On the whole, the entire process affects the trends and nature of job availability and literacy status, keeping them at very low level of irregular income which consequently leaves no space for either education or better occupation chances resulting in to stagnation, low income and a poorer standards of living usually at places which offers them cheap accommodation, in areas, which are extremely unhygienic and congested, resulting in to chronic illness and other diseases. The tendency to cluster and concentrate also comes from a psychological security of closeness to the kin or a common linguistic affinity.

In comparison to this most of the non-migrants own their own accommodation that they can construct and which varies in size from one room to slightly larger ones. This gives a sense of belongingness to the place. Petty businesses (like, tea or *pan* shops), do not give a high return but it enables them to exist in a somewhat better way.

The impact of the Christian missionaries, the kinship bonds and the absence of the caste factor helps them further to escape the vicious cycle of deprivation and social exploitation and consequently, there is less manifestation of absolute poverty among these groups.

As most of the migrations among the tribal slum dwellers take place from rural areas (mostly short distance migration) because of pull and not push factor -- that offers the option of returning back. Most of the slum-dwellers, therefore, continue to have links with their original places of migration.

6.4 Employment and occupation

Occupation pattern indicates the level of economic sustenance of any given society. In this study as Table 6.7 depicts that a higher percentage is dominated by semi-skilled and unskilled labour which is as high as percent and have mostly the migrant ethnic groups, while a lower percentage is found among non migrants. Among the ethnic groups the Punjabis the Biharis have a considerable section of the slum dwellers as unskilled and semi-skilled labour, while Nepali, Bengali, Assamese, and other form a moderate groups.

Table 6.7
Occupational background of migrants

| Categories | Organised jobs | | Labourers | | | Informal Sector | | Agricul ture | Residual |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------|-----------|--------------|---------|-----------------|--------|-----------------|----------|
| | Govt. | Private | Unskilled | Semi-Skilled | Skilled | Artisan | Vendor | | |
| Non-migrants | 22.12 | 37.89 | 6.38 | 9.52 | 5.68 | 6.27 | 3.58 | 6.45 | 2.11 |
| Migrants | 19.82 | 31.24 | 11.52 | 7.21 | 6.23 | 4.81 | 11.23 | 1.97 | 5.97 |
| New Migrants (<5 Yrs) | 12.11 | 22.41 | 25.81 | 11.86 | 2.34 | 1.02 | 13.81 | 0.00 | 10.64 |
| Migrants (5-20 Yrs) | 16.22 | 21.37 | 13.21 | 12.11 | 9.83 | 9.64 | 14.22 | 1.06 | 2.34 |
| Migrants (>20 Yrs.) | 21.49 | 37.46 | 9.50 | 5.86 | 13.06 | 2.15 | 7.81 | 0.91 | 1.76 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

The migrant slum-dwellers (non tribal) usually enter the urban centre with a hope of a quicker job availability as the varied specialisation in the city provides ample opportunity, but in the process, they are usually caught in the vicious cycle of poverty which on one hand deprives them of their basic needs and on the other restricts their options of going back to their place of origin, as new hope of getting a break and the severe push conditions at their place of migration continue to restricts their mobility.

However, it can be pointed out that such situation prevails among the new migrants at large, while old migrants particularly the older slum dwellers may be above the poverty line with more than one source of income with their kith and kin having established themselves and consequently improving the situation⁸.

Among the non migrant section the occupation pattern varies from being agricultural labourer to small land holders, while a section is also engaged as petty traders and vendors. As most of these slum dwellers had /or have constructed their own residential quarters, their rental compulsion does not exist. A close kinship and community bond also helps them from not getting in to the vicious cycle of indebtedness and deprivations. In contrast to this perpetual poverty conditions persists among the migrant groups and the deteriorating living conditions as lack of skill forces them out of any secured job and consequently results in to irregular employment opportunities and low to very low per capita income.

This on the whole affects both the ability and sustenance capacity of these families and hence they continue in the vicious cycle of poverty and exploitation, without even consciously being aware of it. Under such circumstances, it becomes quite clear that the occupation does play a key role in determining the poverty conditions of the slum dwellers, irrespective of the ethnic differentiation.

6.5 Income and indebtedness

As Table 6.8 indicates that a considerable section of the slum dweller are either unemployed or under-employed in the informal sector, engaged mostly in irregular and unskilled jobs,

⁸ Instances of such type can be found in the Bara Bazar slum where, having got formal education and a permanent job, some of the slum dwellers have constructed their own house, away from the main slum and have a comparatively better living and income conditions.

these people have a low per capita income. A large family size further accentuates the problems consequently pushing them towards a condition of perpetual indebtedness for meeting their day to day requirements. A quick perusal of Table 6.7 indicates that the indebtedness rate is comparatively high among certain ethnic concentrations. For example, of the total sampled households Punjabis, Biharis, Nepalese and Bengalis show almost 100 percent indebtedness through out the year for various reasons starting from family expenses to repayment of their earlier loans. A major section show indebtedness due to illness, i.e., medical treatment and marriage expenses as most important factors. It is interesting to note that a negligible percentage of the households (2 to 4 per cent) show indebtedness for the purpose of education of their children. This can be explained by the fact that most of the slum dwellers assign low priority to education. Among the ethnic groups inhabiting the slums Bihari, Punjabi and Nepali slum-dwellers show highest percentage of indebtedness (54, 44 and 36% respectively) for the purpose of family marriages. This can be explained in the terms of the existence of the practice of dowry system as a custom, particularly for the marriage of the girls which leads the parents into indebtedness. Further needless pomp and show on such occasions also worsen the situation. The noticeable factor that emerges here is even to be found among the tribal slum-dwellers and even among the high castes-- as much as 40 percent get indebted due to family marriages. The reason, perhaps, is the tendency for celebration and show of social status among the slum-dwellers themselves⁹.

⁹ On survey it was found that a majority of the slum dwellers considered marriage as a festive occasion for celebration and also as a symbol of social status among the slum dwellers, particularly in the marriage of the daughters. This kind of attitude is common even among the non-slum dwellers at large.

Most of the people continue to be under the burden of debt from private money lenders with interest rate at times as high as 25-50 percent per annum¹⁰. This further aggravates their position and leads to a vicious cycle -- the borrower invariably borrowing to pay back old loans.

Table 6.8
Reasons for indebtedness by ethnic background

| Categories | Marriage | Education | Illness | Family | Property | Loan for earlier loans |
|------------|----------|-----------|---------|--------|----------|------------------------|
| Punjabi | 44.44 | 6.00 | 28.00 | 12.00 | 4.00 | 6.00 |
| Bihari | 54.00 | 0.00 | 22.00 | 14.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 |
| Nepali | 36.00 | 4.00 | 24.00 | 18.00 | 10.00 | 8.00 |
| Bengali | 26.00 | 10.00 | 22.00 | 16.00 | 12.00 | 14.00 |
| Khasi | 40.00 | 10.00 | 25.00 | 10.00 | 15.00 | 5.00 |
| Garo | 20.00 | 0.00 | 40.00 | 30.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Jaintia | 30.00 | 0.00 | 30.00 | 20.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Others | 30.00 | 13.00 | 26.00 | 20.00 | 6.00 | 3.33 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

Table 6.9
Indebtedness by occupation of head of the household

| Occupation | Organised Sector | | Labourers | | | Informal Sector | | Ag. Labourer | Unemployed |
|------------------------|------------------|---------|-----------|--------------|---------|-----------------|---------|--------------|------------|
| | Govt. | Private | Unskilled | Semi-Skilled | Skilled | Artisans | Vendors | | |
| Total in Each category | 7.68 | 19.36 | 16.85 | 12.22 | 7.51 | 5.11 | 11.75 | 5.85 | 13.67 |
| Illness | 21.35 | 37.84 | 41.02 | 36.52 | 29.11 | 25.87 | 19.72 | 22.56 | 41.63 |
| Marriage | 31.72 | 22.14 | 11.13 | 24.83 | 31.02 | 23.97 | 17.68 | 14.55 | 7.91 |
| Education | 5.61 | 0.29 | 0.00 | 1.02 | 1.23 | 2.82 | 1.11 | 0.13 | 0.00 |
| Family Expenditure | 30.55 | 27.61 | 33.70 | 33.22 | 26.23 | 36.64 | 34.26 | 41.71 | 33.62 |
| Property | 7.25 | 1.85 | 0.97 | 1.11 | 3.86 | 5.26 | 5.68 | 2.74 | 0.00 |
| Earlier Loan | 3.63 | 10.27 | 13.21 | 3.32 | 8.55 | 5.44 | 21.55 | 18.31 | 16.84 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

¹⁰ Most of these migrants have a large dependent family (detailed analysis have been done in previous chapter) which explains the causes of malnutrition and under-nourishment, disease and debtness as handicap.

In comparison to this, indebtedness among tribal slum-dwellers, i.e., the Khasis, Garos and Jaintias is less, that is 75 percent, 80 percent and 85 percent respectively. The reason for this can be attributed to a better economic condition and close kinship still strongly operating which enables help both monetary and physical at the time of need. The Khasi slum dwellers mainly occupying the upper Lumphing area and are mostly migrant from nearby areas and have more or less some property base in the villages though may be negligible which gives them a better position in comparison to their counter part.¹¹

In comparison to the non tribal slum dwellers as a whole (particularly the Punjabi and the Bihari), the other groups (Oriya, Tamil, ect.) and the Assamese slum dwellers show a comparatively lesser percentage of indebtedness of 90 and 93 percent respectively. The reason can be attributed to the occupation structure which indicate a major section of them in either skilled jobs or govt and semi government jobs. Thus over all the indebtedness figure indicate a comparatively better position for the non-migrant slum dwellers than those migrated from outside the state.

6.6 Income and occupation

Literacy rates, occupational pattern and income is directly related. That is, higher the education higher the chances to get into the organised sector with a better return of income. However, the situation in the slums in general and in Shillong in particular depict a different

¹¹ Among the Garo and Jaintia slum dwellers one or two family members specially teenaged girls work as domestic help in non tribal houses, which enables them better standard of living and help at time of need. This when taken into account show a comparatively better position than the non tribal slum dwellers where due to caste and occupation factor they are not easily accepted for household works.

picture. As already discussed, due to poverty conditions and living environment majority of the slum dwellers remain illiterate, or only literate. Consequently, they lack any formal training or skill. Under such conditions, the slum dwellers are employed in the formal sector with uncertainty of jobs, irregularity of income and are either low paid or under paid.

Table 6.10
Income classes by educational background

| Educational background | <Rs.500 | Rs.501-1000 | Rs.1001-1500 | Rs.1500 + |
|------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| Illiterates | 72.97 | 26.63 | 0.80 | 0.00 |
| Only literates | 31.29 | 54.12 | 14.59 | 0.00 |
| Primary School | 11.29 | 58.44 | 26.28 | 4.08 |
| High School | 1.22 | 19.71 | 32.61 | 46.46 |
| Degree | 0.00 | 0.00 | 48.22 | 51.78* |
| Tech. Education | 0.00 | 14.85 | 48.22 | 36.93 |
| University | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Others** | 2.81 | 18.69 | 58.81 | 22.69 |

* - This category includes those who had entered the college and has dropped out after attending a year or more.

** - This include any other kind of vocational training or diploma etc.

Source : Field Survey by the Author

As the table 6.10 depicts almost 73 percent (72.97%) of the slum dwellers fall under the illiterate category, while 31.29 percent are only literate. In both these categories the income per household per month is around Rs. 500 or slightly above which is half of the poverty line. Only a mere 0.80 percent are found to be above the poverty line. This can be explained in terms of getting more work due to longer stay in the area or may be due to some semi-permanent job, etc. Among the only literate a considerable chunk of 54.12 percent fall at or slightly below the poverty line. Whereas 14.59 percent are above the poverty line. Among the literate slum dwellers (primary and high school level) a good number is represented in the income category of Rs. 1001 to Rs. 1500. Slum-dwellers having higher

education are normally above the poverty line but do not seem to be poor because of other associated factors. The income categories and the literacy status varies between the slums, within the ethnic groups inhabiting the slums and the migrants and non-migrants segment. This is reflective of the economic constraints resulting out of occupation and income variations.

Table 6.11
Income and occupations

| Occupations | <Rs.500 | Rs.501-1000 | Rs.1001-1500 | Rs.1500 + |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| Organised Govt. Sector* | 6.21 | 45.08 | 30.78 | 17.93 |
| Private Employment | 19.66 | 53.28 | 15.68 | 11.38 |
| Lab.(Unskilled) | 7.25 | 48.22 | 37.44 | 7.11 |
| Lab.(Semi-skilled) | 2.71 | 39.34 | 49.66 | 8.29 |
| Lab.(Skilled) | 1.65** | 23.89 | 63.25 | 11.21 |
| Informal Sector (Artisans) | 1.22 | 29.67 | 58.89 | 9.22 |
| Informal Sector (Vendors) | 2.80 | 19.88 | 52.69 | 24.55 |
| Agri.Labour | 4.88 | 61.91 | 27.33 | 5.52 |
| Unemployed*** | 33.87 | 53.68 | 12.23 | 0.22 |

* - These are represented by temporary/casual workers in the organised sector, who get a fixed amount as salary till they are permanently employed.

** - These are mostly new migrants and lack any credibility and are yet to establish themselves as skilled labourers and therefore get occasional jobs only.

*** - These include who do not have any employment as such but manage to get seasonally or during festive occasions certain contracts or jobs.

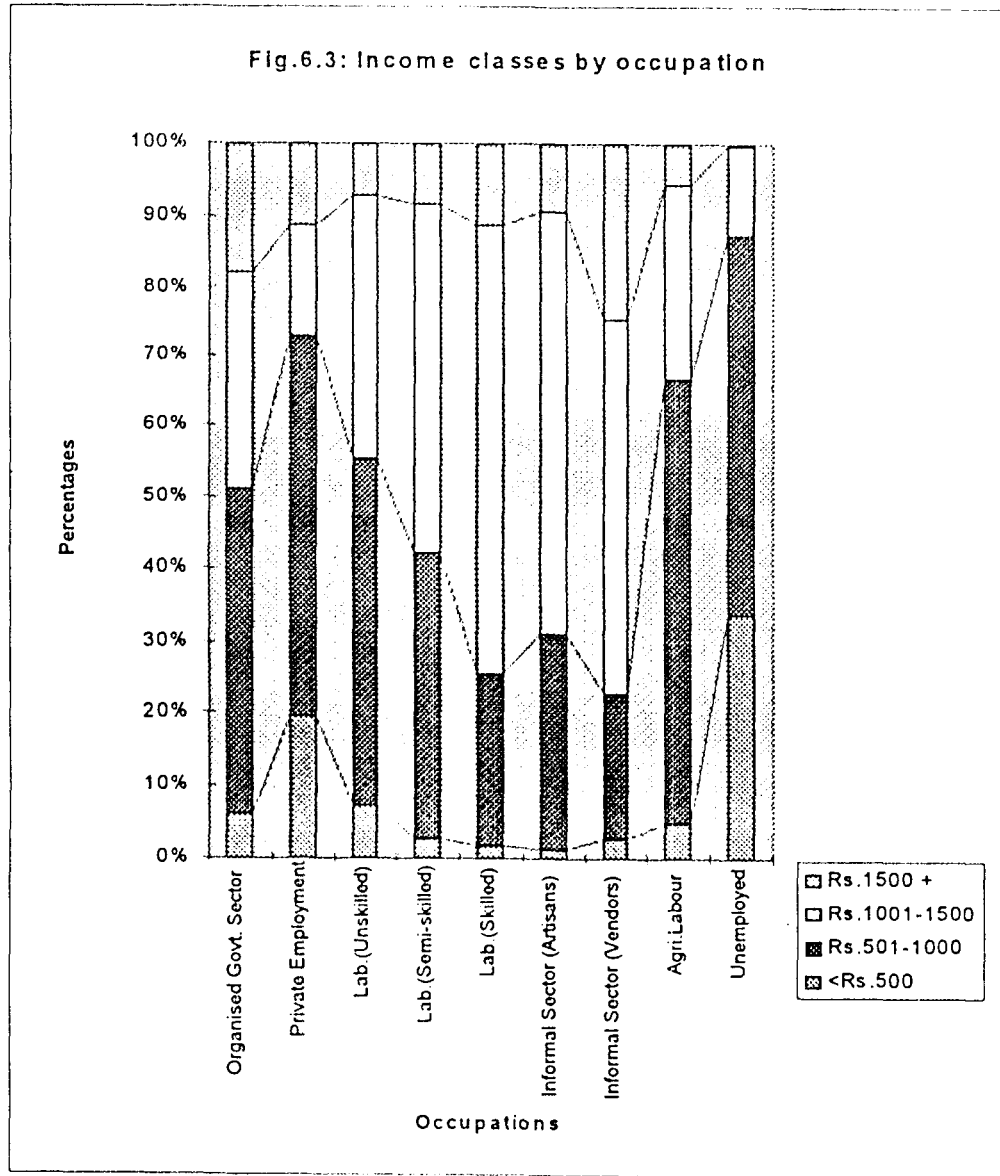
Source : Field Survey by the Author

As the Table 6.11 indicates nature of occupation and income is intricately related. A perusal of the table clearly reflects that there exists a clear distinction between the income returns of the organised and informal sectors, skilled and unskilled labourers, agricultural labourers and among the artisans and the vendors. As much as 45.08 percent and 38.70

percent are at and above the poverty line in the organised sector. While a sizeable proportion of 18 percent can be marked above that.

In contrast to this, in the private employment sector and among the semi-skilled and unskilled labourer the sizeable section fall either below the half poverty line or are at the poverty line. This clearly brings out the nature of job and the related income conditions that affects the very existence of the slum dwellers.

One significant thing that can be observed from the table 6.11 is that among all occupational categories vendors shows the highest percentage of 24.55 in the Rs. 1000 plus category. This is because a large section of this category are local tribals who have kitchen garden or own a piece of land and grow their own vegetables. This earns them comparatively better profit than their counterparts who buy it from the retailers and pay-up a share of their profit in the process.



6.7 The Child in the slum

It is generally presumed that slums are areas of disease, illness, high infant mortality and morbidity, malnutrition and under-nourishment. The slums of Shillong city do not show much exception to these, though the degree of intensity and consequent impact varies from one slum to another.

The slum households reveals that occupation and ethnic factors play an important role in determining the child health conditions. In other words, the economic conditions of the families influences nutrition and other health measures available to the child. Similarly, it reveals that the migrant slum-dwellers occupy a more inconvenient position so far the child health conditions are considered, although this varies from one ethnic group to another. The Bihari migrants show a high percentage (of approximately 50 percent) of the children (mainly within the age group of 5 to 12 years) as malnourished, and under-nourished followed by Punjabis, Nepalese and Bengalis.

Table 6.12
Child health status by ethnic background

| Categories | Healthy | Chronic Illness | Malnourished | Spastic |
|------------|---------|-----------------|--------------|---------|
| Punjabi | 10.00 | 28.00 | 48.00 | 14.00 |
| Bihari | 8.00 | 34.00 | 50.00 | 8.00 |
| Nepali | 16.00 | 32.00 | 42.00 | 10.00 |
| Bengali | 14.00 | 36.00 | 38.00 | 12.00 |
| Khasi | 40.00 | 15.00 | 25.00 | 20.00 |
| Garo | 30.00 | 20.00 | 40.00 | 10.00 |
| Jaintia | 20.00 | 40.00 | 30.00 | 10.00 |
| Assamese | 25.00 | 30.00 | 35.00 | 10.00 |
| Oriya | 30.00 | 20.00 | 50.00 | 0.00 |
| Others | 30.00 | 20.00 | 36.67 | 13.33 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

In comparison to this, the non-migrants like the Khasis, Jaintias and Garo slum-dwellers show a comparatively lower percentage of malnourishment of children varying between 25 to 40 percent. At the same time, the occupation of the parents, nature of working environment and income have great bearing on the child health even among them as well. This is applicable more frequently among the women since they are doubly burdened with

household chores and the family as well. The Table 6.13 reflects, the percentage of malnourished children are the largest among the agricultural workers, unskilled, semi-skilled and residual (46.17 %, 42.74%, 41.23%, and 40.85%), respectively. The nature of job indicates that usually the children are considered as helping hands and are made to work to add to the economic benefits of the family. A large family size and low income affect the purchasing power of these households. This, like other aspects varies between the slums and the ethnic groups as well as among the migrants and the non-migrants.

Similar trends are indicated for the sick and spastic children as well. The reason for such discrepancy lies in the economic conditions of the slum dwellers. If a comparative analysis is done, it becomes clear from the Tables-6.9, and 6.10 that the slum-dwellers mostly belonging to the migrant ethnic groups are generally engaged in low paid unskilled jobs and are highly indebted and consequently fail to provide for basic minimum needs in a decent manner. This in turn affects the purchasing capacity, resultant non availability of nutrient food that in turn affects the general health conditions of the people, particularly the children. Extreme unhygienic living conditions further adds to the problem there by perpetuating disease and illness almost as a regular phenomena, as poverty and paucity of money does not allow them to avail proper medical facilities. The degree however varies between the old and new migrants owing to various reasons.

Table 6.13
Child health by background of parents' occupation in Informal Sector

| Categories | Organised jobs | | Labourers | | | Informal Sector | | Agriculture | Residual |
|---------------|----------------|---------|-----------|--------------|---------|-----------------|--------|-------------|----------|
| | Govt. | Private | Unskilled | Semi-Skilled | Skilled | Artisan | Vendor | | |
| Total | 7.68 | 19.36 | 12.22 | 7.51 | 5.11 | 11.75 | 5.85 | 13.67 | 13.67 |
| Health/Normal | 47.05 | 27.83 | 12.65 | 21.44 | 38.29 | 38.18 | 38.34 | 19.23 | 23.07 |
| Chronic | 32.35 | 36.42 | 36.28 | 31.27 | 28.52 | 24.60 | 29.74 | 30.76 | 31.06 |
| Malnourished | 14.72 | 27.65 | 42.74 | 41.23 | 27.37 | 31.02 | 26.63 | 46.17 | 40.85 |
| Spastic | 3.22 | 4.89 | 5.63 | 4.11 | 3.22 | 4.21 | 2.35 | 2.01 | 3.77 |
| Accident | 2.66 | 3.21 | 2.67 | 1.25 | 1.90 | 1.91 | 2.94 | 1.83 | 1.26 |

Source : Field Survey by the Author

The non migrants slum dwellers on the other hand show a better position. The reason can be attributed to, the comparatively better economic conditions and better living conditions. Food habit also plays an important role as far as health conditions of the children are concerned. Eating of beef or pork for example does not bear any social taboo like the other slum dwellers, where despite severe economic deprivation, social values continue to play an influencing role, particularly in the form of customs, religion and superstitions, more strongly among the females than males and consequently passes on to the children who ultimately suffer due to such backwardness.

Thus on the whole the poverty conditions of the slum dwellers of the Shillong city vary greatly along the ethnic line from one slum to another, as well as within the slums depending upon the status of occupation and duration of migration of the slum dweller to the area.

All these therefore continue to generate poverty both within the city, in the form of stagnation and perpetuating poverty conditions and deprivation, as well as inducing it from outside in the form of migration to the city, creating a rural poverty pocket and there by accentuating the process of poverty formation in a complex manner.

6.8 Summary of findings

From the foregoing analysis it emerges:

1. The structural differentiation is at two levels - at the primary level of income classes that engenders slums and poor localities, and at the secondary level of differentiation by ethnicity. However, whereas the primacy of the first level is common to all cities, in Shillong ethnic differentiation has a primary importance over income differentiation.
2. Ethnicity, occupations, and migrant or non-migrant status create differentiation in the degree in literacy status, in the slums of Shillong. Percentages of illiterate vary from 38 percent among the Bihari slum-dwellers to 15 per cent among the Khasi slums-dwellers. A major section of the illiterates are new migrants and have non-formal sector occupation that goes with irregular income and uncertainty of job conditions.
3. A clear distinction can be marked between the migrant and non-migrant population inhabiting the slums in respect of their socio-economic conditions, occupation pattern and living standards. It can be said that non-migrant enjoy a better position vis-à-vis the migrants, that is reflected through indicators like literacy, indebtedness and occupation structure.
4. Occupation plays an important role in determining the level of poverty of the slum-dwellers, irrespective of ethnic differentiation. However, the informal sector and the

unskilled and semi-skilled jobs incorporate mostly the new migrants, predominantly non-tribals, rather than the non-migrants local tribals or the older migrants of non-tribal origin.

5. A considerable section of the slum-dwellers are either unemployed or under-employed or engaged in the informal sector. They have irregular income and insecurity of tenure of jobs. This leads them to perpetual indebtedness for meeting their requirements like illness, family marriages or even day to day needs. The degree of indebtedness, however, varies between different ethnic groups and between the migrants and the non-migrants.
6. Occupation and ethnicity play an important role in determining the child health conditions in the slums. A major section of the migrant slum-dwellers are generally engaged in low paid un-skilled jobs and are highly indebted. Both low income and indebtedness affect the purchasing capacity of the household and makes them unable to provide nutritious food to the children. Thus, the prevalence of malnourishment of the children in the slums. Unhygienic living environment and lack of adequate medical care leads to perpetuation of frequent illness of the children. The degree, however, varies between old and new migrants, migrants and non-migrants.

It therefore, emerges that apparently the slums of Shillong show all the characteristics similar to slums as in any other urban centre of the country. However, there exists a broader difference within these slums, being segmented on ethnic lines, they indicate varying degrees of poverty conditions. On the other hand, the socio-economic structure of tribal society, the kinship and the community identity and the absence of caste system etc. allows the non-migrant tribal slum-dwellers to be at a better position than the migrant non-tribals who lack of regular income, heavy indebtedness, illiteracy and extreme poverty conditions.

The incidences of more acute poverty conditions are predominant among the migrants on the whole and more among the new migrants, that indicates the inducement of poverty from outside the state in the form of interstate migration. Sharp manifestation of poverty conditions in the form of slums are therefore, prominent among the non-tribal migrants, though the incidence of growing poverty conditions among the tribals can not be entirely ignored.

Chapter VII

CONCLUSION

Poverty in the context of the contemporary society poses many problems and challenges that cries for resolution. In light of inequities and abject conditions that people are confronted with in developing countries like India, poverty alleviation has an over-riding significance over every other issue. Urban poverty and especially slums, in its most acute manifestation, has emerged as a serious threat to social stability -- the urban poor are more vocal, better organised and constitute a necessary evil in cities in developing countries. They constitute a cheap labour force, a reserve force upon which the industrial capitalism can fall upon at times of stress, they clean the mounting dumps of garbage that the consumer societies build at no cost to the urban local bodies, they are the cheap retailers and provide a large number of functions for the comforts of the better-offs -- but, they are also not wanted in the rapidly changing urban-scope of the developing countries. The welfare state is concerned -- thus, with a variety of poverty alleviation programmes, ostensibly to better the life of the poor.¹

¹ A.Kundu(1993), *In name of the urban poor*, Sage(India), New Delhi.

The foregoing chapters, indeed present a quite distressing situation in the city of Shillong that a careful perusal reveals (the broad contour and contradictions of Indian society today), i.e., economic disparities, social inequalities, cultural alienation and increasing deprivation for a larger number of people. Whereas in the other cities, the dichotomy exists between skyscrapers, spacious and luxurious apartments for a privileged few and number of those who squat in squatters and drink from drains, in case of Shillong, the same also exists between the well-offs and those living in slums in extreme unhygienic conditions.

While approaching the problem of urban poverty in Shillong, it was realised that poverty cannot be characterised adequately in terms of income, expenditure and consumption pattern alone. It is much more complex in its structural roots and differentiated contents (the poor), features (form) that emerge as visible symbolism of the poor and their poverty in slums and squatters. Therefore, attention was focused to site and location, internal structure, residential density, age-sex composition, language and ethnicity, social backwardness, condition of women and children, income and occupation, levels of literacy and degree of indebtedness etc. to enhance the understanding of poverty (structural), the poor (as contents) and the slums (as spatial form), the former two taking spatial manifestation as slums.

Current estimates of poverty, in most of the studies, are based on average calorie intake of households by urban expenditure groups. According to the Planning Commission, for estimating the poverty line, the average daily per capita calorie intake of 2100 calories has been the standard that translates into annual household income of Rs.11,850 in 1992 as per prices of 1990-91 for a house of average size of five. As pointed out, this appears a uni-dimensional definition and inadequate-- urban-dwellers, indeed suffer from very serious forms

of spatial and environmental deprivation, the most acute forms of which are visible in the slums.

According to urban poverty survey, carried out by the NIUA (1987)², in low income neighbourhoods, about 60 per cent families above the poverty line were living in kuchha houses and suffering from the same forms of environmental degradation as families below poverty line. The urban poverty, therefore, had to be approached from the point of view of both the household income as well as other social indicators, as mentioned earlier.

A major problem in the study of slums is that they are extremely varied. Broadly three sets of situations can be identified in the growth of slums. First, a slum develops as a result of squatting of poor unskilled workers who are too poor to rent a house and pay for the urban infrastructure. Hence the poor migrants largely squat on vacant public land near places of work, erect hutments and use public facilities. The city administration considers such a settlements as illegal and does not provide any municipal services. The result is substandard housing, overcrowding and unsanitary conditions and appalling human misery.

The second set of conditions under which slums develop are deterioration of a group of buildings in the old part of the city. The area gets congested and overcrowded and in the absence of adequate municipal services, slum-like conditions arise. Such areas become overcrowded and unsanitary slum conditions prevail in the absence of adequate civic amenities. The same situation obtains in the chawls of industrial workers even where housing is provided by the factory management.

Third, as the city expands, it sucks in the colonies of fishermen, herdsman and the like, and the fringe villages are put to urban land-use, whereas the inhabited area of

²NIUA(1987)

the villages are left intact without infrastructural facilities. Since the rent and cost of living would be low in these areas many poor unskilled workers come to live there. The first type of slum formation is perhaps the most common in Indian cities. Since present study is aimed at providing a broad view of the existing urbanisation and emerging urban poverty and the poor, slums as manifestation of poverty in the Shillong was taken as a basis to understand and analyse the existing conditions at a micro level.

The colonial history mattered a lot to the growth of Shillong. The regional economic structure since the inception of the city was characterised by the fragmentation of space only on politico-administrative considerations without any thrust towards structural changes in the economy. The city developed and remained under direct British control surrounded by numerous Khasi princely states. Even after independence the nature of urbanisation is characterised by the major growth in the population without being accompanied by any economic transformation in the hinterland.

The most acute form of spatial and environmental deprivation is manifested in slums. Their study in the context of Shillong city brings out the following spatio-temporal characteristics:

1. The site and location of slums usually display marginal locational conditions and slums of Shillong are no exception to this. Due to spatio-temporal and social restrictions, the scope for physical expansion of the slums is limited. Despite being incorporated within the city limits, most of the slums remain in comparatively marginal and difficult locations like ditches, lowlands or along steep slopes and have difficult accessibility.
2. The slums of Shillong contain almost 35 per cent of the population of the city and are segregated on distinct ethnic lines. They can be categorised in to two types - old and new.

New slums are generally smaller in terms of household size and physical extension. This is because these new slums are inhabited by recent migrants, mostly individuals. In contrast to this, in the older slums the household sizes and the total population are larger.

3. The residential conditions like density per household, and area per person is very similar to that of any other slum in the country. The huts/tenements are mostly of Kuchha or temporary type made mainly of wood pieces, tin, or tarpaulins clothes and plastic sheets, and are also exposed to all kinds of hazards. However, the house types, materials for construction and the patterns, i.e., alignment etc. vary from one slum to another and depend mostly on ethnic composition of the slum-dwellers, nature of occupation and income and other socio-economic factors.
4. From the view point of health and hygiene majority of the slums are characterised by unhygienic conditions and severe congestions. Minimum facilities like potable water, sanitation and electricity are woefully inadequate, although the launching of schemes like EIUS (Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums) have brought some amount of succour to slum-dwellers.
5. A large section of the slum dwellers are inter-state migrants. Intra-state migration is still at a low key level and it is mostly from nearby rural areas. Almost 89 per cent of the migrants inhabiting the slum are from rural areas and only 11 percent are from other urban areas. The inter-state and intra-state migrations are indicative of age and sex selectivity. More than 50 per cent of the migrants belong to the age group of 15-50 years and are predominantly male, indicating recent nature of migration, and a very high dependency ratio. A large section of the inter-state migrants inhabiting these slums belong to either Scheduled Caste or OBC, whereas only a nominal per cent belong to high caste. This is indication that mostly socially and economically deprived sections are the migrants because of the impact of push factor in places of their origin.

6. Slums of Shillong show a strong religious affinity., characterised by the dominance of two religious groups, namely Sikhs and Hindus. Whereas Christians are also found in the slums, Muslims are almost negligible..
7. In the slums of Shillong the structural differentiation is at two levels - at primary level of income/class differentiation (that engenders slums) and at the secondary level of ethnic differentiation. Almost all the slums are differentiated on the basis of ethnicity. Socially these slum dwellers remain confined to themselves, with little or no interaction with the tribal population, and on a thin line with the non tribals. Caste and language factors play a dominant role in these relations. The slums of Shillong have a clear differentiation on ethnic lines forming the basis of differences in language, culture and socio-economic patterns. Language is the most important binding force among the slum-dwellers and there is a strong tendency to cluster and concentrate in places having common linguistic affinity.
8. Slum-dwellers are in general educationally backward. A very high percentage (77%) of them are illiterate, whereas a very small proportion (5.4%) only have education up to high school level. The degree however, varies between one slum to another and is mostly determined by ethnic segregation and nature of occupation of the head of the household. Ethnicity, occupation, and migrant or non-migrant status create differentiation in the degree of literacy status in the slums. Percentages of illiterates vary from 38 per cent among the Bihari slum-dwellers to 15 percent among the Khasis. A major section of these illiterates are new migrants and have occupations in the informal sectors with irregular incomes and uncertainty of job conditions.
9. Occupation plays a very important role in determining the income of households irrespective of their ethnic differentiation. However, the migrant and the non migrant aspects do determine, to a large extent, the nature of job itself. While the new migrants generally get engaged in the informal sectors and constitute the unskilled and semi-skilled labour force, the non migrants to large extent get employed in the organised sectors and are comparatively in a better position.

10. The slums of Shillong comprises of a very large section of inter-state migrants accounting for almost 59.7 percent of the total slum population of the city. Migration to city is with a motive for and in search of economic opportunities of either employment in organised sectors or some form of self-employment activities in the informal sector. Both migration and nature of occupation is strongly dominated by factors like caste, kinship, language and religion and varies between different ethnic groups and localities. A clear distinction can be drawn between the migrants and non-migrants inhabiting in the slums in respect of their socio-economic conditions, occupation patterns and living standards. It can be said that non-migrants enjoy a better position vis-à-vis the migrants which is reflected through indicators like literacy, indebtedness and occupation structure.
11. A considerable section of the slum-dwellers are either unemployed or under-employed or engaged in the informal sectors. They have irregular income and insecurity of tenure of jobs. This leads them into perpetual indebtedness for meeting their requirements like family illness, marriages or even day to day needs. The degree of indebtedness, however, varies among the different ethnic groups and between the migrant and non-migrant sections.
12. Occupation and migration play an important role in determining the poverty conditions of the slum-dwellers. This is clearly reflected through health conditions of children in the slums. A major section of the migrant slum dwellers are generally engaged in low paid un-skilled jobs and they also remain highly indebted. Both low income and indebtedness affect their purchasing capacity and renders them unable to be able to provide nutritious food to their children, resulting in the prevalence of malnourishment of the children in the slums. Unhygienic living environment and lack of adequate health care leads to perpetuation of frequent illness of the children. The degree, however, varies between old and new migrants, and migrants and non-migrants.
13. The family and the high gender structuration in most of the slums are unfavourable to women. Though women work along with their husbands and contribute to the economy of

the household, they do not enjoy the equal status. Early marriages, illiteracy and social backwardness omimates the social life of the women in the slums. Thus, the content of the social structure in the slums depicts the important components that are interdependent giving a meaning to social institution and association.

14. The issues of employment and income of slum-dwellers were found to be highly complex in nature. One aspect of the complexity as confronted in Shillong is also the nature of inter-slum income distribution that also indicates strong ethnic orientation. This is not the expected situation (Chapter 4). This ethnic divide appears to be structural in nature and is quite deep-seated.

The condition of the poor and especially the slum-dwellers, in a sense, is reflective of the general situation of the poor in urban India and at the same time, it is different taking into account its cultural specificities and the ethnic dimensions. A variety of poverty alleviation programmes of Government of India, like EIU, UBSP, NRY, etc. are run in selected slums of the city, that are expected to bring some relief to the urban poor. However, experience shows that no cardinal change is discernible neither in their physical environment nor in their social lives that are expected to enable the poor and the slum residents to take initiative in bettering their own lives. The programmes are also implemented selectively along ethnic lines (i.e., selection of slums and the target groups are determined along the ethnic lines). i.e., the tribals have a larger share than the non-tribals under political and administrative pressures.

Studies on slums and the urban poor by geographers, sociologists, political scientists and economists are by no means few on India. They are few in the context of the Northeast region. Shillong provided a good opportunity to evaluate some known ideas and compare

the conditions with other slums, since it is more than a century old city and provides shelter to a variety of ethnicities and cultures from within the region and from outside. What lessons then can be drawn ?

In Lefebvrian framework the inter-meshed nature of penetration of market and capitalism in an otherwise tribal milieu of the city is to be grappled with its structural roots and in the manner capitalism creates inequities and engenders poverty. The characterisation of the poor provides insights to various aspects, whereas the morphology of the slums shows the manifestation in spatial form. This nexus of the structure of poverty, the poor and their built environment needs fuller appreciation.

1. First, the ethnic plurality and social networks are to be fully appreciated and grasped.
2. Second, the differentiation arising between the migrants and the non-migrants and between old and new migrants need fuller appreciation.
3. Third, the status of the most vulnerable among the poor, the unemployed, the women and children is to be fully appreciated.
4. Fourth, the relationship between poverty in the city and the economic ambience in its hinterland needs further studies, though in case of Shillong the quantum of intra-state migration is of relatively manageable order at the moment, but indications are that the situation may exacerbate if the economic base of the city does not change for the better.

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