

## Editor's Note

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The fourth issue of *Regional Development Studies (RDS)* continues the critical examination of the socioeconomic and environmental problems of developing countries, with special emphasis on regional and local development.

Regional development, which grew out of the larger body of development theory, has evolved through several metamorphoses, following Kuhn's account of scientific revolution.<sup>1/</sup> Kuhn explained how anomalous information would lead to the abandonment of old paradigms and their replacement by new ones, to better explain and accommodate new phenomena and behaviour. Along these lines, regional development has evolved from the early growth pole approach of the 1950s and 1960s to the sustainable regional development theory of the late 1980s and 1990s.

Until the 1950s, regional development planning was largely designed to develop the natural and water resources of a region. That is why early regional development planning focused mainly on river basins. Subsequently, regional development planning broadened its focus to encompass problems of economically-depressed regions and the whole gamut of human settlements issues. The urban-industrial growth strategy known as the growth pole approach was considered an effective regional development means to solving the problems of economically-depressed regions.

However, the anticipated trickle-down effect of the growth pole strategy failed to lift the depressed regions out of poverty, and uneven development became a major problem in most developing countries. The failure to resolve the regional problems triggered the search for innovative and alternative strategies. Consequently, new theories and tools emerged, such as the centre-periphery model, cumulative causation regional development policy, the agropolitan regional development strategy, and, most recently, the sustainable regional development approach.

The global socioeconomic changes that are now evident require that regional development's obsolete concepts, tools, and approaches give way to other approaches and models of regional development that capture and explain the emerging trends. Towards this objective and to effectively respond to the challenges facing developing countries in the field of development in general, and regional development in particular, UNCRD launched *RDS* in 1993 to publish scholarly articles that critically examine this growing range of regional development issues.

Before an introduction to the eleven articles contained in this volume of *RDS* is presented, however, an important caution is warranted. Readers should be aware that these articles were written prior to the grave financial crisis which began in July

1997 and which continues to grip much of Southeast and East Asia; and that therefore the authors were writing without foreknowledge of the economic turmoil that was to follow. Although most articles are largely unrelated to these ongoing events, others should be read within the context of this unfolding financial and monetary drama. The crisis is having an unprecedented impact on the economies of this region and may ultimately affect the entire global economy.

The structural change that began to take place in the global economy following the collapse of the centrally-planned economies (CPEs) has led to the advent of two important phenomena — globalization and regionalization. Globalization, which is impelled by the revolution in communication, industries, information, and computer technology, is the driving force behind the formation of regional unions. These are formed to foster trade, foreign investments, and exports within groups of contiguous nations to strengthen their economic and political systems in the post-cold war era. Growth triangles (GTs) are typical of such regional unions, being formed to exploit the comparative advantages between contiguous regions of different nations to promote foreign investment and the export of commodities. The first article, by Hiroshi Kakazu, discusses the theories, merits, and success stories of Asian GTs. Based on two case studies — the Singapore, Johor (Malaysia), and Riau (Indonesia) (SIJORI) GT and the Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines (BIMP)-East Asian Growth Area (EAGA) GT — Kakazu argues that the formation of the Asian GTs is an effective and viable development strategy that could be replicated in other developing countries. It may be wise to view the economic performance of the Asian economies discussed in this article and their policy implications for other developing countries in the light of the ongoing economic problems of the region.

The importance of appropriate analytical econometric tools in evaluating the effectiveness of macroeconomic management policies in developing countries is the topic of N. S. Cooray's article. Using an econometric model and taking Sri Lanka as a case study, the article analyses the effectiveness and impact of macroeconomic policies and underscores the importance of econometric modeling.

Yoshitsugu Hayashi *et al.* take up the issue of urban mobility and environmental problems that many municipal authorities of the developing countries are facing. By focusing on the projected mass rapid transit (MRT) system of Bangkok, the authors examine transport policies that could reduce the number of car users and provide effective public transport services. They study the common parlance of urban congestion and evaluate the effectiveness of introducing a MRT system to alleviate traffic congestion. The authors argue that the diversity and capacity of transport infrastructure supply play a crucial role in determining congestion levels, once a city or region has experienced rapid economic growth, urbanization, and motorization.

C. Thangavel and A. N. Sachithanandan direct their attention to the process of urban land development in general, and farmland conversion into urban land in particular. The authors identify four factors that influence the process of land conversion in the Indian city of Madras: the behaviour of agricultural landowners; developers' and consumers' attitudes; market forces; and central government policy. These factors have influenced the land conversion process in Madras at the same time as creating a situation in which the pace of the land being subdivided exceeds the demand for the urban land. This results in vacant and unused land plots. The

authors argue that speculation is involved in the land subdivision process; and that the majority of people invest in plots as hedges against inflation and as future investments. Therefore, they advise that when urban development planning is undertaken, these social issues and factors should be taken into account.

The next article, by Yoshimi Chitose, looks at the relationship between female migration and economic and social change in a geographical context. Using a discrete-time survival analysis, the author studied the female migration which took place in Peninsular Malaysia between 1953 and 1988, and the factors behind the movement. Her conclusion is that women engaged in traditional economic activities and those living near economic growth centres have a higher propensity to migrate while women residing in co-ethnic settlements are less likely to do so.

Structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), which emerged in the early 1980s as an alternative development strategy and a panacea for the economic crises afflicting many developing countries, have been the subject of debate and controversy. Chika Kitajima's article takes up this issue and examines the effects of SAPs on women in countries of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The author argues that although the negative social impacts on the low-income segments of the population resulting from SAPs have appeared relatively uniform, women have been affected more severely than their male counterparts. This is mainly because of the existing cultural, political, and economic biases against women.

Junko Saikawa, in her article, examines the roles and functions of intermediary organizations within the context of social systems (markets, government policies, local communities, and households). Taking the Lower Moshi Agricultural Development Project of Kilimanjaro, Tanzania as a case study, the author argues that the implementing body, the Kilimanjaro Agricultural Development Project (KADP) constituted the core of an intermediary organization and played a crucial role in organizing farmers and enhancing local development by substituting for the market, government, and local communities.

The article by Tomiko Yamaguchi looks at a locally-initiated community development programme in a village of Yogyakarta Special Region (Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, DIY), Indonesia, and highlights the role the programme played in empowering local communities by enhancing the knowledge and consciousness of local farmers. The locally-initiated development programme emerged as a result of the powerlessness which the farmers felt after the introduction of Indonesia's *First Five-Year Development Plan 1969/70-1973/4 (REPELITA I)* — which forced the integration of farming into the national economy.

Next, Richard J. Estes examines Chinese foundations and their functions under a "socialist market economy" and highlights the differences between the Chinese foundations and their counterparts in the Western democracies. The article is a product of an ongoing research project and is based mainly on firsthand data and information collected through interviews, field observations, and published materials. One of the article's observations, that foundations in China, unlike those in the Western democracies, are supported and sponsored by the central government is most revealing.

The next article, by Anisul Haque and J. N. B. Bell, examines issues related to urban environmental management, including solid waste management (SWM) in the cities of developing countries. Based on a case study of Dhaka, Bangladesh, the authors discuss the present state of waste management in that city and suggest some

policy prescriptions to improve the current system of recycling, with particular emphasis on ways and means of improving the deterioration of recycled plastic materials.

The final article, by Yujiro Ogawa *et al.*, proposes a methodology for citizen's participation in disaster prevention at the community level. Taking Nagono district in central Nagoya, Japan, as the case study location, the authors compiled a profile of the district and developed a disaster prevention map that was drawn up using the information obtained from the observations made through a town-watching scheme. The map, which highlights the hazardous places in the community, outlines pre-disaster planning strategies and post-disaster responses. The article suggests an interesting tool for small-scale vulnerability assessment and disaster management in a local community.

These articles, comprising the 1998 issue of *RDS*, contain a wealth of topics, all with degrees of relevance for the countries of the developing world.

#### NOTE

- 1/ T. S. Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).