Current State of International Road Transport in the Greater Mekong Subregion and its impacts on communities

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Abstract: There are many national, regional and subregional initiatives and projects to improve international road transportation in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). The condition of physical infrastructure is greatly improved in the past ten years. In this regard, the paper aims to review the current state of road infrastructure in the GMS region and highlight challenges for the countries to upgrade and maintain road infrastructure. However, despite these efforts and even though the connectivity is very high on the ASEAN agenda the movement of people and goods in the GMS has not yet reached the anticipated level and there is much to be done to facilitate cross-border movement of goods and people. The paper also looks at various global and regional transport facilitation frameworks and the United Nations International Conventions that could be useful for the GMS countries in facilitating trade among themselves. Finally, as road brings development, its impacts and benefits to the communities are assessed and put forward proposals for involving communities residing along the road in development and maintenance of roads and providing economic opportunities.

Key words: Roads, cross-border transport, facilitation, communities, economic opportunity

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Mobility Pattern of the Women Depending on the Resources of the Sundarbans, Bangladesh: A Study of the Impact Zone

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Abstract: The Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, is not only playing the vital role in maintaining the overall environment of the south-western region as well as of the whole of Bangladesh but also acts as the prime source of resources for the people's livelihood living around the forest. The limited resources of the forest are being indiscriminately extracted which has profound impacts on the overall environment and the economy. Not only men but also a good number of women are involved in extracting the limited resources of the Sundarbans. Further, it is pertinent to note here that what modes of transports are used by these women in trading the resources extracted for the Sundarbans and their overall mobility patterns. The paper embodies discussions on mode of transport used, travel time, transport cost, purposes of travel, distance traveled, effects on the women livelihood, problems faced and so on. It ends with some suggestions on policy issue concerning the women depending on the resources of the Sundarbans in commensurate with the existing national transportation policy and poverty reduction strategies.
Transnationalisation in the Greater Mekong Subregion and the reconfiguration of agrarian structures: A case study at Thai-Laos borders

Soimart Rungmanee

Abstract:

This paper investigates the transnationalisation circumstances in the Greater Mekong Subregion and their manifestations on agrarian structures in the border areas of Thailand and Laos. While many researches on agrarian transformation propose that Thailand has been under deagrarianization due to the engagement of rural households in non-farm activities and the interpenetration between rural and urban, this paper argues that the process of deagrarianization cannot be explained as a linear process especially in the border areas where a spatial history, geographical location and ethnographic identities of the people set the distinctive characters. Facing with labour shortages problems due to the out-migration to the city, villagers living near Thai-Lao borders are able to carry on their farm activities by hiring workers from Laos. Daily migration along Mekong River occurs during harvest seasons in May, June, November and December through the traditional customs. Though the studies on deagrarianization contend that education and and non-farming job opportunities change the characters of rural differentiation that is used to be indicated by land ownerships, this paper looks back in to class differentiation as one of the determinant theoretical frameworks to see the uneven social relations in agricultural structures, particular between the Thai farmers who become a landlord and their employees from Laos. Critical attention is focused onto the more complex composition under cross-border situation, ethnic politics and migration labour relations. Education, gender, ethnicity and ages contribute the social processes and social differentiation at the local level.
The Influences of Highways on Economic Activities in Medium- and Small-sized Cities in China

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Abstract

Highways are one of the vital infrastructures to economic growth, social development and national security. This study aims to analyze further how highways influence economic activities particularly in Chinese medium- and small-sized cities (MSCs) which are relatively lagged behind from large cities due to large agricultural populations, isolated city environment and deficient infrastructures. By focusing on the highways opened before 2002 which resulted in six highways, the economic and industrial changes of twelve MSCs along those highways are analyzed. The economic changes are measured by the average growth of GDP, whereas the industrial changes by local major industrial structure and output values of industries. The results show that, generally, the proportions of non-agricultural populations have grown steadily since the highways opened and the output values of secondary and tertiary industries have also increased rapidly. Furthermore, the presence of highways has increased the growth rate of GDP. Additionally, the comparison of influences brought by those highways on economic activities in eastern, middle and western China are discussed. It is found that highways accelerated the development of a sound industrial structure in MSCs in eastern China; developed local industries as well as raised the whole economic status in middle China; and improved the relatively closed environments around those in western China.
Gendering Cross-border networks in Greater Mekong Sub-region
Drawing invisible routes to Thailand

AKM Ahsan Ullah¹

Background

The past decades have witnessed rapid economic growth in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) brought about largely by 3Ts (travel, tourism and trade). Geopolitical changes in the region’s borderlands and border economy have resulted in efforts to strengthen formal inter-state economic and infrastructural connectivity.² This rapid growth, however, has left huge socioeconomic disparity within the region creating conditions conducive to population mobility within and beyond, trafficking in women of which today is one of those significant off-shoots. The general trend of trafficking in women in the region is from Myanmar, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam to Thailand.

Over the years, Thailand has received prominence as a hub in the conglomeration of entertainment sectors, however, largely unknown is that a large number of trafficked victims end up in sex working in confined conditions akin to slavery. With the increasing economic integration since the formation of the GMS in 1992, clandestine nature of human mobility has gone on the rise through cross porous and increasingly loosely managed inter-state borders. As the dynamics in the connectivity and human mobility in the region change, traffickers successfully explored fresh avenues of trafficking in humans, across as well as within the borders of countries in GMS.

Boundaries have significant impact on the economy, culture and environment of any borderland. However, for the most part of the extensive scholarship on the relations between Thailand and the other ASEAN states takes far less account than it deserves of the impact of the boundary on the borderlands. Although there are researches, published scholarly papers, reports on dynamics of trafficking in humans available in the region,

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² Thailand shares about 1,810 km long borders with Lao PDR, about 800 km with Cambodia, 1800 kms with Myanmar, and 503 km with Malaysia.
sufficiently not known is that under what promises and premises the victims are motivated to set off, what trans-border networks they take to get to destinations, how long it takes to get to destinations, what hardships they suffer en route their destinations, and where a sizeable number of trafficked victims end up. All those have crucial implications for the economic integration and transportation connectivity in the region. This paper attempts to answer these questions based on empirical information and conceptual supplementation. The primary purpose of the research has been to better understand the routes taken by the respondents to get to Thailand. The fundamental argument the paper puts forward that economic and social integration within the region has therefore proliferated and intensified the web of regional networks of trafficking.

**Methodology**

A well-designed checklist was used to conduct in-depth interviews. Selection of respondents was based on some premises: at least one year of stint in Thailand; be ASEAN national; those who resorted to and/or trapped by traffickers or agents to get to the destinations. Selection of spots of interview rested on the Tuktuk driver. Deliberately excluded was those were from beyond ASEAN region, and stayed less than a year and came on their own.

The study, therefore, is based on primary information collected through survey of 94 female respondents (29 from Cambodia, 24 from Lao PDR, 19 from Myanmar and 15 from Vietnam and 7 from Indonesia). They were purposively selected with the help of Tuktuk driver. The driver I hired for my interview knew a number of places in Bangkok (Pahurat, Silom, Sukumvit, Mo Chit and Lumphini) where they operate in confined and restrictive conditions. In order to analyze the data, qualitative techniques were used and some descriptive statistics were applied to show the magnitude of the phenomenon. As for the major challenges in the research, respondents in many cases were not able to recollect the names of the spots/points they were handed over to another group of traffickers, and the routes they took; some of them failed to recall how long it took for them to get to Thailand.

**Preliminary findings**

Any kind of integration helps build trust among neighbouring nations making human mobility trouble-free. Today, socio-economic integration and connectivity in myriad ways in the GMS have become synonymous. This integration is often used as advantages by illicit traffickers. The study shows that poor women generally are lured by false promises of well-paid jobs abroad, and pay exorbitant fees to agents for the opportunity. Intermediaries generally introduced members of families to agents who promise to make arrangements for relevant documentations and transportations across borders. The study demonstrates that majority of the respondents (68%) were promised better jobs either in

3 Pimps (most of who are Tuktuk drivers) hunt clients for them. They entice clients from different places and get them to the sex workers. They get commissions on every client caught (Ullah, 2010; Lin, 1998).

4 As is true today within the ASEAN and European Union and to some extent in the SARRC.

5 For more see Ullah, 2010 and Kabeer, 2003.
Thailand; 29% were promised getting them to either East Asian countries (South Korea, Hong Kong or Taiwan) or in Europe.

As high as 47% of the respondents from Myanmar; 71% from Cambodia, 53% from Indonesia and 28% from Vietnam reported to have been transported through jungles, often over mountains at night time and then by boats. Some Indonesians however reported that they traversed Malaysia to get to the destination. Across source countries, the forms of routes vary.\(^6\) Data show, to my surprise, that 12% respondents from Cambodia, 58% from Lao PDR, 41% from Myanmar and 12% from Indonesia reported to have taken 1-5 days to get to the destinations; and 67% Cambodians, 21% Laotians, 29% Mynamarese and 12% Indonesian required 5-10 days getting to the destination. Of the total respondents, 23% spent more than 20 days to get to the destination.\(^7\) More than 82% believed that they paid exorbitant amount of money to the agents/traffickers to finance the trip.

Of the total, 63% reported being sexually abused on their routes; 29% reported being verbally abused, 57% reported being served meager food and 36% reported being threatened by the traffickers. They were handed over to many groups of people at different points. Of the total respondents, 32% reported to have been handed over at least to two points to two groups of people who they never met before; 43% reported they were handed over 3-4 points at dead of night to other groups. Most of the respondents (62%) were caught in trafficking and forced prostitution and was caught in debt-bondage as well. Most of them have their documents confiscated by their agents or taken away by owners who forced them to engage in sex working. Their position is made such vulnerable so that they remain always at the mercy of their employers. They could not protest, refused demands or disobeyed them; if they did they were threatened to turn over to police.

**Policy implications**

Traffickers use their own marked routes to transport their prey which is more invisible than generally could be imagined. The economic, environmental and cultural geography of borderlands are all crucially influenced by the special locational characteristic of simply being near a boundary.\(^8\) The most important is that when all the source countries (in the study) share borders with Thailand, they spend on an average seven days to get to Thailand, and obviously *en route* they were exposed to various forms of abuses. Widespread complain was against the border guard and police who allow traffickers going on with this trade. The women and girls are trafficked into Thailand with the

\(^6\) Two main overland routes are currently used most often; they are Keng Tung-Tachilek-Mae Sai Chiang Mai route and a route connecting Myawaddy and the Thai border town of Mae Sot, six miles across the Moei border river. The main border outposts along the Thai side of the border are Mae Sai, Mae Hong Son and Mae Sariang in Chiang Rai Province, Mae Sot in Tak Province, and Kra Buri and Ranong in the southern tip of Thailand (Derks, 2000; Bajrekarevic, 2000).

\(^7\) Whilst on the Burmese side of the border there have been areas where official state functionaries have not dared set foot, any movements across the border on the Thai side would quickly be picked up by the Thai police.

\(^8\) Please see Prescott, 1987
knowledge and complicity of border guards and police. The phenomenon of borderlands next to open international boundaries deserves further attention by geographers. This study has crucial policy implications regionally as well as globally. However, evident from the limited academic literature is that it is ripe time to undertake more research initiatives to explore the impact of such invisible routes on neighbouring economy, border relations and human rights.

Bibliography


Abstract
FOR
International workshop on
Gender, Economic Integration, and Cross-border Road Infrastructure
Development:
Poverty and Mobility in the Context of Asia
May 6-7, 2010
At
AIT Conference Center, Thailand

Theme: Changes in access to social services such as health
(Maternal Health)

Mobility and Health in Rural Nepal

Reviewer and paper presenter
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Introduction
The mobility of people and their access to health care are closely linked, but to date the details of how this relationship works in rural Nepal have not been fully understood. Much of Nepal’s rural population does not have access to a road, with many people living several days walk from the nearest road head. Health posts are present in many villages and every district has a hospital, but health post facilities are limited and access to hospitals can be very difficult for those not living close to the district centre, especially during monsoon. If a pregnant woman living in a remote area experiences problems before, during or after delivery, her options for emergency assistance are very limited.

Challenges
Maternal mortality
At present Nepal has a maternal mortality rate of 281 deaths per 100,000 live births. Nepal has committed to Millennium Development Goal No.5, which stipulates that maternal mortality should be reduced by ¾ from 1990 to 2015. When you consider that Nepal started from a baseline of 540 maternal deaths in 1990, it is clear that good progress is being made towards this target.

Difficult geography
In a country as mountainous and inaccessible as Nepal, there is no simple answer to reducing maternal mortality. Clearly the government cannot build roads to each and every village, at least not in the foreseeable future. Neither can it afford to helicopter patients to hospitals every time
there is a health emergency. So, how can the situation be improved with the current resources at the disposal of the government.

**Objective**
To assess the impact of transport interventions such as Pedestrian Trial Bridge, Twin and Access Road on maternal health services.

**Methodology**
Three researches carried out in Nepal with support of IFRTD in 2006/7 in Nepal. This paper is focused to analyse main findings of these three studies to share in broader forum.
The final report of these researches reviewed to look at the impact in utilization of health service by mothers and barriers to use the available access road, pedestrian trial bridge and IMT (Tuins).

**Brief introduction on three researches in Nepal on Mobility and Health**

**IMT (Tuins) and impact in health service**
Practical Action, looked into how non-motorised forms of transport had impacted on people’s health, in Dhading and Dhanusha districts. The two forms of non-motorised transport studied were Cycle Ambulances and Tuins (cable river crossing systems), which have been introduced in the project areas over the last 3-5 years.

**Pedestrian trail bridges**
The Trail Bridge Support Unit, funded by Swiss aid, carried out research on pedestrian trail bridges and how they affect access to health care. This study focused on four bridges in Surkhet, Baglung, Nuwakot and Panchthar and found that bridges were a vital link to access health facilities, especially during monsoon when rivers can become impassable.

**Effects of road access in maternal health care**
Two more Swiss funded programmes, the District Roads Support Programme and the Rural Health Development Project, jointly carried out research into how maternal health is affected by road access in three districts, Dolakha, Ramechhap and Baglung. This project focused on disadvantaged groups and how their particular access to health facilities played a role in maternal health.

**Main findings**
1. The project found that Tuins in particular were very useful in helping people to access health facilities more quickly, and in some cases had even saved lives. In addition, they increase people’s access to markets and contribute towards a generally higher standard of living.
2. Cycle ambulances are particularly useful on plain areas. As these forms of transport are non-motorised, they are of course immune to the recent price hikes and shortages in fuel supply.
3. Prior to bridge construction, delays of up to 3 days were common, meaning that local people would have to wait for the rivers to subside before they could receive treatment. On average, the research found that where a bridge was in place, 30 minutes were saved for a one-way river crossing; which for emergencies can mean the difference between life and death.
4. Bridges also provide safer crossings, which has influenced health service providers to travel to communities and provide outreach services. It was found that 94% of skilled birth attendants who had assisted during home deliveries, used trail bridges. Similarly, the coverage and frequency of vaccination campaigns were reported to have become more regular after bridge construction.

5. Research on Maternal health is affected by difficulty in road access found the main barriers to improved maternal health to be lack of awareness, location and quality of facilities, decision-making within the home, road condition, availability and affordability of public transport and travel time. The case studies reported, 18% of maternal deaths occurred during transport to the health facility; this was due to a number of reasons, but delays in decision making and inadequacy of transport infrastructure and services play a large part.

**Recommendations**

1. Equitable and inclusive planning of transport infrastructure at the local level. In order to effectively serve the poorest and most disadvantaged, they must be given a say in how transport infrastructure and health facilities are planned.

2. Appropriate IMT should be innovated and constructed as per the geography of the village to increase access to health services.

3. Increase access to health centres as a priority when planning for trail bridges, as well as promoting motorable bridges as a way to ensure higher levels of access to health care during the monsoon.

4. Awareness on rights to access health services also needs to be raised.

5. Coordination between the health and transport sectors is limited, but should be enhanced to improve planning of both transport and health infrastructure. In addition the report recommends managing health services locally and following the government’s outreach policy that is presently in place.

**Acknowledgement to researcher and coordinator**

a. Ms. Jun Hada, Practical Action, Nepal
b. Mr. Robin Workman, DRSP, Nepal
c. Ms. Ansu Tumbahangfe, Trail Bridge Support Unit, Nepal
d. Mr. Ranjith de Silva, Coordinator, Asia Regional Coordinator, IFRTD, Sri-Lanka

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i  Appropriate and improved River crossing device by cable means

ii Intermediate Means of Transport
Bandung, one of the metropolitan cities in Indonesia, are growing rapidly because of their economic activities. This economic activity in turn be an attraction for a number of migrants. Limited land in the city center caused them to live in the suburbs with all the limitations of facilities. Road infrastructure to accommodate the movement from the periphery to the center of city has been developed, but tend to accommodate only the movement patterns of men. Women and men have different roles and functions in society, so that the activities and movement patterns performed by men and women also differ. This study aims to identify the travel behavior of women and men as well as transportation infrastructure that meet their needs. Hypothesis test results for 100 respondents who are married couples shows that daily activities, average mileage, modes used, and transportation costs incurred between men and women differ significantly. Movement carried out by women tend to be local, so that the transportation infrastructure in the local level, such as zebra cross, pedestrian ways, and public transport, needs more attention.
Construction of village roads by villagers in Sunamganj

Approach to rural road development

The infrastructure component of the Sunamganj Community-Based Resource Management Project (SCBRMP) in Bangladesh has focused on building village roads to connect communities with the main road network. Local community roads have often been overlooked, impacting tremendously on the livelihoods of village communities. In Sunamganj, roads are undeveloped partly because of the seasonal flooding in most of the district. Lack of roads prevents people from bringing their product to market, children from attending school, people from getting to hospital and often farmers from bringing harvested crops home.

Roads built by the project have solved all these problems in two unique ways.

Firstly, roads built by the project are concrete rather than bitumen, they can stand being flooded. Moreover, by being submersible they do not require high embankments, reducing cost, removing the need to acquire more land, and not further disrupting the flow of flood waters (which can create local drainage problems and result in embankments being washed out). This approach also avoids construction problems related to the need to compact soil on new embankments.

Secondly, the project supports the participation of the community in selecting, planning, monitoring and maintaining the roads. Although the roads are built by local contractors, the community is involved in planning the programme of work, monitoring the construction and ensuring maintenance. This work is organized through an Infrastructure Management Committee (IMC). The committee is drawn from community organizations established by the project. It comprises seven to nine members, of whom at least two are women.

In collaboration with LGED upazila engineer, the IMC is trained by the project’s engineer in checking the quality of materials, concrete mixing processes, thickness of the concrete, placement of reinforcing bars and curing after the IMC supervise construction activities and ensure the quality of work. In cases of irregularity, they first complain to the LGED field supervisor. If the problem continues, they contact the project. IMC’s have raised many complaints which have been resolved immediately. However, four times IMCs had to temporarily stop the work because of major irregularities. Consequently, they succeeded in making contractors work according to their contracts.
The road building programme includes tree planting on the shoulders. Routine maintenance of road shoulders and care of trees is in the hands of women who have been selected from the poorest people in the community. Each 1 km of road engages two women paid BDT 50 per day.

**Innovation in road design**

In recent years the project has made a further innovation. Instead of employing contractors to build roads using reinforced concrete, project community groups, known as Labour Contracting Societies (LCS), are undertaking construction of roads made from concrete blocks. Omitting reinforcing saves on the cost of expensive steel, but the design allows for later addition of lateral reinforcing bars in any places where there is evidence of subsidence. The blocks are 375 mm long, 225 mm wide and 150 mm deep, and tapered towards the top. Shallower blocks are used on their side as edging. Gaps between blocks are filled with cement mortar. Block making can be done over some time in advance of laying the road, allowing group members, especially women, to fit this work in with other household tasks. Over all the design of this new block road concept was done by Engr Sk. Md. Mohsin, Project Director SCBRMP.

Construction through LCS increases community involvement and generates a significant amount of employment, including for women who make many of the blocks. Significant skills are also developed. Block making takes place in the September to November *monga* period when little other work is available, and fishing areas are closed. At this time many poor households have to reduce food consumption and borrow from money-lenders to survive.

Table 1 compares the cost of constructing reinforced concrete (RCC) roads with block roads. Not only is the block road significantly (18%) cheaper than a concrete road of the same width, but a greater proportion of this cost accrues to local people who provide the labour. Direct labour costs amount to 21% of the block road compared with 13% of the RCC road. Materials imported into the district (cement and steel reinforcing bars) account for 61% of the cost of the RCC road but only 43% of the cost of the block road. The remaining materials, crushed stone and sand, are locally available from river beds, and involve considerable labour for their collection. LCS have also learned to make their own concrete moulds at a lower cost (Tk260) compared with those procured by the project (Tk320). Together these materials account for 25% of the cost of the RCC road and 36% of the block road.
Authors: Engr. Sk. Md. Mohsin and Michal A. Roy

Case study
Sayod Husain (45) A rickshaw puller from Surma Union, Before the road improved he used to ply rickshaw in city 25 km away from his village. There he had to stay until late night for work and could save around Tk. 70 per day after consuming for food and other maintenances. But now after road development he plies rickshaw near to his home and can earn Tk. 150 per day. Before, it was a big hassle to travel to city and coming back at night. During rainy season, it was too tough. In those days he could not arrange food properly for his family of four members. But now the situation is different. There is no problem with food. He usually gets sufficient passengers. Road has increased the traffic with increased turnout of people for different activities. It doesn’t matter whether it is rainy season or winter, and therefore he has earning. Yet he uses a hired rickshaw, but has a plan to buy one for his own taking loan from MFI, and it will give him more earning.

Table 1: Comparison of the cost of concrete roads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>RCC road Type-2 – 100 m</th>
<th>Concrete block road – 100 m</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>Cost Tk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
<td>Bag 192</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>68160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand(F.M-1.8)</td>
<td>Cu.ft 453</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand(F.M-0.8)</td>
<td>Cu.ft 538</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crushed stone (20mm down grade)</td>
<td>Cu.ft 908</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.S rod(10mm dia)</td>
<td>Kg 992</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polythene sheet</td>
<td>Sq.ft 2152</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block moulds</td>
<td>No. 100</td>
<td>65*</td>
<td>6,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour days</td>
<td>Day 165</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>23100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>184367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* moulds costing Tk260 each are assumed to last for 400 m of road (each being used approximately 100 times).

Economic and social benefits

To date the project has built 121 roads adding up to 127 kms and connecting more than 125 villages in 8 upazilas of which 16 kms are block road. After having the technical evaluation by expert of LGED (A committee was done with senior Engineer of LGED) and their recommendation this year project is going to replicate the design in more than 40 Km roads.

A recent study revealed significant impact of the roads on livelihoods of the community in general and the poor in particular. It shows roads have generated new scopes of about 8 opportunities including rickshaw, rickshaw-van, Motorcycle, auto tempo, para-vets fertilizer store, call centre cum others and contractor services in the form of LCS and maximum of those have given significant benefits to the poor community, both directly and indirectly. Usually a rickshaw or rickshaw- van puller now can earn Tk. 150 -200 per day; a motorcycle operator by ferrying people can make a net profit Tk. 250. per day; by driving auto-tempo one can earn Tk. 250-300 per day. A para-vets can make an income on an average Tk. 160-180 per day, A fertilizer trader on an average can make a income per day Tk. 300-350 ; and a LCS member can make a earning on an average Tk. 10,000 - 12000 per year.

Apart from that the opportunities increased in 8 livelihood activities, including agriculture wage labouring, salaried

Road impacted on better marketing and crop diversification
services, village medical partitioning, grocery shopping, operating tea stall, peddling, petty trading and promoting medium scale rural industries. It has observed with diversification of agriculture with cash crops the agriculture labour wage has increased from Tk.70 to 150; the income of a medical practitioner has increased from Tk 300 to 500, more grocery shops have been established. The medium scale industries like brickfield, saw mill etc have also been increasing set-up in the area with improved road communication, and the poor are getting benefit out of those by getting employment. The following table shows the benefit levels by road improvement of different categories of households.

Table 2 Benefited by road improvement of different categories of household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Directly benefited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Landless poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agricultural, Fisheries and Livestock:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Field crop</td>
<td>Significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Homestead gardening</td>
<td>Significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Forestry/orchard</td>
<td>Not as such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fisheries (culture)</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Livestock</td>
<td>Not as such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Poultry</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agriculture labourer</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-farm</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wage employment</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small cottage industries</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transport operation</td>
<td>Significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rickshaw</td>
<td>Significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rickshaw van</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Motorcycle</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Auto-tempo</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Salaried services</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Village doctor</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Para-vets</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Grocery shop</td>
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<td>• Fertilizer store</td>
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<td>• Tea stall</td>
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<td>• Call centre cum others</td>
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<td>• Peddling</td>
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<td>• Petty trading</td>
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<td>• Contractor service</td>
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<td>• Rural Industry/Brickfield/Saw mill etc</td>
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<td>• Business</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The improved roads have enormous impacts on facilitating access to education, medical facilities, women mobility, and reducing social isolation.

Access to school has become easy for the village children particularly during wet season. It happened even the teachers could not often be regular or on time to school during wet season. But after road development both teachers and students have got easy access to school and the schooling has become regular irrespective of season. Ms. Jamila Parvin, Assistant School Teacher of Berigaon
Primary School, says, “It happened regularly during rainy season I could not attend the school at right time due to bad communication, and it happened to students as well. But now there is no such problem following road improvement. Students attendance has largely improved due to better communication.”

It was too hard to go to hospital or clinic due to bad road and lack of suitable transport. After road building the problem has been overcome. Now, even at night there is no problem to travel to hospital in need and by quicker transport like auto-van.

Women mobility has largely increased to different places, particularly to clinic, school and markets. There is now no seasonal problem to visit any palaces as it was before during wet season due to bad road communication. They are now more frequent to visit relatives and neighbours. One Hashu Bibi of Krishnanagar village of Surma union has taken the benefit of better communication to improve her livelihood. She has started peddling business and is making a good income of around Tk. 200 per day working 6 to 8 hours.

Isolations between households, villages have reduced following improved communication. It happened people working in nearby town could not back to home regularly, but only during weekend. Now for good communication they can back to home daily at the end of work, and it has reduced the cost of living as well as the isolation from the family.

It is now easier for children to get to school, so they are much more inclined to go and attendance has increased from 40% to 80% of all school age children in the village. Women have become much more mobile, and now visit regularly Sunamganj town to see the doctor etc.

Lessons for the future

Roads are creating new livelihoods, bringing in new technologies, allowing people to access different public and private services, increasing mobility – particularly the womenfolk. The improved roads are not only linking the villages with mainstream road network, rather these are bringing the villages in mainstream economy breaking the isolation and confinement. The road programme of CBRMP has put the people in new reality of progress and aspiration. To expand road network in villages the CB road would be a better option considering its many good aspects.

There is great potential to replicate the approach of building village roads using concrete block technology and LCS. However, stone is not locally available in most of Bangladesh – and transport from other areas makes it expensive. It may be possible to make concrete blocks of sufficient quality using broken bricks, or incorporate bricks into the pavement specification to reduce the need for concrete. LCS have worked well in Sunamganj as the project has already established and supported COs with membership targeted at poor households. These COs have bank accounts through which payments are made by the project and materials are purchased. Although support for these groups from local government is very useful, too close a linkage can undermine their independence and ability to make decisions in the best interests of their members.
Bridging the Divides – Enabling Border Crossing Facilities as Facilitators of Growth
by Samuel E. Sapuay¹ and José Edgardo A. Gomez, Jr.²
March 2010

ABSTRACT:

The road network provides a country the necessary linkages that facilitate the mobility of goods and people to enable more interactive economic activities necessary for growth and prosperity. Although intra-country connectivity is vital, on a regional basis inter-country linkages need to be facilitated just as well to promote international trade and energize cultural exchanges between nations. Border crossing facilities play important roles in adjacent states because such facilities serve as gateways to facilitate the flow of goods and people and stations for monitoring and controlling inter-country exchanges. In some instances, the lack of adequate and modern infrastructure as well as an obsolete customs system pose as barriers to more open and smooth international trade. This is to the detriment of the localities close to the border facilities in particular, and can result in stunted growth between countries and the region from a larger perspective. Hence a more efficient and systematized improvement both in the infrastructure component as well as in customs processing is necessary.

Two case studies are presented here, which were parts of the author’s grounded experience in two ADB-funded technical assistance projects³. The first one has been gleaned from systematic observation of the Heilongjiang Road Development II Project for the Yichun-Nenjiang link, which renders a broad analysis of a number of border crossing facilities between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation along the Heilongjiang River. The second one describes the Northern GMS Transport Network Project which analyzed the particular infrastructure and customs processing at the Border Crossing Facility at Kenethao on the Lao PDR side, which is one of the entry points into Thali, Thailand over the Nam Heuang River. Both these studies provide a good overview of prevailing issues and concerns about the status of the infrastructure and customs processing between countries.

The study concludes with recommendations which can be implemented to improve situations at border crossings and spur further cross-country integration in two economically-dynamic Subregions of Asia. The findings and analysis will be relevant to regional policy-makers and infrastructure planners in improving their understanding of the importance of improved connectivity with international economic growth. The authors hope to contribute to the prospects of improved growth in trade and further regional economic integration as results of strengthened cross-border transport infrastructure and systems.

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¹ Samuel Sapuay is a Civil Engineer and a long-time infrastructure consultant for multinational projects of ADB and other international organizations.
² José Edgardo A. Gomez, Jr. is an Assistant Professor at the University of the Philippines’ School of Urban & Regional Planning; he also does consultancy in technical/creative writing and editing work.
³ The authors wish to acknowledge the ADB for making the opportunity possible for Engr. Sapuay to play a key role on the ground in the two abovementioned projects: ADB-PPTA T7117 – PRC (H&J USA) and TA 4742 LAO [TERA International Group, Inc.]. His presence on-site enabled him to conduct the personal research which forms the basis of this paper.
Inter-linkages through road connectivity and its impact on poverty and gender

Road transport is a predominate mode of transport in Nepal. It plays vital role to reduce the urban disparity through balanced urban structure which is the thrust of National Urban Policy (2007). The policy envisages a balanced urban structure by developing roads and strengthening its inter-linkages between north-south corridor to connect the Mountain and Terai region of Nepal. The development of road corridors could be the major channels for economic integration, linkages and mobility between India and China via Nepal. Even though quantitative assessment of the impact of these corridors on poverty reduction and gender imbalances is not yet available, there are ample empirical evidences of positive impacts that roads brings to communities. In this backdrop, the paper takes a position that strengthened transportation and communication system enhance the synergistic inter-linkages between different geographic locations through the flow of goods, people, capital, information and ideas. Through this connectivity, wide spectrum of opportunities could be generated that can integrate regional economy and bring multiplier effects. It presents cases from Rural Urban Partnership Program (RUPP) and Rural Access Project (RAP) in Nepal to show the positive impact of road connectivity in bringing economic vibrancy and bridging the gender gap. The paper further illustrates how the inter-linkages between different areas, road connectivity and infrastructure development has contributed towards mobility, economic integration and change in gender based power relation as well as overall poverty alleviation in Nepal and draws some conclusions and lessons that can be replicated in other region to bring about transformation within the communities.
Title of Abstract:

Social Impacts of Increasing Road Networks on Rural Livelihoods in Nepal

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Jhabindra Bhandari

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Executive Director, Sustainable Health and Development Forum, Nepal

Background:

Nepal is one of the developing countries in South Asia where majority (80%) of population live in rural areas and rely heavily on subsistence on agriculture. The widespread poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and poor rural road infrastructure are considered to be significant development challenges in rural areas of the country. The Government of Nepal has given high priority in rural road infrastructure to improve mobility of rural population that would empower rural people to access social and economic services. Such road networks in rural areas have largely benefited the rural population by linking rural and urban services.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to assess the social impacts of increasing road networks on rural livelihoods in Nepal. It actually aims to identify the social benefits of the road transportation system in rural areas; and its impacts on the rural livelihoods.

Methods:

It was a cross-sectional study. Mainly, both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies were used. A semi-structured questionnaires was used for interviewing 150 (80 men and 70 women) in rural village of Makawanpur district in Nepal. Focus group discussion and in-depth interviews were conducted with family members, local service providers and community people to understand their perceptions and experiences on the social benefits of rural road networks in the village.

Results and Conclusions:

It reveals that majority (70%) of the rural people are aware and understand the importance of road networks in terms of easy access to social and economic services. It has fostered agriculture marketing more significantly; and in particular, women’s mobility has drastically increased to access education, health and other economic opportunities. The enrolment of children in school has remarkably increased and health
care service utilization in local health facilities is also in increasing trend due to improved road transportation in rural areas. The livelihood opportunities in the rural areas have also increased due to expansion of other economic and agriculture services, increased social mobility of men and women; and increasing trend of land use patterns for productive services. The socio-economic status of the rural communities has significantly enhanced due to rural road networks and this has to be further expanded and scaled up at national level.
The Social and economic impact of ‘Muludan’ tradition
Cross-border cultural tourism in Cirebon-West Java

By Deny Hamdani

This paper examines the impact of ‘Muludan’ tradition to social and economic life of local people after the 2008 economic crisis. Muludan which means celebrating mulud, from Arabic maulid, means birthday. It is commemorating the birth of Muhammad prophet on the third month of Javanese Islamic calendar. Since the 15th century, the tradition has been annually undertaken by the ruler of Cirebon’s kingdom which has attracted many visitors from various regions. The custom has not only engaged religious activities, but also opened market for people to trade during the days of celebration.

This study focuses on the analysis of the symbolic massages of the ‘panjang jimat’ (festival of noble artifacts) at the peak of muludan’s celebration and the economic transaction during the annual bazaar at the park of Kasepuhan palace. I emphasize the social interaction among the people before and at the peak of celebration where tourists from satellite regions (Majalengka, Indramayu, Kuningan, Brebes and Tegal) come to visit Cirebon. As the characteristic of Cirebon culture which is formed from other cultural elements such as Middle East, Chinese, India, Javanese and Sundanese, the continuation of celebration has fostered multicultural appreciation in a traditional way.

Based on the literature, media reports and interview materials, I argue that the annual celebration of Muhammad’s birth in Cirebon has created a regular reminder for people concerning some noble principles of their religion which is conveyed by the story of Muhammad prophet and, at the same time, generated economic income to the local people both male and female, particularly informal sectors. Through a long history of acculturation between Islam and local culture, religious elements and market have been integrated into a unique social system of a city with some historical tourism objects.

Deny Hamdani is researcher at the Social-Economic Research Institute (SERI), Jakarta, Indonesia.

This paper will be presented in the international workshop on Gender, Economic Integration, and Cross-border Road Infrastructure Development, May 6-7, 2010, at AIT Conference Center, Thailand. The program is organized by Asian Institute of Technology Asia Pacific Regional Secretariat of the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD) and supported by Japan-ASEAN Solidarity Fund, ASEAN Foundation Asian Development Bank global Transport Knowledge Partnership (gTKP).
Vulnerable populations and ethnicity in infrastructure projects

Mr Allan Beesey, MA

Studies in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam demonstrate that road improvement which opens up previously isolated areas has been accompanied by significant in-migration of entrepreneurs seeking to take advantage of new commercial opportunities. These in-migrants are typically members of the dominant ethnic group, and quickly dominate emerging markets, often through exploitative relationships with local ethnic minorities. This has typically raised land acquisition issues (McAndrew 2001, Lyttleton 2004, Cornford 2008).

A preliminary study in the central highlands of Vietnam demonstrates how competition and complex relations in local communities is likely to leave the more marginalized populations out of the picture when new opportunities arrive. The upgrading of the road in Lam Dong Province is to improve access to coffee and tea growing areas and promote development in lesser populated areas of the province. In the districts that the road passes through there mines and dams also being developed. There is extensive migration into the area, both seasonal and not seasonal with sites of many resettled populations. Some of the resettled populations are ethnic minorities who have done well. The indigenous ethnic minorities are in debt to in-migrating entrepreneurs. This is the current state of development and further development through road upgrading is likely to continue in this vein of further marginalization for some ethnic groups.
IMPACTS OF ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT ON WOMEN SMALL-SCALE FISH TRADERS: CASE STUDY OF FISH BORDER TRADE IN SVAY RIENG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

Author
Kunthea Keat, Master Student, AIT, Thailand

Abstract
The countries of the Great Mekong Region (GMS) have gone through different stages of war and insecurity. Meanwhile, infrastructure development has been destroyed and misses out the economic development opportunities and regional integration. In Cambodia with peace accord in October 1991 and GMS initiate program in 1992 are seen as an opportunities for economic growth, regional trade facilitation, improve mode of transportation and cross-border trading with neighboring courtiers whose formally the Indochina or better known as battlefield of civil war. Among GMS plan, infrastructure development and regional economic integration remain top priority. This idea was not new compared with the French study on Mekong Exploration in 1866-1868. Cambodia is one of the six countries within GSM and these programs remain top priorities. The county’s ambition reveals that by 2011, all major provinces and locations will be connected by main road. Among these, road No.1 is the first and controversy one since 1997 to be renovated. It is currently being served as an economic and political strategy in connecting other roads from Cambodia sea port, northeast provinces and all provinces surrounded Tonle Sap Lake where all national resource are subjected to be mobilized and traded through different form of business network.

In this paper, I wish to highlight the impact of Cambodia national road No.1 in term of cross-border trading facilitation, gender transformation and the relation to fish trading rout between Cambodia and Vietnam, in particular. The specific key finding will focus on:

- How fish trade have changed, in term of type and amount of fish imported and exported, people engaged, operation, and cost and benefit after cross border road was improved.
- How cross-border road improvement have impacted on women’s small scale fish trade business and their relationship with other actors in the trade chain.
- Assessment on how women small scale fish traders are trying to take advantage of the newly improved road, and the obstacles that they face in doing so.
- And to investigate how the changes in women’s fish business have affected gender relations in the household.

This paper is an outcome of my on-going thesis work with AIT on “Gender, Transportation and Development” course. The case studies focus on cross border road between Cambodia and Vietnam at Bavet-Mok Bai border which area was improved. The case study is in Svay Rieng province. Major six market where cross-border trade and commodities exchange from the two countries across the border have been selected as sample in Svay Rieng Province. The information collected include quantity of fish exported and imported, actors involve in fish trade, income of women fish traders, relation among fish traders, and gender relation in household of women traders before and after road improvement. The study was conducted in two steps. The researcher also visited differences fishery sources from different place within Cambodia side like in Kandal province where the Basac and Mekong River meet and create vast of wetland resource and other areas in Prey Veng and provinces surrounded Tonle Sap Lake. Constant visits also made available to observe the activities at the
crowded areas and current special economic zone in Bavet and compare with those peripheral areas in Svay Rieng and try to understand how this area have been left out from development mainstream.
Topic: Changes in people’s livelihood within the strategic economic triangle of Hanoi – Haiphong – Quangninh

by

Le Thi Thanh Huyen
Abstract

The main economic region development is one of the great guidelines in Vietnam party and state policy to motivate national industrialization and modernization accompany to international economic integration process. According to the national resolution in the 8th party congress about regional economic development, Vietnam government decided to establish three driving force economic triangle regions which are the nuclear of the three main economic regions: North, Middle, South. The northern driving force economic region includes Hanoi – Haiphong – Quangninh, in which Hanoi is the centre.

Under this programme, road transport is particularly considered to be extremely important by Vietnamese government. In fact, there are a lot of projects focus on the construction and renovation of road networks completed and being carried out to facilitate goods and people circulation within the region. For example, these are Binh bridge construction project, improving national highway no.10 project, Kien bridge project between Haiphong and Quangninh, the highway 18A & 18B between Hanoi and Quangninh, the highway no.5 between Haiphong and Hanoi… At present, the transport system assists strongly mobility of goods and people and trade activity exchange as well in the region.

The first achievement from economic region development is local high economic growth rate with larger investment bring about better local people living condition due to new economic opportunities. Local people get more chances to join into economic activity and improve their lives. From this perspective, this study is to explore changes in transport and investment as well as their impact on local people livelihoods in provinces in the economic region. In order to attain its objectives, the study used both primary and secondary data to analysis. However, primary data will be main source for data analysis. Secondary data collected from the desk studies will include project documents, completion reports related to this economic region. Information from desk studies will be used to provide an overview of analysis. Following this, primary data will be gathered through key informant and respondent in depth interviews and key informant semi – structured interviews.

The study finds out that transportation really encourages regional trade activity exchange by facilitation of goods and people mobility. This brings huge investment projects in provinces within the region. Besides economic development, local people living condition is better days by days. Many employment opportunities, economic chances come in. Local people are encouraged to join into economic activities to improve themselves lives.

The findings from the study should be good experience in the next steps to acquire the best results in regional economic development policies, not only in economic growth but also local people living condition.

The map of the strategic economic triangle of Hanoi – Haiphong – Quangninh:
Gender impact of rural road infrastructures: the case of IFAD-supported NERCORMP project in Northeast India

Vincent Darlong, Adrian Marbaniang* & Hrishikesh Singh*

IFAD India Country Office, New Delhi, India
*NERCORMP, Shillong, India

India’s North Eastern Region (NER) as a geographical unit is distinct from the rest of India. Physiographically mostly mountainous, this part of India is home to many and varied tribal populations. In these tribes, women are regarded better than their counter-parts in most of the non-tribal India, and form the mainstay of the household economy. However, women enjoy limited power over property and economy, even in the matrilineal societies. This region is also well known for its rich biodiversity. For variety of reasons, NER generally lag behind in economic development despite commendable strides being made elsewhere in the country. Notwithstanding its immense potential, the NER represents the classical paradox of ‘poverty in the midst of plenty.’ Additionally, a top-down approach to development and handouts served to create a dependency mentality in the region. Lack of co-ordination among various government departments and development agencies further hinder effective development actions.

In such a context, the IFAD-funded North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project for Upland Areas (NERCORMP) in collaboration with Government of India was implemented during 1999-2008 in 3 states in Northeast India. The overall objective of NERCORMP was ‘improving the livelihood of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through improved management of their resource base in a way that contributes to protecting and restoring the environment.’ One of the eight specific sub-objectives was ‘to increase access to basic services and infrastructure facilities’, of which construction and repair of rural roads and bridges to ensure inter-village connectivity in all its project villages became one of the key community-driven activities under the Village Development Fund. Over 1200 km of inter-villages roads and 400 bridges and culverts were constructed and repaired in 860 upland villages benefiting over 39,000 households.

This paper explores the impact of road construction and consequent resurgence of local economies, trade development, and reorganization of the weekly rural market systems in selected project villages in three different states of North East India. It focuses primarily on the impacts on women in transforming their economies, addressing household poverty and building their social assets including networking for knowledge sharing and learning, health and education. It also highlights some aspects of undesirable consequences of improved connectivity and mobility in the areas of incidence of drug abuse and HIV/AIDS, particularly among rural youth. The study emphasizes the significance of road construction and maintenance programmes for rural women, men and youth and suggest possible policy recommendations.
Challenges and opportunities associated with increased regional integration
– a study of the Lao freight transport sector

Dr. Magnus Andersson
Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies
Lund University

The focus of this paper is regional integration at different geographical levels, and particularly, the process of how the regional integration taking within the Greater Mekong Sub-region influence the spatial structure and the transportation industry within a member country’s borders. Regional integration is a complex balancing act, especially in areas where regional, and even national, economic inequalities are large and where the programs involve countries at different stages of transition towards market economy. This is of particular importance for the smallest, poorest and weakest partners in the integration process. Large scale investments in the transport infrastructure have been undertaken in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, providing better access across the member countries borders. However, investments in roads, railroads and ports needs to be developed together with institutional infrastructure defined as well functioning markets and regulatory regimes to govern these markets. The interaction between these two types of infrastructures is fundamental in respect to socio-economic development as only one type of infrastructure is not enough to create and stimulate socio-economic development. It is obvious that socio-economic development is difficult to achieve in economies lacking physical infrastructure even though appropriate institutional infrastructure are in place. Low levels of domestic market integration and an ongoing transition processes towards market economy provide challenges for people’s livelihoods and the development of a sustainable domestic private sector able to compete on regional markets.

The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the current status of the Lao PDR’s freight sector. The sector is analyzed through a quantitative model calculating domestic freight costs together with an analysis of the sector’s structure and awareness of the challenges but also opportunities associated with on-going regional integration programs in the region.
How Much Does Interregional Transportation Infrastructure Development Influence on Freight Traffic Flow Patterns in the Greater Mekong Subregion?

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Abstract.

This paper aims to estimate traffic flow patterns under the condition that the international transportation infrastructure is invested in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) in the future. First, the paper focuses on cross-border traffic flows rather than domestic traffic flows. This is because the paper is concerned with the impact of interregional projects from an international perspective. Second, it covers not passenger traffic but freight traffic. This is because the interregional transportation project is expected to impact the freight traffic more critically than the passenger traffic. Third, the paper focuses on the through-traffic crossing Lao PDR. This is because the increase of through-traffic volume crossing a land-locked country may cause various negative impacts in the region and/or the land-locked country. This paper is organized as follows: motivations and goals are presented with literature reviews in Section 1. Next, the models and scenarios used for estimating the freight traffic flows are explained in Section 2. Then, the results are shown for each scenario in Section 3. Finally, the policy implications and further research issues are presented.

Currently, multiple international transportation infrastructure projects are in progress in the GMS, including the cross-border land transportation development, port development, and cross-border trade facilitation. In addition to the ongoing projects, further cross-border trade facilitation is proposed, such as introduction of advanced technology for logistics management. The main aim of these projects is to enhance the economic development in the GMS through the increase of international trade. The authors (Iwata et al., 2010) analyzed the impacts of these projects on the economic activities with a spatial computable general equilibrium model. The results suggested that the projects would contribute to economic development of the GMS members including Lao PDR. They also showed that the further trade facilitation would accelerate economic development. However, they presented that the projects may additionally give the negative impacts on Lao PDR through the increase of through-traffic flows. They may include traffic accidents, traffic noise, environmental deterioration, and physical damages to the road. This paper examines the expected changes in the through-traffic flows passing through Lao PDR and discusses its impacts.

Two econometric models are used for the analysis. The one is the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) model. This is one of the spatial computable general equilibrium models with which the change in international trade patterns caused by transportation projects is estimated. The other is a Maritime Cargo Flow Simulation (MCFS) model. The MCFS model is originally proposed by Shibasaki et al. (2005), which analyzes the modal choice and route choice of freight transportation in the GMS, given the origin-destination patterns. It can simulate the cargo flows by incorporating the market competitions among shipping companies and the preference of container shippers about the route and carrier choice, based on Nash equilibrium calculation. The freight flow patterns in the GMS are estimated by the MCFS model on the basis of the origin-destination pattern estimated by the GTAP model.

Two scenarios are set up for the analysis. The first scenario is the case where the transportation projects in progress will be completed. The second scenario is the case where the cross-border trade facilitation will be carried out further in addition to the first scenario.

The results of the analysis provide three insights. First, the analysis results in the first scenario show that the current projects may not give the critical impacts on the local community in the country although they may increase slightly the land freight through-traffic crossing Lao PDR. Second, the analysis results of the second scenario show that the further cross-border trade facilitation would cause a drastic modal-shift from sea transportation to land transportation. Finally, the analysis results of the second scenario also show that the increase of land freight traffic flows between Thailand and Vietnam would contribute to the substantial growth of through-traffic in Lao PDR whereas the cross-border freight traffic flows from and to China could also influence substantially through-traffic flows in Lao PDR.

Reference
Rural-urban-global linkages and the development of the Greater Mekong Region

Abstract

The Mekong Region includes five countries (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam) and part of Southern China. The historically rich macro-region does have a few relatively large cities that would only now begin to compete on a global scale for economic attractiveness. Most cities and towns in the region, however, are young, or just emerging, and growing rapidly, in a socio-economic and political climate where urban places are "created". The paper looks at the fast changing conditions in three countries of the Mekong Region (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia). They were included in a systematic assessment of rural-urban and regional linkages under a study funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which was conducted from 2004 to 2006. The study did include an assessment of the ADB-led investments in macro-infrastructure under the concept of economic development corridors. In this setting, the paper introduces a framework of rural-urban linkages, and then a typology of urban centres. Finally, the paper outlines policy considerations and prospects for the newly urbanizing regions in the three countries.

1. Introduction

The workshop intentions cover a wide range of socio-economic change issues, from gender relations to economic integration, to poverty and mobility, and the impact of cross-border infrastructure development. The paper is organized into five sections after this brief introduction (1), followed (2) by an overview of the now “borderless” Greater Mekong Region and its transition and transformation processes over the past 25 years, with an emphasis on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. In the next section (3), an attempt at a typology of cities in the region is made, arising from the assessment of the transformation processes in the region. This section also discusses a series of newly created and rapidly growing towns and cities, including those surprising ‘maverick towns’ that reflect the generative forces at work. The last two sections are (4) a brief summary of the policy considerations and suggestions arising from the underlying regional study", and finally, (5) some concluding to merge the workshop intentions with the empirical evidence from the Mekong Region.

XXXXXXX some more text to be inserted here in the introduction to better link the workshop objectives and the content of this paper which draws on the regional study carried out for the Asian Development Bank XXXXXXX
2. The Greater Mekong Region

This section proceeds from the underlying study to the conceptual framework of rural-urban and global linkages and its application in the Greater Mekong Region. The paper draws on the ADB funded regional study which was conducted by the author and his international team from 2004 to 2006 (ADB, 2006; Kammeier and Hakim, 2010). The study was focused on only three of the six countries of the Greater Mekong Region – Viet Nam, Lao PDR, and Cambodia. The remaining three countries (Thailand, Myanmar, and part of the southern rim of China) were covered in the context of the cross-border linkages. Table 1 and Map 1 below provide an overview of the region.

The underlying regional study

The overarching objective of the study was to review trends and prospects of the urban sector as a basis for the re-orientation of ADB policies where the “urban sector” is only now (2010) beginning to emerge as an important part of the portfolio 2. The work essentially had three components,

1. a situation analysis of the three countries and their developmental and institutional framework (using a time framework of about 20 years since the economic-political opening in the mid-1980s up to the time when the study was conducted in 2005), and
2. the policy directions to be taken up by the countries concerned and the major donor agencies. This implies, in particular,
3. a third dimension, i.e. a regional perspective for cooperation and coordination in the macro-regional context which is now marked by open borders and direct exposure to global economic impacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Selected indicators on four Mekong Region countries</th>
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<tr>
<td>GDP/cap ($)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Population (mil., 2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pop growth (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban growth (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urbanization (%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agric contrib. GDP (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty ratio (current)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural pop. density (pers/km2 arable land)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop./devt dynamics, characteristics</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(1) The urbanization rate of Thailand is always underreported due to the specific urban classification criteria underlying the statistical database. It is more likely to be 40%

Source: From the manuscript of the forthcoming book publication on rural-urban linkages, Mekong Region (Kammeier and Hakim, 2010)
Map 1 (a and b): The Greater Mekong (Sub-)Region and the economic development corridors defined as a basis for infrastructure development

The six GMS countries are Myanmar, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Viet Nam, and part of PR China (Yunnan Province and, since 2005, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region).

Source: ADB website – GMS Update, August 2005

There were essentially two levels of study

(a) the macro-regional international one, and the national one, largely based on the review of literature and documents, but also including discussions with key agencies, and

(b) the micro-regional and local levels of seven carefully selected case studies 3, including the views of local opinion leaders and stakeholders.

Urbanization patterns in Southeast Asia

On the whole, Southeast Asia is one of the least urbanized regions of the world, with considerable variations across the countries (Yap, 2010). The three countries of the ADB study are much less urbanized and poorer than Thailand. The projected growth rates for the next five years (2010 to 2015) are particularly rapid for the poorest countries in their early urbanization phases, among them Cambodia (4.48% p.a.), while the growth rates in many other countries are less dramatic. The long-term projections (up to 2025 and 2050) suggest that all newly urbanizing countries in the region will be catching up, reaching rather high values compared with the present time (Tabs. 2 and 3).

Note: In the final version of the paper, the two tables may be shortened or omitted.
The challenges of ‘balanced’ development

The urbanization process may be called ‘balanced’ if the surplus agricultural labour can be absorbed simultaneously by the growing urban employment market. This is often not the case as cities tend to grow “too fast”, i.e. they are full of under-employed people (mainly in the informal sector) which results in the proliferation of informal settlements. A second notion of the ‘balance’ to be achieved is a reasonable city-size distribution across the regions, as an indicator of regional wealth distribution and economic equity for rural and urban dwellers.

The lofty goal of balanced development (social and spatial) may be used as a broader equivalent of the sustainability aspects alluded to in the conference announcement.

A region in transition

The Greater Mekong Region (or Sub-region, hence “GMS”) is one of the most important economic and culturally significant world regions in a rapid and fundamental transition process that attracts international attention and assistance. Since the end of the 1980s, the overriding motto of development processes in the Greater Mekong Region has been its transformation “from battlefield to marketplace” 4. 1986 is the year of the beginning of the Vietnamese Doi Moi (Reform) which has since transformed the socialist system into a thriving market-driven economy (similar to China after the 1978 reforms by Deng Chao Ping). The Lao PDR adopted a similar reform policy in the same year. In Cambodia, the key date is
December 1991 (the Paris Peace Agreement) which prepared the ground for a complete reconstruction of the Cambodian society, economy, and state.

The Mekong is one of the great Asian rivers, originating in Tibet, flowing down through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Viet Nam. The river is a powerful symbol for the now open borders across Indochina, a region that was, until recently, a land of heavily guarded borders, bitter struggles, marked cultural differences, colonial and post-colonial domination by foreign nations. It is only since the mid-1980s that the borders softened, and regional cooperation began where there had been little communication since the end of the colonial period in 1953 (the Vietnamese victory in Dien Bien Phu).

The Strategic Framework for the Greater Mekong Subregion was adopted by the 10th GMS Ministerial Conference in November 2001. Its aim is to help bring about a well-integrated and prosperous Mekong subregion, free of poverty and committed to protecting the environment. The GMS Programme focuses on five strategic development thrusts to achieve these goals: (i) strengthen infrastructure linkages, (ii) facilitate cross-border trade and investment, (iii) enhance private sector participation in development and improve its competitiveness, (iv) develop human resources and skill competencies, and protect the environment and (v) promote sustainable use of the region’s shared natural resources.

Eleven mutually reinforcing ‘flagship’ programs have been identified in key areas and are being implemented in pursuit of these strategic thrusts. They aim to link the six Mekong countries more closely, to develop and take advantage of complementarities between their very different economies and to facilitate cross-border trade and investment in a manner that reduces poverty and promotes sustainable development.

**Poverty reduction, pro-poor growth and rural-urban linkages**

Despite the differences in the situation and perspectives of the three countries, in all of them poverty tends to be predominantly rural and also to be associated with physical remoteness and with marginalisation, both through the lack of linkages and through exclusion from decision making processes. Recognizing this, poverty reduction strategies in the three countries aim at improving the access of the poor to social services and at achieving a measure of what could be described as pro-poor growth, the benefits and opportunities of which favour, or at least do not exclude, the poor. Linking remote regions to the rest of their countries through improved transport infrastructure and services, linking backward rural economies more effectively the national and even global economy so as to provide them with the opportunities and economic incentives to increase production and to diversify. It is in this context that the creation of new towns and cities has to be seen – to some extent generated by the economic policies, but also deliberately planned as part of the overall transformation.

It is nearly impossible to isolate the impact of the above mentioned flagship programs from other factors of political transition and regional integration that are all at work at the same time, such as general economic growth, tariff changes, more open borders, technological progress and especially informal change factors due to market opportunities and to the easier flow of information and communications.

The GMS strategy and especially vision of a region at peace continues to have a tremendous impact on expanding people’s awareness beyond its traditional boundaries, to take in formerly distant areas that are now close, different cultures that are rapidly becoming familiar, business opportunities that were unthinkable twenty years ago. Even more importantly, this generates a dynamic – economic, social, cultural and political – that promises to transform the region beyond recognition. This is the stuff, not of economics, cost-benefit analysis or international trade theory, but of history in the making.

**Change processes in the Greater Mekong Region**

‘Transition’ as discussed in the preceding section refers to the two structural political changes in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia since 1986 – from socialist systems with closed
borders to open market economies. These political changes have been instrumental in speeding up the three socio-economic ‘transformation’ processes from agrarian to early and then mature industrial systems:

1. from predominantly rural to predominantly urban economic base and environment;
2. decreasing overall population growth, from high-level demographic equilibrium to low-level equilibrium with the resulting sustainable growth rates of 0.5 to 1.0%; and
3. from mainly primary-sector employment to mainly secondary and tertiary-sector employment.

The model of reciprocal rural-urban linkages was adopted as a guideline for the study which was designed to show the way towards ‘balanced’ development. The model provides a strong rationale for urban development strategies that incorporate the major thrusts of environment, democratic decentralization, and globalization. In it, small and intermediate cities have to play a crucial role - making the difference between positive and negative rural-urban interactions in regional development. The key diagram (Figure 1 below) emphasizes the connections with the lower range of urban centres that unfortunately tend to be bypassed in an uncontrolled globalization scenario (clearly shown in the right-side diagram).

**Figure 1: Positive and negative rural-urban interactions and regional development**

Source: Satterthwaite and Tacoli, 2003

**Linkages and development: the basic questions**

Rural-urban linkages used to be a frequently referred-to subject area in international development, especially when the theme of secondary cities, service centres, and other concepts were promoted by international development agencies in the 1970s and 80s. The usefulness of this orientation framework has been “re-discovered” in the past five years or so (Tacoli, 2006).
The first and most basic question is this: Do more intensive linkages (due to infrastructure investments, technology changes in telecommunications, and business facilitation, e.g.) lead to higher levels of socio-economic development, and to properly balanced patterns (regionally, and with regard to better quality of rural and urban living conditions)?

The answer to this question is a clear yes, but it is not easy to decide on the mix, nor is it easy to predict the time lapse between investments and development effects triggered by infrastructure provision.

This must be backed by a second question: Knowing that urban development is perhaps the most important complementary element in an increasingly interlinked spatial and socio-economic transformation process, which are the policies to be launched to boost the urban functions in rural and national development?

The study did attempt at answering this question in considerable detail, but it would be beyond the scope of this paper to provide more than a brief summary.

A third point may be added: National urban development is known to be the result of many unintended effects of seemingly unrelated non-urban policies on agriculture, taxation, road construction, or land ownership. It is also well known that urbanization patterns result much more from the unintended spatial effects of non-spatial policies than from explicitly spatial policies. On the other hand, it should be obvious that there is a very wide scope for trying to guide urbanization towards the preferred national goals of sustainable and equitable development, especially at the early stages of urbanization. All these aspects apply to the three countries under study.5

**Linkage classification**

The relations between towns and rural areas, as well as those between rural towns and large cities, have been classified in many ways. At the lower level of the spatial scale, the interdependencies between rural market towns and the surrounding areas imply supply and demand functions at both ends of the physical, economic and social linkages. These are the “classic” linkages where factors related to accessibility, social class organization, political culture, and economic production systems are interacting.

A useful broad classification of linkages is as follows:

- Physical (roads, energy, waterways)
- Economic (backward and forward production linkages, e.g.)
- Population movements (all forms of migration, including commuting)
- Services (government, private-sector)
- Social and political organizations and networks
- Flows of information and diffusion of innovation

Table 4 provides a more detailed overview of linkages referred to in analysis and policy studies. This sets the background to the usual classification of the interdependencies between urban and rural systems, with supply and demand functions on both ends. Such economic linkages (backward and forward) are closely related to the demographic movements (temporary and permanent migration), and to some extent, they are shaped by the social and political networks.
### Table 4: Urban-rural linkages and interdependencies: Lower-order rural towns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban system functions</th>
<th>Interdependencies</th>
<th>Rural system functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flows of information and diffusion of innovation</td>
<td>Agricultural production (changing) and productivity (increasing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural trade/transport centre (with further linkages outside the region)</td>
<td>Agricultural production (changing) and productivity (increasing)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural support services (increasingly complex and of higher value):</td>
<td>Agricultural intensification influenced by rural infrastructure, production incentives, and education and capacity to adopt/adapt innovations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Production inputs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Repair services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Production credit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information on production methods (innovation!)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agricultural consumer markets (increasingly sophisticated):</td>
<td>Rising rural incomes increasing the demand for non-agricultural goods and services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- processed agricultural products</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- private services</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- public services (health, education, administration)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agro-based industry (keeping most of the possible value-added in the region)</td>
<td>Cash crop production and agricultural diversification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-agricultural employment (increasing with growing rural prosperity and education)</td>
<td>All of the above mentioned functions are involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on (Douglass, 1998: 11); modified to emphasize dynamic changes

A set of maps (Maps 2, 3, and 4) shows a comparison of the geographic accessibility of small and medium-sized towns in Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia: Proximity and accessibility to major urban centres (defined here as cities over 40,000 population in Laos and Cambodia, and all provincial centres in Viet Nam) of which there are only very few in Laos, a few more in Cambodia, but a very large number in Viet Nam; a simple circular area of influence of 50 km radius was defined to depict those areas that are actually out of reach of such urban centres. The maps clearly show the much higher degree of connectivity in Vietnam compared with the two smaller countries.
Global-local linkages

In the context of globalization, economic development does not take place uniformly across national territories. The newly emerging linkage of an area into the global economy may completely bypass adjacent areas or regions. It is therefore no guarantee for widespread economic development in the country, or even in a region. In other words, there will be losers as well as winners from globalization. The logic of globalization is not only a logic of integration, it is also one of exclusion and differentiation. This has been well characterized at the urban level, where global flows are associated with concentrations both of wealth and of poverty, and at the international level, where countries, even whole world regions, are left behind by globalization.

Current examples of direct global-local linkage impacts in Laos and Cambodia include the following major developments in rural areas:

- Widespread contract farming across the borders with Vietnam (rubber) and Thailand (maize, rice, fruits)
- Chinese entrepreneurs funding the “opening up” of hitherto remote areas around Stung Treng, by financing road construction in a new north-south corridor linking up Kampong Cham and southern Laos
- Massive land leasing agreements in Cambodia with Saudi Arabia, Kuweit, and United Arab Emirates for growing rice for consumption in those food-poor but oil-rich states

All of these international agreements between unequal partners have dire consequences in deforestation, marginalization of poor landless farmers, and – most probably – effects on the creation of new towns almost from scratch.

3. A typology of cities and towns – geographic theory and reality

Relating the economic-geographic reality in Peninsular Southeast Asia (Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia) to the Rostow-Taaffe model provides an explanation of the distribution of the present regional patterns and provides a basis for predicting the long-term future. It will be determined, to some extent, by three main factors, the political framework of open borders and markets; the macro-scale infrastructure which extends accessibility into hitherto remote regions; and the regional and global economic forces penetrating the national economies and societies down to the local level.

The Rostow-Taaffe model of economic geography

The changing spatial structure of economic development has been depicted by the famous Rostow-Taaffe model (in the diagram below, Figure 2) which explains the gradual transformation, and that is also, gradual urbanization, of a hypothetical island, from the coastal fringes into the interior. The model uses four idealized sequences or stages to demonstrate developmental change with its typical spatial interaction patterns.

The purely theoretical model shows an island, which is naturally connected externally with the rest of the world – hence the growth of part towns prior to the growth of towns further inland. In the reality of the Mekong countries, the internal rural-urban linkages appear to be less prominent in their effects on the changing settlement systems, while the external trade linkages would exert the strongest effects, even more so than the stimuli that are being promoted by the political and economic GMS integration. These finer points must be added to the Rostow-Taaffe model which is shown here just to emphasize the very broad lines of change and intensification of the spatial structure.

At the beginning, the entire island territory is in a state of low-density agrarian use of the natural resources, with scattered settlements and very small local centres. They do not have much interaction among one another because of the low densities, the slow movements on foot or ox cart, and hence the “friction of space”. Along the coast line are contact points with external influences that stimulate the growth of the few small fishing ports and trade posts that would have been there for a long time.
Figure 2: The Rostow-Taaffe model of the changing spatial structure of regional economic development

This initial stage gradually develops into a second stage with the first modest roads (in "dendritic" configurations) into the interior, gradually opening it up to an exchange economy where raw materials are exploited and transported out towards the coast for export, while imported goods, but also innovations in technology and knowledge begin to influence the previously untouched interior territory in a process of diffusion of innovations, and with it, gradual transformation. The third stage shows an emerging network of transport and communications channels with growing urban nodes, expanding from the coastal zone into the interior. The last stage in the model shows the full transformation into a network-nodal system of articulated rural and urban centres. By now the coverage of "undeveloped" space has been reduced to pockets of mountainous or infertile land that is unsuitable for agriculture, industries, or settlements.

Relating the model to Southeast Asian reality

The reference to the Rostow-Taaffe model seems to be particularly relevant to the conditions in the Greater Mekong Region. To some extent, the principal configuration of the model resembles the geography of peninsular Southeast Asia, with the large core of forested mountainous terrain in most of Laos, parts of Cambodia, and the border areas in Viet Nam and Northern Thailand. These areas have very low population densities and abundant natural resources. The rural settlement system has no major towns but only some small market centres.

In the interior lands, only the valleys with limited arable land can be cultivated by traditional agricultural techniques, apart from shifting cultivation in the upland areas. The prevailing areas of subsistence agriculture were not completely isolated and unconnected with the more developed fringes of the peninsula.

Nevertheless, the pace of change was slow and has only recently begun to pick up momentum. In contrast, the surrounding regions in Viet Nam, Thailand, and southern China have more arable land, higher average densities, and larger urban concentrations, but above all, through their coastal cities, direct access to the increasingly important external influences. So the rate of change from mainly rural to mixed and urban patterns has been much faster during the past two decades than in the decades before.

Development processes taking place at different speed and intensity

The channels of exchange are the roads and telecommunication lines but also the intensifying regional air-traffic connections from the outer to the interior lands, i.e. from the Vietnamese coast, from Thailand, as well as from southeastern coastal China through the lower-intensity territories of Yunnan Province into the interior spaces. Because of the political opening of the Greater Mekong Region, such channels of information and innovation flows
are now beginning to be connected across the territory. The policy goal is to focus further economic and urban development on the ‘development corridors’ along the major highways that have been constructed with ADB loans and grants.

The sub-regions are also interconnected by waterways (especially the Mekong itself), roads, and only in some areas, railway lines, but the network densities, and the speeds within the networks vary greatly.

Almost all of the large metropolitan cities of the region are located on the coasts (except for Kunming which is the only large urban centre far from the coast), whereas Sihanoukville still is a relatively new and small port centre. It links Phnom Penh (located less than 200 km inland) more directly with overseas markets and influences than its traditional land links to Ho Chi Minh City and Bangkok.

Urban development along the transects from the coast into the interior of the region declines, from interconnected metropolitan regions and a string of large and medium-sized coastal cities in Viet Nam to relatively isolated small towns in the interior. The existing medium-sized urban centres in Northeast Thailand are much less interconnected and comparably smaller than those in Viet Nam. However, because of the efficient transport system in Thailand, the time distances into Cambodia and into the southern and central regions of Laos have been reduced to a fraction of what they were 50 years ago. Thus, with fully developed regional road and communication systems, the formerly dominating “friction of space” has become a less and less important factor in explaining the development diffusion processes.

The urban typology

The characteristics of the urban system in the Greater Mekong Region show up in the rather few large conurbations (with about 8-10% of the national population in each of them). In addition (but that is not possible to map at this general scale), there is a well-structured range of large, medium-sized and small cities in Viet Nam, but only few modest secondary cities in Cambodia and Laos, and many small rural towns.

The different types of regions shown in the map have a range of city types – trade centres, manufacturing and service centres, and – more recently emerging as a prominent category – border cities, often as twin cities (examples: Mukdahan – Savannakhet; Lao Bao – Davansanh; Poi Pet – Aranyaprateth; Bavet – Moc Bai).

Not only do the regions have different existing urban centres, but their needs in the medium-term future would be predictable to a great extent, given the existing land-use typology and the need for additional centres as well as their carrying capacity. Most of these urban centres need specific planning and policy responses, to enhance the interaction between rural and urban, between local and international relations.

Differential urban growth, driven by global and regional economic forces

It was interesting to study the population size changes of the twenty largest cities in Viet Nam during the period of 1979 to 1999 by means of a simple ranking comparison. The overall growth factor (1999 over 1979) was 1.68, but there is a large range of values for individual cities, from slightly more than 1.00 to 2.42. It is interesting to see that especially the coastal cities have grown faster than the average growth rate in those 20 years (Table 5 below). This would indicate trade functions and FDI to be the main driving forces in that urban growth. Among the top ranking five cities, the rank size order did not change, but most of the cities at ranks 6 to 20 experienced considerable variations, with many “newcomers” growing faster than others. Administrative re-designation and boundary adjustments would also have played a role in the changing city sizes (for example in those cases, where the growth appears to be exceptionally slow or even negative).
Table 5: Long-term city-size changes in Viet Nam, 1979-1999

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
<td>2,633</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
<td>4,209</td>
<td>1.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hanoi</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hanoi</td>
<td>1,524</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Haiphong</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Haiphong</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Danang</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Danang</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bien Hoa</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bien Hoa</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Can Tho</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Can Tho</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nhatrang</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Can Tho</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hue</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Hue</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nam Dinh</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Quy Nhon</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Thai Nguyen</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vung Tau</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Quy Nhon</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Long Xuyen</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Long Xuyen</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Rach Gia</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Hongai / Halong</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Vinh</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My Tho</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nam Dinh</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Vinh</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Halong</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Vung Tau</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Thai Nguyen</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dalat</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dalat</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rach Gia</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Phan Thiet</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cam Pha</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Cam Pha</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Phan Thiet</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>My Tho</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,916</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,958</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1.68</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The long-term growth (1979-1999) is shown for the first twenty largest cities only. Number and rank are identical for 1979. For 1999, all cities are numbered as in 1979, but in addition, their rank is shown which is now different, as some "newcomers" have grown faster. So the ranks of several cities have changed in 1999. The names of the first twenty cities are shaded in the same way for both years.

Source: (ADB, 2006)

The same kind of analysis was carried out for Cambodia, using data from the last census before the civil war and the Khmer Rouge regime (1962!), and then those from the first census of modern democratic Cambodia (census 1998). Phnom Penh and Battambang maintained their top positions, but only Battambang has grown faster than the mean factor of 2.87, while Phnom Penh had grown at an average speed, maintaining its primate position as being about eight times larger than the next city. The figures do not reveal the fact that the Phnom Penh conurbation is spilling over into the neighbouring province of Kandal.

The admittedly crude comparison reveals two important points,

1. the old established pre-colonial (and then colonial) centres like Kampong Cham, Pousat, and Kampong Chhnang or Kampot (and all other old market towns) have lost in relative size and importance, while

2. the fast growing "newcomers" in this rank order are all linked with foreign economic influences, or global-local linkages: Above all, Siem Reap, the prime tourist destination of the country, has exploded in size due to the tourism-related investments; Sihanouville, the port city, has grown because of the foreign trade; and formerly unknown urban centres like Mongkol Borei, Poi Pet, and Suong have grown rapidly because of the border trade.

One should not over-interpret this analysis because many of the towns would have assumed a different administrative status, but the main factors influencing the population growth of towns become strikingly visible from comparing the statistics and a map (Table 6).
**Table 6: Long-term Urban Population Change in Cambodia, 1962-1998**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>A Pop 1962 (1)</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>B Pop 1998 (2)</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Ratio B:A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>393.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,078.0</td>
<td>Phnom Penh</td>
<td>2.74 o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>124.3</td>
<td>Battambang</td>
<td>3.20 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Cham</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>97.1</td>
<td>Siem Reap</td>
<td>9.52 !</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pousat</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>Mongkol Borei</td>
<td>Probably &gt;10!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Chhnang</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>Sihanoukville</td>
<td>9.39 !</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>Kampong Cham</td>
<td>1.59 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kracheh</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>Suong</td>
<td>Probably &gt;10!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svay Rieng</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>Poi Pet</td>
<td>Probably &gt;10!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siem Reap</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>Kampong Chhnang</td>
<td>3.21 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Thum</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>Kampong Speu</td>
<td>5.53 t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prey Veang</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>Kampot</td>
<td>2.83 o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kep</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>Kampong Thum</td>
<td>3.30 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kampong Speu</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>Kracheh</td>
<td>2.39 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takeo</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>Pousat</td>
<td>1.88 -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shihanoukville</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>Smach Meanchey (KK)</td>
<td>Probably fast!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mongkol Borei
Suong
Poi Pet
Smach Meanchey
Kandal
Stueng Traeng
Srae Ambel
Kampong Leav
Sampang Labansiek

No comparable data available as none of these places were classified as urban in 1962. Presumably, size of each of these places less than 5,000 inhabitants

Total: 15 urban areas (1962) 582.9
Total B: The same 15 urban areas (1998) 1,672.8

All 15 towns with data for 1962 and 1998 >> “Mean Factor of Urban Growth” 2.87

Population numbers (in 1,000)
(1) All 15 “urban” areas as per Census of 1962
(2) Urban areas as per “urban study” (Urban Reclassification, 2004) which interpreted the figures of the 1998 Census (listing for places with more than 10,000 only)
(3) Kep constitutes a special problem of “urban” definition: In 1962, a great part of the total population would have been rated as “urban”, while in 1998, only 4,000 of the total population of 28,000 was rated as living in an “urban” area

Code:
No comparable data for 1962 – grey shading;
Average growth (around the value of 2.87) o; above average (3.2 – 3.3) +; much above average (5.5 – 9.5) !;
Below average (as low as 1.5) -

Source: (ADB, 2006)

Most recently, the analysis in Cambodia was complemented by a comparison of the 1998 figures and those from the 2008 census. The overall urban growth was relatively slow at 2.21% p.a., but there has been a rather uneven distribution of growth patterns. The most rapidly growing urban areas are in those peripheral provinces where underused agricultural land is being opened up. Some of them may rightly be called ‘maverick towns’ seemingly coming from nowhere, such as Suong with 50,000 inhabitants (mentioned in the 1962-1998 comparison above, Table 6) but also some very small towns “in the middle of nowhere”.

Those provinces with the slowest (even negative) urban growth are stagnating areas because of drought and other problems, affecting both rural areas and urban centres so even the towns are losing population to outmigration. Table 7 highlights the fastest and slowest
growing towns – all of them exceedingly small. Furthermore, the urban sector in another five
provinces has grown at very slow rates of under 0.5% p.a., perhaps in some cases caused
by further re-classification of urban areas.

Table 7: Inter-censal urban growth in Cambodia, 1998-2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The five fastest growing towns (% p.a.) in fast growing peripheral provinces</th>
<th>The five slowest growing towns (% p.a.) in stagnating central provinces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pailin</td>
<td>6.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mondul Kiri</td>
<td>5.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratanak Kiri</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otdar Meanchey</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preah Vihear</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From regional linkage patterns to region-specific development strategies

In the ADB study, the methodology for turning linkage concepts and analysis into policy
recommendations for balanced urban development proceeded in four steps:

1. Assessing the differences and commonalities of regional conditions by means of
   thematic mapping for the entire region (actually covering four countries, including
   Thailand), using a number of proxy parameters (presented by a series of thematic
   maps). The model for this mapping exercise related to Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam
   was an interesting multi-criteria thematic mapping of the aggregate effects of 40
   years of development and change in Thailand (Thailand Atlas, 2004).

2. Deriving an overall typology of development patterns, implicitly showing regional
differences in accessibility and connectivity, visualized by means of two synthesis
maps (Maps 5 and 6)

3. Establishing a framework for differentiated intervention in the emerging urban system
   in the Greater Mekong Region, in general terms, and relating it to the country
   conditions and policies, and then finally,

4. Proceeding to concrete recommendations for policy development, support
   programmes and projects for the region as a whole as well as for each of the three
countries.

The first synthesis map (Map 5 below) was designed to show the diversity of territory and
heterogeneity in growth dynamics. Seven categories for depicting the diversity of territory
and growth dynamics were used, i.e.

- **Metropolitan core and peri-urban zones** (two types of patterns covering the large
  metropolitan areas of Bangkok, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, as well as the core area of
  the Phnom Penh urban area)

- **Metropolitan influence area** – industries mixed with agriculture (extending from the
  peri-urban zones, gradually including more and more of the previously “pure” rural
  areas)

- Three types of agriculture-dominated areas, with (a) two sub-categories, mainly
dynamic lowland and upland areas, and (b) another rural type of land use,
  representing various types of agricultural production

- **Hilly / mountainous areas** with various forms of forest cover and scattered agricultural
  use.
The second synthesis map (Map 6) emphasizes the manifestations of global exchange processes that are concentrated in the large cities with their ports and airports, and distributed further down into the growing regional centres, especially those that have been equipped with new airports. Major contract farming areas are also shown – cross border contracts in Laos and Cambodia, offered by entrepreneurs from Thailand, China, and Vietnam.

Emerging urban places, including ‘maverick towns’

The case studies in the ADB study focused on urban centres that are located within the economic development corridors, and/or at border crossings, because the open-borders policy stands for the exposure of border towns and regions to the impact of growth factors from the neighbouring country (higher and lower wage levels; opportunities for contract farming by entrepreneurs based in the more developed countries – China and Thailand, in particular).

It is possible to generalize that the border towns – typically as twins across the border line – have been growing rapidly, are being used by governments and private sector alike to locate industrial estates and export processing zones, and markets. Along the Thai-Lao and Thai-Cambodia borders there are the most surprising new towns almost “in the middle of nowhere” – mini Las Vegas type gambling centres. They are, of course, illegal in Thailand (as well as in Laos and Cambodia) but they have been accommodated somehow as welcome as tax spinners and tourism magnets. Some of these border towns were among the case studies of the ADB study (2006). 8

There is sufficient empirical evidence of ‘maverick towns’ seemingly appearing from nowhere, for example Suong Town in Cambodia (a relatively large town of about 50,000
inhabitants which does not appear on the topographic map!), half way between the old established provincial town of Kampong Cham and the Vietnamese border. This is an incipient town with hardly any infrastructure but enormous economic transactions from the hinterland of thriving rubber plantations and regional trade movements between Cambodia and Viet Nam.

The list of such maverick towns would have to include, among others,

- Lao Cai (Vietnam), a thriving trade and tourism centre;
- Poi Pet (Cambodia) just across from Aranyaprathet (Thailand), the most unlikely combination of a wild “Las Vegas” imitation and one of the busiest centres of bilateral trade;
- Ko Kong (Cambodia), another one of those Thai-Cambodian gambling points which might be destined for phenomenal growth once the exploitation of the natural gas in the gulf area nearby begins;
- Luang Namtha (Northern Laos), the once sleepy country town which has a new airport to accommodate the increasing numbers of tourists, apart from being the centre of the Chinese funded incipient rubber industry.

The more familiar medium-sized secondary cities in all three countries will require more attention in national urban development policies, as counter weights to the rapidly growing capital regions. A case would have to be made for Battambang, Sihanoukville, and Siem Reap in Cambodia. In Vietnam, there is Da Nang which is an ideally positioned city of a fairly large size right in the middle between the two largest agglomerations of Vietnam, and a string of medium-sized cities all over the country. In Laos, there would be a case for Savannakhet as a secondary city, and Luang Prabang which is also prominent as an international tourism magnet. Vientiane, the capital itself, is not yet very large even though it tends to attract an overportional share of foreign direct investments. However, it would be beyond the scope of the paper to deal with the topic of secondary city development in any detail.

4. Policy considerations and prospects

Reciprocal rural-urban linkages would require concerted efforts at strengthening both sides. The ideal outcome of such policies are described as the ‘virtuous cycle’ of rural development (Douglass, 1998) where both international and national conditions are favourable to regional investment, in basic or leading sectors, so as to internalize three key multiplier effects i.e.

- employment generation;
- processing and manufacturing of basic products within the region; and
- local purchase of inputs.

All of this together would keep the value-added of local production within the region and increase the demand for urban services because of the increase in rural incomes. The policy interventions required to set the virtuous cycle in motion include both rural and urban components, and infrastructure networks connecting both spheres. This implies simultaneous regional development of agriculture and a growing non-agricultural sector focused on small and intermediate towns.

Urban development that is pro-poor and pro-rural

The study was expected to provide a guiding policy framework and to propose “conclusive strategies and interventions to enable urban areas to maximize pro-poor benefits of subregional cooperation..., mutually reinforcing rural and urban development”. This question posed a considerable challenge, specifically in the required attention to pointing out
“appropriate institutional and governance frameworks to strengthen positive rural-urban linkages nationwide and in selected geographical regions”.

Envisioning differential support programmes

The analysis proceeds to a typology of cities reflecting economic functions rather than administrative status. What is required then is to design a planning framework for the “urban functions in rural development” which has to be demand driven, but not supply driven.

Donor-supported intervention programme may be broadly structured into “upstream” and “downstream” programme components, i.e. those that support national or sub-national policy-making agencies, and those that help carry out demonstration or pilot projects in a particular locality. Both components are needed, and should not be conceptualized or implemented in isolation. Purely upstream-related projects are indispensable but may not be able to convince national policy-makers of the benefits of the changes that are being proposed. However, “downstream” projects can not be carried out without the enabling framework that depends on national policy support.

Components: The small / intermediate town programmes should be tailored to the closest possible cooperation between government and private-sector players. Essentially six components are needed as part of a support programme. They are:

1. Local economic development (“hardware” and “software”)
2. Urban infrastructure improvements (water supply and sanitation, power, waste disposal and others)
3. Public facilities and services (especially those serving the hinterland)
4. Physical rural-urban linkages (especially rural feeder roads, local transport)
5. Urban management and planning (local government and administration)
6. Training for business (SME entrepreneurs and key staff)

Depending on the type of town, the relative importance (and share in the costs) of each of the components would differ. Each of the six components would be given more or less emphasis, in response to specific requirements. Table 8 below shows how the same six components may be used to come up with a versatile programme which consists of different ‘packages’ for specific situations. Examples of such packages are: Economic centre in a prosperous region, or rural service centre in a low-density region. It should be quite obvious that the measures to be taken in these types of centres are greatly different.

Package A would be a typical ‘linkage booster’ whereby an urban centre with high potential is given some ‘pump primer’ support, in conjunction with sustained rural development programmes specific to the agricultural hinterland. Although it might be difficult to distinguish economic infrastructure from other types of urban infrastructure, the emphasis in Package A is on strategic economic support, both ‘hardware’ and ‘software’ measures. Examples of towns in GMS for this type of support package may include Savannakhet or Battambang, or even Soung, in SE Cambodia.

In contrast, Package B would be for an already thriving town (which may resemble some kind of ‘growth centre’), where – perhaps as the result of recent rapid growth – the local infrastructure networks are lagging behind. The broad definition of local infrastructure may well include a slum upgrading project and similar social development concerns. In this case, the economic measures that are in the foreground in Package A may not need extra attention as the private sector would be able to handle the necessary investments. Examples: Siem Reap, and a large number of medium-sized provincial cities in Viet Nam.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Package A</th>
<th>Package B</th>
<th>Package C</th>
<th>Package D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Local economic development (“hardware” and “software”)</td>
<td>Highest priority</td>
<td>Secondary priority</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Highest priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Urban infrastructure improvements (water supply and sanitation, power, waste disposal and others)</td>
<td>Secondary priority</td>
<td>Highest priority</td>
<td>Secondary priority</td>
<td>Secondary priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Public facilities and services (especially those serving the hinterland)</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Highest priority</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Physical rural-urban linkages (especially rural feeder roads and transport services)</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>Additional priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Urban management and planning (local government and administration)</td>
<td>Additional priority</td>
<td>Additional priority</td>
<td>Low priority</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Training for business (SME entrepreneurs and key staff)</td>
<td>High priority, as part of economic start-up</td>
<td>Secondary priority</td>
<td>Low priority</td>
<td>Complementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Package C** which again consists of a mix of the same six components, is designed as a support programme for a typical service centre in a ‘backward region’ with very low population densities and meagre resource endowment, where not much economic development is possible. In this case, the government would have to concentrate the public service functions in one point to achieve some limited agglomeration advantages. Another conceivable version of the public facilities component in this package would be base stations of mobile services, for example for basic health, postal or banking services. In this case, there would be no emphasis on cost recovery in the same way as it would in the public services provided in Packages A and B. Examples: The small provincial and district centres in the peripheral regions of the three GMS countries considered here.

**Package D** may be conceived as a package for thriving border towns and border regions, as a special version of Package A or B. Examples: Poi Pet, Lao Cai, or Moc Bai (Viet Nam) and Bavet (Cambodia).

Urban management and planning capacity is part and parcel of all four packages, in a national capacity building programme. However, given the differences in size and importance, the additional high priority accorded to this component in Packages A, B, and C, would not equally apply to the rather small rural centres in Package C. In this case, the state agencies (rather than the fledgling local administration) would have to take a strong role in providing the area-wide services that are needed in the first place.
Follow-up projects

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) in partnership with other international agencies, is determined to promote integrated urban development in the region, thus actively participating in the process of “creating cities”. The economic development corridors would thus take shape while they have so far been primarily roads.

**Corridor and border towns:** ADB is launching a scheme of investments in conjunction with urban management support for Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Ten small and medium-sized urban centres have been selected for a support program which is beginning in 2010. All of them are located within the economic development corridors, and some of them are at the most important border passages between the three countries.

**CDIA:** A new facility for supporting urban development in Asia was launched by ADB with considerable financial support by Germany and Sweden in 2007. Called *City Development Initiative Asia (CDIA)*, it is an approach designed to strengthen links between urban planning and the programming of urban investments, and to ensure that the subsequent investment programs are carried out. The overall goal is to improve urban environments through the provision of infrastructure and the strengthening of governance. Key concerns are the prioritization of investments and the identification of funding sources – domestic, international and private sector. In the Greater Mekong Area, an CDIA program is now being launched in Battambang, the second largest city of Cambodia, and another program for Vietnam is under consideration.

5. Concluding remarks

What can this paper contribute to the theme of the conference; can it prove anything? The focus of the paper is on the processes that generate new urban centres from very small rural service points, and on the kind of policies to be adopted for guiding such processes in a direction where real benefits may accrue towards a somewhat idealistic form of balanced development.

Even at the early stage of national urban development which is typical in the Mekong Region, there are patterns of development that largely depend on regional and global linkages, but also – to some extent – on the more familiar local linkages of an urban centre and its immediate hinterland.

The spatial distribution of the types of regions (with mixed central and peripheral characteristics) is closely associated with four principal interrelated factors, i.e.

- historical development (and with that, existence of intermediate urban centres),
- geographic proximity and direct access from regions of higher centrality,
- availability of agricultural land, and
- density of population, associated with higher degrees of development and more intense exchange flows than in lower density regions.

The processes of change impulses, diffusion and penetration of ideas and technology are primarily from the central regions (in this case located along the coasts) to the peripheral ones (the largely untapped interior), but there are also effects in the opposite direction, from the periphery to the central regions. The Mekong Region is now fully exposed to global and national impacts that lead to the “opening up” of previously remote and inaccessible regions, bringing them closer into the reach of change forces emanating from the centres of global-national-urban interaction. These processes do include real dangers to previously untapped and protected forest areas where effective counter measures are urgently needed.
As a concluding summary statement it may be said that the principles of an urban development policy that is pro-poor and pro-rural are applicable in the context of the three countries. Their existing policy frameworks are open to modifications towards this innovative kind of development strategy. The focal agencies involved in the dialogue during the course of conducting the study are genuinely interested in receiving new ideas and contributing to the policy initiatives and more concrete programme and project proposals that have been worked out with their active participation. So the economic processes that are generating urban centres shall be supported by national programmes for creating sustainable urban systems.

References

The "Harvard" referencing system is preferred by the author but it may not be the one to be used in the proceedings – to be decided by the workshop organizer and editor.

(ADB, 2006) Asian Development Bank, RETA No. 6121 – Rural, urban, and sub-regional linkages in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Cambodia): A holistic approach to development and poverty reduction


Endnotes

1 The Asian Development Bank (ADB) entrusted the author of this paper with a major research study on rural-urban and global linkages in the Greater Mekong Region, with a focus on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The study was in the ADB category of RETA (for regional technical assistance), i.e. a study which is not tied to any decision on infrastructure projects or disbursement of funds. The full title of the study was: Asian Development Bank, RETA No. 6121 – Rural, urban, and sub-regional linkages in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Cambodia): A holistic approach to development and poverty reduction. The work was completed in February 2006 with an international conference in Hanoi. Based on the study, a book is being prepared for publication by ADB – (Kammeier and Hakim, 2010). It is likely to be available later in 2010.

2 Of course, urban infrastructure (drainage, urban roads, water supply, and waste water treatment, e.g.) has always been part of ADB’s agenda, sometimes in conjunction with technical assistance in institutional development.

3 The case studies in ADB RETA 6121 are: Lao Cai (Viet Nam-China border); Luang Namtha (Laos-China border); Poi Pet and Battambang (Cambodia-Thai border); Suong (Cambodia), Savannakhet (Thailand-Laos border), and Quang Tri Province and the border town of Lao Bao (Viet Nam-Lao border). Lastly, there was a case study on peri-urban growth and industrial estates in Vietnam.

4 The phrase was coined in the early 1990s by the then Prime Minister of Thailand, General Chatchai Choonhavan.

5 In this respect, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is beginning to move ahead, translating the general analysis of the study into concrete action. The author is currently in charge of drawing up a strategic framework for urban development in Cambodia to be completed in late April 2010. Similar strategic studies for Viet Nam and Laos are underway.

6 A similar analysis was carried out for Laos, but it was not very significant because the data available were not good enough.

7 This analysis is part of the ongoing urban development strategy for Cambodia which is being carried out by the author for the ADB. Its draft was discussed at a stakeholder workshop in Phnom Penh on March 30, 2010.

8 Refer to endnote 5.

9 Suong Town has recently been included in the creation of municipalities in Cambodia, an important step forward in setting up urban local authorities in addition to the rural communes and districts.
Gendered Impacts of Road Infrastructure and Changing Land Use
--- A Case Study of Kunming – Bangkok Highway

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&

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In the regional economic integration and striving for western regions’ development, there has been increasing investment in the road infrastructure in western China. Yunnan, as a border province with 3 southeastern Asian countries, particularly has its strategic importance in regional trade development. Nevertheless, has improved connectivities necessarily brought the benefits to the local communities, women and men, or rather, their lives have been disturbed and livelihoods affected? How have different ethnic groups enjoyed the access and mobility? Such questions are hardly touched upon in the impact evaluations of road infrastructure. This study attempts to look into the impacts of road provisions and induced changes in crop cultivation and trade on the ethnic communities, women and men. The study will analyze the relations between asset building and compensation from the land expropriated for road construction, mobility of people and good and changing land use and cropping pattern, and further impact on gender relations. The analyses are based on questionnaire survey and in-depth discussions in 3 villages along Kunming-Bangkok Highway and relevant departments in Yunnan Province in China.
Abstract

The aging population becomes an increasing concern in most countries of the world due to increasing life expectancy and technological advancement. Widespread barriers to the elderly participation in society are commonly reflected in the physical barriers of the built environment, which includes public transport infrastructure. In addition to distance, poor access to transportation means that those who do not have private transport are less likely to access services. Even where community or public transport is available, the times and frequency of service may discriminate against its use. Journeys may take too long, or services may be too infrequent, perhaps requiring elderly users to spend too long at their destination, or that the public transportation itself presents as a barrier for use. This paper reviews both past and current initiatives and policies undertaken among selected Southeast Asian cities to public transportation as well as challenges in improving accessibility particularly responding to the needs of elderly users. Results of the study show that appropriate measures that improve accessibility to public transportation and promote inclusion among the elderly still lags behind. Responding effectively to the aging population entails accommodating their needs for mobility and promoting policies that envision "a society for all ages" in public transportation.

Keywords: aging, public transport, accessibility, inclusion, southeast asia
The Changes Factor Affects Destination of Urban Commuter into Jakarta Megapolitan on Gender – Indonesia

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Abstract

This paper aims to communicate and observe the change of urban-women migrant worker’s motive to be a commuter from Bodetabek (Bogor-Depok-Tangerang and Bekasi cities) into Jakarta megopolitan city based on longitudinal data of intercensal Population Survey (SUPAS) in 1995 and 2005. Main factors which take action for contributing to commuters’ reason such as: development of transportation technology, demographic change, dynamic labour-economic and environment change. The both Supas data series including infrastructure data will compare and scrutinize to identify the main changes motivation among commuter from Bodetabek into Jakarta during a decade. In addition to that qualitative data will be applied as well in the data analysis. Finally, founded on panel data, this paper can describe the changes factor on which affecting destination of urban commuter into Jakarta information resources for planning on economic demography development.

Keywords: intercensal population census (SUPAS), commuter, labour-economic and migrant worker
Reflections on the Potential Impact of the Proposed East African Community [EAC] Regional Cooperation on Women Relative to Men’s Economic Mobility

Nite Tanzarn, Director/Board Member International Forum for Rural Transport and Development [IFRTD]
Abstract, March 2010

The five member countries of the East African Community [EAC] namely Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda have entered into a regional economic integration agreement intended to reduce and ultimately remove tariff and non tariff barriers to the free flow of goods, services and factors of production between the five countries. The overall objective of this agreement is to improve trade between the EAC states. Amongst other things, since no customs duties will be paid within the EAC, there will be a potential reduction in the costs of supply and as a result, improved mobility of goods and capital. Correspondingly, there would be a reduction in the consumer prices and consequently, an increase in demand.

What is the potential gendered impact of EAC economic integration? Looking at the supply and the demand side, the paper will explore the following. How are women and men likely to respond to and take advantage of the expanded opportunities inherent in the regional integration? Will women and men benefit equitably from the trade stimulated across and amongst the five countries? How will the integration affect women’s relative to men’s time use and mobility? What are the potential barriers to women’s relative to men’s participation in and benefit from economic integration? How does gender structure economic integration: what are the implications of unequal gender relations on the EAC economic integration? Will gender inequalities be reduced or exacerbated? How can we ensure that the EAC economic integration promotes gender equality and equity as well as women’s empowerment?

Key words: gender, regional economic integration,
Contrasting Male and Female Entrepreneurs’ Cross Border Trading Experiences prior to and after the Construction of the Second Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge

Nittana Southiseng¹ and John Walsh²

Shinawatra International University, Thailand.

Prior to 2007, only water transport (boat) was available for cross-border trading and other activities for the Lao and Thai people wishing to cross from Savannakhet in Laos to Mukdahan in Thailand and vice versa. Cross-border trading at that time normally took place from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. Service quality and product costs in Savannakhet were unstable and seasonal, partly depending on how convenient water transportation across the Mekong happened to be at that time. Both male and female entrepreneurs had the same experiences that fluctuating market prices interfered with their ability to establish relationships of trust with their customers. However, after the official opening of the Lao-Thai Friendship Bridge in 2006 and its opening for the general public in early 2007, both male and female entrepreneurs found that their local business environment was greatly enhanced. This involved the reduction of transport costs, convenience of moving people and goods across the river and the stimulation of Laos as a transit point on a newly-opened route from Thailand to Vietnam. However, the extent to which these developments have impacted upon male and female entrepreneurs has yet to be established and it is anticipated that a program of in-depth personal interviewing of a sample of such entrepreneurs will help to reveal the extent to which new opportunities, changing business conditions and access to social capital have a gendered aspect. It will also lead to some suggestions as to how entrepreneurial activities can become more efficient.

Keywords: Entrepreneur, Cross-border trading, Basic infrastructure, Laos

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Access and mobility of rural women;
Role of transport infrastructure in changing gender relations:
A case study from rural Sri Lanka

By

Upali Pannilage

Theoretically, the term gender refers to the social and cultural relationship between men and women in the society. It also reflect the relationship of power between women and men which revealed in a range of practices, ideas, and representations, including the division of labour, roles, and resources shared by men and women. Gender analysis offered tools for investigating the material bases of difference between women and men. Yet gender analysis tells us very little about how gender identities and roles experienced by individual women and men within communities. Rather, it is used to delineate distinctions between what women in general and men in general do, in order to guide planners.

Most of the development interventions have viewed women as passive recipient of development rather than active contributors for the development. In this context women have been marginalised from the mainstream development process. Although, they have contributed and involved actively in the process of development, especially rural development, their contribution has largely been neglected.

Poor access is one of the characteristics of poverty. At the macro-level, the access to safe water, electricity and the road network is associated with national per capita income. Meantime, access to basic services such as health, water and sanitation is not necessarily reflected in increases in income of households.

Ideally, rural development should, while improving the economic status of people, concentrate on the social changes that affect their lives. Yet, most responsible authorities, policy makers and implementers continue to prioritize economic factors far above the social aspects when planning and implementing rural development. Such interventions have rarely achieved the expected results.

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Rural development approaches have tended to shift from welfare to equity, antipoverty to efficiency without significantly changing the lives of men and women in the society. The empowerment approach is an alternative strategy introduced later on to meet the inadequacies of previous development programmes. Development thinkers are presently experimenting with the strength and validity of this approach to remove the existing barriers for women and uplift their lives. Unemployment, low income, isolation and lack of access to essential services can be seen as main features of the poverty in rural areas.

Mobility is one of the main factors that use by society to discriminate women. From the childhood level family members, neighbours and others in the society strive to limit the mobility of women by using several excuses. Community has established some social norms for women to reduce their mobility. These traditional thinking and behaviours have contributed considerably to minimise both social and physical mobility of women.

This paper is based on a study conducted in a rural village (*Malberigama*) in Southern Sri Lanka which was a small village comprises of 51 families and 209 men & women. The village is a highly remote one situated in the dry zone with the annual rain fall of around 1200 mm within a period of only 4 months during the year.

Access and mobility is one of the key problems faced by the women in this village. Access to health services, unavailability of proper housing and sanitary facilities, unavailability of clean drinking water, access to education were the main issues faced by the communities of this village. These access and mobility issues have roots not only in appropriate transport planning, but also stretched to demographic patterns and the nature of the village situation.

An international development agency namely Practical Action has intervened in this village and implemented a participatory intervention to improve the access and mobility by improving transport infrastructure of the village.

Impact generated due to the transport interventions was accessed by this paper. An access road was constructed using community based road construction and maintenance approach introduced by Practical Action. The designing, planning, implementation, maintenance and monitoring process was carried out with the community participation and the capacity of the villagers were developed on these accept as required.
This paper discussed about how access to a motorable road increased the social status of communities who earlier felt isolated from the mainstream of social, economic and political developments.

The traffic and vehicle ownership of the village including traffic patterns were studied to understand the level of improvement in access and mobility of communities in the village. Especially this paper discussed how the life and gender roles and relations increased with the increase of mobility of the community by giving a special attention to the women in this community.

Finally, following the analysis of the findings paper concludes highlighting that the improved transport access increase community’s mobility and at the same time their access to health, education, water, market, etc. increased. This is leading to change the gender relations and roles towards increased living standards of the society.
Assuring Gender Equity in Rural Infrastructure Development: An Exploration for conceptual framework and equity tools

International workshop on Gender, Economic Integration, and Cross-border Road Infrastructure Development: Poverty and Mobility in the Context of Asia
May 6-7, 2010
At
AIT Conference Center, Thailand

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Abstract

In gender disaggregated rural habitats, women have different considerations for their developmental needs and aspirations. In Indian context, globalizing in with a traditional politico religious gendered belief systems, institutional and social world have normative structures that restrict women’s participation in the mainstream development process. Within democratic polity in India, women have been attaining a substantial social and institutional space in a visible positive progression. Considering the governance of the rural development, rural women need to be given more structural spaces for equitably deciding the development trajectory of the context. In this regard, the process of infrastructure development has a prominent role in determining the local and national development pathways and gender specific rural poverty alleviation. Within this, if assured gender equity, development is likely to become more sustainable, social and economically. For assuring gender equity in infrastructure development, there should be a strong focus on the institutional and social processes involved with the aim for qualitative growth for the sustainable governance of contextual development systems.

This paper explores gender issues within infrastructure development right from its inception stage to the long-term development outcome trajectories for women. With a literature based conceptual framework for analysis, proposed paper provides tools for assuring gender equity within rural infrastructure development initiatives. Based on its analytical framework, paper will conclude with prescriptive policy suggestions for gender equity.

Key words: Gender, infrastructure development, equity, rural development.
Title: Extending Road Infrastructure - Potentials for Cross Border Mobility and Poverty Reduction in Nepal by Jun Hada, Programme Officer (Transport Sector Portfolio), SDC office in Nepal.

Abstract:

Nepal is a landlocked country surrounded by India on east, west and south and by China on the north. With only 13,000 kms of strategic road and 23,000 kms of local road networks built so far, the country is in very poor state in terms of transport and mobility. Most of Nepal’s 147,000 sq. km. are still isolated and inaccessible because only 60% of the total population today has access to roads within 2 hours walking distance and more than 23 % live beyond 4 hours of walking distance. Accessibility is extremely poor in the north and remote western hill districts.

Looking at this bleak situation, the Swiss Government has been supporting infrastructure policy and road development in Nepal since year 1975. The Lamosanghu - Jiri highway connecting Arniko Highway till the border of China is the first Swiss Assistance to Nepal on road development sector introducing labour-based, environment friendly and participatory approach. This road completed in 1987, has generated local employment for more than a decade, has increased literacy rate and also contributed to reduce child mortality in the road vicinity. The development of this road in addition had brought about the need for maintenance of the roads built, thus the Swiss Assistance was extended to maintain Arniko - Highway to establish planned maintenance and management system in the Department of Roads, Government of Nepal. The 115 km long Arniko Highway connecting the border of China has opened up a huge potential for expanding mobility for trade and economy in the north eastern districts of Nepal.

The highway construction itself not only generated short or medium term employment to the rural people, but also improved their livelihoods through increased opportunities for sustained income generation for example livestock rearing, vegetable and cash crop farming, cottage industries etc. These have flourished more with the access enhancement as it allowed timely inputs and services they required. There is much change in the local economy due to increased imports of goods from China. There are local hubs along the highway where Chinese goods are sold at reasonably lower prices resulted from the reduced transportation costs. There is significant flow of Nepalese people going to Chinese Border for employment, particularly for semi-skilled and skilled works. Notwithstanding these positive changes, there have also been potential risks of rural villagers being suddenly exposed to outside world. Due to quick access to goods and services, people are more exposed to cinema and videos, there is sudden shift in behaviour change among population in the hubs along the highway. Increasing imports of manufactured goods along the road has depressed the local handcraft markets and women’s traditional sources of cash income. There are risks of diffusion of health infections particularly HIV/AIDS through markets for commercial sex along the hubs of road corridor placing girls and women at higher risks. Nevertheless, it has overall, changed the lives and livelihoods better along the highway’s zone of influence. With a possibility of Nepal to emerge as a transit state between India and China, it actually offers a great potential for regional economic development, expansion of production and trade diversification thereby contributing to economic well-being and poverty alleviation.

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POVERTY AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF THE BONGAO PORT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

Bongao Port, the Philippines’ gateway to the rest of Southeast Asia because of its proximity to the eastern Malaysian State of Sabah. Bongao has been a popular barter center and meeting place for southern merchants and Muslim traders for centuries. Prior to the construction of the Bongao Port Improvement Project, a Poverty and Social Analysis was conducted to comply with the requirements of the Asian Development Bank. Initially, the poverty lines and the poverty incidence were determined. A poverty profile classified the “poor” from the “very poor”. The project beneficiaries were determined through a distribution and poverty impact analysis. The project’s likely effects on different groups, with focus on the poor and other vulnerable groups, were used to identify the constraints of passing the project’s benefits to the targeted groups, namely the boat passengers, the local population, surface vessel freight shippers, freight and passenger vessel operators, as well as producers. The use of the port by the poor and its competitive conditions were studied. Results show that the Project will directly benefit the poor in Bongao and its environs in terms of the likely uses of the facilities; their distance from the nearest market; access to services like education, health facilities, frequent destinations; market activities; knowledge of HIV; gender roles; expectations on the port expansion; and the degree of their support and willingness to participate in the process for the Bongao Port Improvement project. Moreover, the net economic benefits of the project to different stakeholders show that the project is feasible.
ABSTRACT

Urban Expansion in Vientiane and Impacts of Local Livelihood:
A Case Study of Ban Nongchan Relocation in Vientiane City, Lao PDR

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After the popular revolution in 1975, the country was run under a strict command and control economy. The changes to the economy have led to increased urbanization, which is placing pressure on local governments to meet the growing demand for improved urban services to encourage industrial development and new investment opportunities. The increase of population gave rise to the need for developing additional residential areas, which mean more land, houses and infrastructure services for the increasing populations.

The Lao government has adopted the 2020 Development Strategy which reflected in the developments in the urban sector, as a result of the new economic policies of the government, urban economic development in the country accelerated causing on the one hand more physical growth in the urban areas and on the other hand increases in environmental problems also. With the National Economic Mechanism (NEM) development policy in 1986, the government intends to boost economic growth as well as to preserve the environment sound Capital City. Therefore, the Prime Minister’s Decree has adopted the Vientiane Urban Planning 2003-2010: the boundary of Vientiane planning development to 2010 covers the area of 20,950 ha, with 189 villages. In doing so, Vientiane Urban Development Administrative Agency (VUDAA) established in 1999 to engage in the zoning of the Vientiane Capital City.

In my research, the case study of development project in Vientiane, which funded by Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) to establish the Public Park, to preserve the environment, restoration of Marsh and beautify Vientiane Municipality. In these phenomena, there were 622 families of both Nongchan and Dongpalantha villages were removed out to the new resettlement area in the area of North Nongteng village, Sikhottabong District, Vientiane, Lao PDR. Therefore, I will concentrate on resettlement forms, changes in livelihood, socioeconomic and environment problems in order to understand international and local connection in urban development discourse, to evaluate the success of urban relocation schemes, and to understand the networking of relocated people in bargaining in the development process.
Gender, mobility and road construction in Greater Mekong Subregion

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Abstract

In the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), road connectivity is considered to be an important step towards economic integration. Infrastructure development including road construction is creating various forms of mobility among the people in the formally isolated areas. There are largely three types of mobility that are seen in GMS. First form is labor migration, especially cross-border labor migration. Some are for years and some are seasonal but repetitive, and some are commuting – coming back every day. Road construction induces commercialization, which increases the demand for cash income. At the same time, road construction makes it easier for people to move. On the other hand, improved road connectivity developed border areas, where new areas for cross-border migrants to look for jobs are created. Second form is displacement. Road construction displaced people, along with construction of dams and other development projects. Large scale plantation takes away land where people used for shifting cultivation, depriving means of livelihoods. Some displacement happens because of government policies to cluster villages to make it easier to provide services. Displacement often leads to drastic changes in livelihood, and lead to the first form of mobility. Third form of mobility is non-mobility. That is, if we take the effect of mobility as changes in livelihoods and changes in exposure to outside society, those who are left behind in the villages go through similar experience as those who leave the place physically. There will be more outsider coming in, which induces higher need of cash income, changes the way they consume, and at the same time, increases insecurity. All these forms of mobility have a gender dimension, creating different experience and effects on women and men.
A Gendered Mobility of Working Women’s Agency in Space: 
A Reflection of Gendered Division of Labour and Decision-making in the Household

Abstract

The increase of productive work of women has increased women’s social position in many societies. Likewise, in Thailand, the traditional gender roles and relations of women as the “back leg of the elephant” has been challenged by the increase in the proportion of women who are economically active. However, Thai cultural and traditional view of gender relations still has implications for women’s and men’s social position, especially those in the family. This paper argues that the pattern of women’s spatial mobility and decision-making about trips are a reflection of the extent to which traditional gender roles are shared between women and men.

This paper aims to explore the lives of working women and men in an inner city neighbourhood or a Soi in Bangkok. In particular, this paper explores a spatial significance of a Soi in an inner Bangkok in enabling working women and men to balance their gender roles. To do this, women’s agency is used as a working concept, concerning women’s and men’s movement between private and public space and within public space which is a new dimension to understand household and gender relations. Working women’s and men’s spatial mobility is explored to understand, first, the extent of their traditional gender role which is shared between women and men. Second, their household negotiation with regards to trips they make will also be ‘unpacked’ to understand their negotiation of being in public and private space.
Gender Analysis of Highways Development, Cross Border Mobility and Trade in GMS: Cambodia Road Improvement Project, Sisophon to Poipet

Authors

John Pilgrim and Ngin Chanrith

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the changes in social and economic status of women and their households in the areas of Sisophon, Poipet and Banteay Chhmar in Banteay Meanchey province, Cambodia, following the completion of significant improvements to Road No. 56 and to National Road 5. The research methodology had three components: (1) Secondary data from documentary materials, from research data from a previous survey of affected households living along National Highways 5 and 6 and along Provincial Roads Nos. 56 and 68 in 2004; (2) Participatory Rural Appraisal using focus group discussions and key informant interviews; and (3) Socio-economic household survey of a random sample of 138 households living along Road No. 56 between Sisophon and Banteay Chhmar, and along National Road 5 between Sisophon and Poipet.

The study revealed that the cost of travel between key locations as a result of the road improvements has not significantly changed, but the speed of travel and thus both access to services and cost in travel time have been substantially reduced. The benefits to women which are most evident are those of access to health and maternity services, with a significant increase in the proportion of women attending ante-natal and MCH clinics and having their children born at a hospital or health clinic facility. There has been substantial economic development benefiting most (but not all households) as a result of market increases and increased prices for crops, notably for cash crops, including cassava grown along Road No. 56 for export to ethanol processing factories in Thailand, and elsewhere in the Northwest marketing to factories near Phnom Penh. The major disbenefit of labour migration to Thailand from Northwestern Provinces of Cambodia is that of the prevalence of illegal migration, exposing migrant workers to theft and fraud by labour agents, and to violence and incarceration by the Thai and beatings and reported theft by the Cambodian police. Little evidence has emerged in this study of significant or lasting losses of either farming or trading households displaced by the construction of NR 5, although about a thousand households lost the use of small strips of rice production land in the Right of Way, and about 40 had small stalls – mainly umbrella stands and tables – temporarily moved back.
The impact of NR3 to gender and poverty alleviation: Income generation, changes in livelihoods and gender relation – A case in Houayxai district, Bokeo province, Lao PDR

By Saykham Thammanosouth, Mr. Chanthavangso Oudomdeth, Mr. Viengnam Doaungphachanh, Mr. Lamphoun Khounphakdy, Mr. Thongxay Seangmuang, Mr. Vongsack Malivanh

Abstract

National Road Number 3 (NR3) is the latest economic corridor in Laos, linking Lao-Thai border at Houayxai-Chiangkong to Lao-Chinese border at Boten through two Northern provinces of Bokeo and Luangnamtha. NR3 improvement project, started in 2003 and completed in 2007, is aiming to help to reduce poverty in the area by enhancing market access, improving services provision, and improving income generation as well as generating employment opportunities. This study investigated some of the income generation, changes in livelihoods and gender relation perspectives of villagers living along NR3 and the Mekong River in Houayxai district through two types of qualitative interviews (semi-structure and in-depth interviews, 76 and 11 interviewees respectively in four selected villages) as well as from secondary data review. From the analysis of the interviews and secondary data, it has been revealed that the NR3 improvement project has brought positive improvements to villagers living along the improved road, especially in terms of income generation and positive changes in livelihood. The study also revealed that gender relations, for instance division of labour and decision making at the household level, did not change much when compare the situation before and after NR3 improvement project. This study increases our understanding on how an infrastructure development project might impact on villagers, especially in terms of gender and poverty alleviation.