

Workshop Structure and Objectives

ICIMOD's programme on Rural - Urban Linkages was initiated in October 1985, as a major component of the Off - Farm Employment Generation Programme. This programme included a Workshop on Off - Farm Employment Generation, held in Dehra Dun, India, from 17 - 20 May 1986. Discussions focused on reviewing the major dimensions of the problems and the overall experience in mountain areas. Specific sectoral activities and the role of small towns were examined, and information was exchanged regarding policies and programmes of different countries with reference to hill development and employment generation.

This International Workshop on Planned Urbanisation in the Hindu Kush - Himalaya Region was designed to focus on one aspect of Off-Farm Employment Generation : rural - urban linkages. The major objective was to lay the foundation for a collaborative work programme on rural-urban linkages in five countries of the Region (Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan). The programme was initiated by selecting six valleys (Thimphu, Lhasa, Dun, Srinagar, Kathmandu, and Peshawar), seen as generators of socio-economic change, for discussion at the Workshop, without necessarily implying that the follow - up programme would be limited to these valleys.

These areas were selected as being relatively economically dynamic and advanced, in terms of the development of urban functions and allocation of resources. These areas also have the largest concentrations of population, with probability of even greater growth in future. Also, most of these valley areas have within them many satellite towns or are strongly linked with other smaller towns, permitting the evaluation of rural-urban linkages in the framework of an urban hierarchy.

The first stage for this International Workshop was the preparation of detailed background papers relating to the Kathmandu Valley Region by planners from His Majesty's Government of Nepal and ICIMOD staff. Concurrently, limited exercises on other valleys were undertaken through consultations with representatives from the countries of the Region, and professional planners from the valleys.

The specific objectives of the Workshop were :

- To review the approaches adopted so far for the planned urbanisation of valley regions

- To recommend mechanisms for planning, financing and managing valley region urbanisation within a wider regional framework
- To assist in the development of a methodology proposal for a Comparative Planning and Action Programme in the field of rural - urban linkages in the Region to be promoted and coordinated by ICIMOD and undertaken by national planning teams for the major valley regions
- To promote regional cooperation in research, training, and information exchange on urbanisation

A draft methodology for planned urbanisation was prepared by Desmond J. McNeill and presented during the first session of the Workshop. Intended to encourage discussion, the draft includes a review of experience of planned urbanisation in Asia, a statement on the role of hill towns in the Region, and a methodology with emphasis on implementation. Three notable features of the methodology are : a strategy for economic development is central ; emphasis is on stimulating and guiding rather than attempting to control ; and the view is expressed that planning is a continuous process of informed coordinated decision making in keeping with an overall strategy.

Fifty - four professionals mainly from the Region attended this Workshop (Refer to Annex 6 for participant list). One day was devoted to each of the three key perspectives of the Workshop: socio-economic, environmental and institutional. A wide range of disciplines was represented, with most participants directly involved in the field of urban development planning, often with extensive and specialised international experience. It was anticipated that such a gathering would contribute to the development of a framework for a Comparative Planning and Action Programme for the major valley regions.