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PLANNING IMPLICATIONS OF THE REGIONAL
DISPARITIES IN SRI LANKA

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Department of Town and Country Planning

 University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.
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of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Town and Country Planning

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SYNOPSIS

This study is concerned with the planning implications of the existing regional disparities in Sri Lanka. The regional development problem is one of inequality in the development of subnational geographic (Wet-Zone and Dry-Zone) regions and of the disparities in the distribution of wealth and income and in the provisions of infrastructure utilities and amenities. It is, in fact, the spatial manifestation of the phenomenon known as the "dual economy"; a dynamic, growing infrastructure modernizing urbanizing region (i.e. in the South-Western quadrant of the Wet-Zone of the country) co-existing with a stagnant, traditional rural regions (Dry-Zone). The consequences of this dichotomy is serious for all regions; in the rural regions, it results in low income, unemployment, migration of the most progressive segment of the population and a dependence on subsistence methods of production in the urban areas, the result has been increased migration causing serious deficiencies in housing, social services and employment and so on.

The discussion of these problems in the study has been carried out in six Chapters. The first two chapters are introductory; the next two are analytical and the fifth chapter comprises the discussion on the planning solutions towards dealing with the problems. The final chapter has been devoted to the conclusions and recommendations.

Thus, in the first chapter an attempt has been made to identify the regional delineation which was considered suitable for the study. In the second chapter the discussion has

focussed on the salient features of each of the defined regions. In next chapter three, the existing socio-economic and physical regional disparities have been separately analysed. The causes and effects of such a disparity are also examined, mostly in terms of economic and demographic factors. The socio-economic development indicators of each region shows the prevailing discriminations. On the basis of this analysis, the planning implications of the existing regional disparities have been discussed in the fourth chapter. The present situation of spatial structuring of the urban centres, the government policies for resource allocation and the organizational implications have also been critically analysed in this chapter.

The fifth chapter is devoted to a discussion of examining appropriate planning solutions to these problems. Some significant concepts such as "Balanced growth Vs. Unbalanced growth" "Decentralization" "Growth Pole Strategy" and "Dispersed growth Centres" have been discussed with a view to deriving an appropriate planning strategy. On this basis the final chapter has recommended Dispersed Growth Centre strategy as an appropriate solution towards meeting the planning problems arising from the regional disparities.

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