The Importance of Secondary and Small Cities in the Urban Network of Mumbai Metropolitan Region

SOHEE MINSUN KIM, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT F05, SERD/AIT

The concept of ‘urban-rural network or linkage’ has been developed as a mechanism to better view and understand the inherent differences between the two terms in the field of planning and regional development. Examining actual transforming process in one of the most dynamic and least regulated cities in the world – Mumbai metropolitan region, this study tries to describe the increasing significance of urban-rural linkages in the livelihoods of rural residents, including spatial and occupational transformations and their interdependence on surrounding urban centers and towns.

Methodology

![Image of Urban-Rural Flow and Linkage]

- **Rural livelihood and land use analysis**
  - Accessibility to land
  - Availability to water
  - Employment
  - Non-agricultural activities

- **Flow and network analysis**
  - Rural-to-urban
  - Urban-to-rural
  - Rural-to-rural

- **Policy and institution analysis**
  - Land use/land cover
  - Institutional framework

- **Choice of Study Area**: Panvel block, Raigad district
  - Area of 618 km², 570,000 population (2011 Census)
  - 30km southeast of central Mumbai
  - Region’s strategic transport and logistics hub
  - Extensive land use change from agricultural to urban land use in the last two decades

Data Collection: questionnaire for all heads of households in three case villages:
1. their demographic information,
2. access and mobility for their economic livelihood

Tracing and quantifying urban-rural linkages through a set of flows:
- People (employment and migration)
- Production and commodities (agricultural input/output)
- Knowledge and information (destination for higher education)

Network Analysis: Key Findings

- Services and trade typically provide a larger share of employment and tend to concentrate in urban centers and smaller urban centers that facilitate exchange by offering employment and markets both for farming and non-farming sectors.
- Small and micro-enterprises, where low-income groups concentrate, need access to markets, capital, sources of information, skills and institutional support to identify local opportunities and respond to competition with other regions.
- Main destinations for employment and out-migrants tend to be relatively small cities and local centers, which indicate considerable potential role of town centers in rural livelihood.
- Marginalized groups such as scheduled tribes and in-migrants, in many cases, prefer to live in the village and reap the benefit from the opportunities provided by the local town centers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

1. Rapid urbanization has led to the diversification of rural non-agricultural economy in peri-urban villages, and they are now being incorporated into the bottom of the regional economic hierarchy.
2. Small urban centers may stimulate the growth of local businesses by offering markets large enough to capture economies of scale and agglomeration for many types of non-farm enterprises.
3. Better local transport facilities and increased mobility are a key element of livelihood strategies based on diversification of activities and reliance on both rural and urban resources.
4. For those small urban centers in the proximity of large cities, competition for natural resources can benefit large urban-based firms and higher-income urbanites, at the expense of low-income peri-urban and rural residents.
5. Urban-rural linkages can be strengthened by the local or regional authorities which transcend traditional administrative boundaries and build an interdependent urban-rural continuum in planning and resource management practices.

References