

Preface

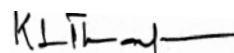
It is now received wisdom that the current wave of globalization is not the first one. However, unlike on previous occasions, most notably in the 19th century when most of Asia was under colonial rule, managing globalization poses a bigger problem now than ever before. Democracy, popular aspirations and peoples' needs have made the task very challenging, not the least because one of the positive externalities of globalization, namely, poverty alleviation, is also accompanied by a substantial displacement cost.

The issues are especially stark in Asia because of the large numbers of people living in poverty. One of the most important causes underpinning chronic poverty has been identified as poor access and connectivity. It is worth pointing out in this regard that while other forms of infrastructure are not taken for granted, access, connectivity, transport links, management and technology have not received the attention they deserve, especially given the importance of transport to economic activity and economic growth.

Globalization of international capital has, as we all have witnessed, accelerated economic growth rates in Asia. It has also, as a result, altered the transport geography of nations, as well as the region. The main feature of transport links during the colonial period was their orientation: they ran from the hinterland to ports as the colonies were used for feeding the factories of the colonial masters with raw materials and minerals.

But all this has now changed. The development of domestic markets arising from rapid economic growth has led to the need to develop internal transport links to support the increasing levels of economic activity. This is happening not only at the national level, but also at the regional level. Old divisions are now giving way to greater integration and we are witnessing the development of regional transport networks, which are bringing countries and peoples closer together through greater trade and tourism.

Therefore, it gives me great pleasure in bringing to the readers this highly useful volume. It brings home the central role of transport in the socio-economic development process. It also focuses on one of the most neglected aspects of transport, namely, that transport needs to be considered primarily as a network. In drawing these matters to the attention of the reader, the authors have done a yeoman service. I feel transport planners and policymakers will be better equipped for analysing the key issues after reading it.



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