

Chapter 4

Regional Development at Crossroad to Degrade the Environment: Regional Impact and Responses to Climate Change and Other Environmental Issues



L. Manawadu, M. D. K. L. Gunathilaka, and V. P. I. S. Wijeratne

Abstract The regional approach in development opens up a promising avenue for thousands of people residing in remote rural areas in Sri Lanka. This paper examines the regional development in Sri Lanka, regional development efforts and policy implications, and consequences of regional development. In the limelight, previous governments in Sri Lanka have proposed various development plans. Among them, the Accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme, IRDP, and Southern Development Plan are well known. Though these programmes succeeded to some extent, the overall success is a dilemma due to various environmental issues and climate change issues intensified with such development efforts. Now the environmental issues have become a barrier to achieve regional development due to natural disasters. It is recommended to apply proper sustainable land-use practices to avoid the impacts of this cyclic effect and provide responses by using the regional approach to an environmental perspective.

Keywords Environmental issues · Regional disparities · Regional development · Mahaweli development programme · Sustainable response

4.1 The Regional Approach in Development

Regions have always been powerful spatial metaphors and political concepts, but it is within the context of more recent paradigm shifts that the region has acquired its putative economic, political, and social salience. A focus on regions as a spatial scale of governance and economic development is, of course, not new. In most of the European countries and the new world, regionalization has been understood as a necessary process in the modernization of a country and as a means to adapt to shifting economic realities associates with globalization. Thus, regional development is a process toward development by regions or particular parts of a country.

L. Manawadu (✉) · M. D. K. L. Gunathilaka · V. P. I. S. Wijeratne
Department of Geography, University of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka
e-mail: lasan@geo.cmb.ac.lk