

O Level Elective Geography

Chap 10: Strategies to Alleviate Uneven Development

1) Uneven Development on International Scale

International Cooperation

- International cooperation occurs when different countries work together to achieve a common objective, through the provision of financial or technical aid.
- International organisations are formed when different countries work together to achieve a common objective (e.g. World Bank)
- International agreements are agreements drawn by countries, dealing with important world issues. Countries meet regularly to discuss international agreements which will alleviate uneven development in the world (e.g. development strategies)
- Long term plans: > 5 years

International organisations

a) World Bank

- Provides monetary or technological aid to LDCs, to assist them in developing economically and socially. Consist of 184 member countries; they all contribute funds to aid LDCs that require financial or technical assistance.
- Provides loans for LDCs at little or no interest for development projects like improving sanitation and for immunisation programmes.
- E.g. Kecamatan Development Programme (KDP)
 - Under the KDP, World Bank offers monetary grants directly to Indonesian villages for development projects.
 - With the aid of World Bank, an Indonesian village suffering from drought, Sleepy Tirtomoyo, was able to dig an underground well and install a piping network.
 - They now have access to a reliable clean water supply and their SOL has improved.

b) Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- Established to reduce poverty and improve the QOL of people in Asia Pacific.
- Consists of 64 member countries that are provided with monetary and technical aid, for economic and overall development.
- ADB lends millions of dollars to LDCs like Bangladesh to support its economic growth.
- E.g. Jamuna Bridge Project
 - The ADB provided financial and technical help to Bangladesh to build a bridge across the Jamuna River connecting the less developed and more developed regions.
 - The bridge has improved the country's transport infrastructure, eased traffic congestion and promoted economic growth through the connection of the two regions, leading to increased accessibility. This has made it easier for agricultural farmers to transport their produce to markets at the commercial centre where there is greater demand leading to increased profits.

International agreements

a) United Nations Millennium Development Goals

- A long-term plan aimed at alleviating uneven development by helping LDCs achieve greater development and escape poverty. Comprises 8 goals to be achieved by 2015.
- The first goal is to eradicate extreme global poverty and hunger. For the case of Vietnam, strategies adopted include equipping poorer people with necessary skills for employment, and increasing access to basic social services for the poor, to improve their SOL. Its proportion of poor households has decreased from 1993's 58.1% to 2004's 24.1%.
- The second goal plans to achieve primary education for everyone in the world. Progress has been promising especially in India. The highest increase of primary school enrolment is in SEA where 1999's 72% rose to 2004's 89%.

b) United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Information

- The international agreement, established by more than 160 countries, was aimed at controlling the usage of resources in the world's seas and oceans. This was to ensure a sustainable usage of resources to prevent depletion.

Concerns

- Fish stocks were depleting in popular fishing grounds like the North Sea as fishing boats now can travel further to fish.
- Concerns regarding the pollution of oceans were also raised. Ships and oil tanks release harmful materials into oceans which cause pollution and threaten aquatic life and coastal resources.

Measures: Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)

- Under the UNCLOS, coastal states have the exclusive right to use resources like fish and oil within their EEZ, a boundary 200 nautical miles from their shore. Was to prevent foreign fishermen from fishing into waters of other countries which may cause depletion in that area.
- The EEZ agreement was beneficial to coastal LDCs like Peru which is dependent on the fishing industry. It prevents DCs from using advanced fishing equipment to fish in Peru's seas, which will put the Perus at a disadvantage as the large fishing boats of DCs enables its fishermen to spot underwater fishes easily. It therefore protects the fishing rights of fishermen from LDCs so that they can maintain their livelihood.

2) Strategies to promote national development

- National development refers to the increase in a country's wealth resulting in a higher SOL for its citizens. It is highly dependent on the strategies its government adopts, which would be feasible in bringing about national development.
- The core-periphery theory may be applied to understand uneven development on a

national scale.

a) Improving water supply and sanitation in LD regions

- An adequate infrastructure including clean water supply and well-developed sanitation is essential for achieving development. India has adopted such a development strategy to ensure that basic needs for citizens are met.
- Case of Ahmedabad, India
 - Despite being a major commercial and industrial centre, 41% of its population live in slums and squatter settlements; 25% without toilet facilities
 - Extreme poverty is widespread

Measures

- Parivartan Slum Networking Programme was established to aid development.
- Local authorities and leading business institutions came together to improve their living conditions and provide a better QOL, funded by local banks.
- Slum dwellers provided with basic infrastructure: clean water supply, underground sewerage and individual toilets. Reduces spread of diseases caused by bacteria in waste and contaminated water.
- Proper support was given during development phase: monthly monitoring meetings, future planning sessions. Training sessions for people on proper use of facilities.

Success

- Within 5 years, it has benefitted 56000 people in > 40 slums
- Expanded to include 59 more slums
- Death rates declined from 6.9 per 1000 to 3.7 per 1000 people. Fewer people have also been falling ill.
- Its success has allowed has increased the SOL of people in Ahmedabad and aided development.

b) Improving education standards in LD regions

- Education is the key for employment, and important for a country's development.
- In Thailand, education was identified as the key factor for its development, especially in LD regions including hill tribe communities.
- The hill tribe communities live in extreme poverty, lacked formal education (illiterate) and have a low SOL compared to city regions like Bangkok.

Measures

- The Hill Tribe Education Project was developed under the government's policy to provide 'Education for all', aimed at promoting literacy.
- Basic education programmes were developed and provided to suit their needs, academic subjects (e.g. Maths) and life skills were taught.
- Volunteer teachers from cities were brought in to provide education in community learning centres established in each village.
- Also educated on sustainable development for supporting themselves and hence improve their SOL. E.g. sustainable farming methods, which led to increased agricultural production.

Success

- Improved agricultural production (educated sustainable farming methods)
- Gained employment in cities (education enhances employability)
- Generated income (through increased crops and being employed)

Challenges

- Geographical isolation (dispersed settlements) inhibits government outreach
- Communication barriers between volunteers and hill tribes

c) Population control in LD regions

- An overpopulation (experienced by LDCs like Africa) will cause the country's limited resources to be strained leading to a shortage of jobs, housing and education. Overcrowding also poses environmental concerns.
- To prevent such consequences, drastic measures may have to be implemented in affected countries.

Case of China's 'One Child Policy'

Measures

- In China, the 'one child policy' was implemented to alleviate excessive population growth by reducing birth rate.
- It encouraged each couple to have only one child, by means of penalties and incentives. E.g. couples with more children had to pay higher taxes; those with only one child received housing and education subsidies.
- Assisted by local authorities- people encouraged to adhere to policy through:
 - Recruiting volunteers to promote late marriage & contraception
 - Publicity :e.g. advertisements put up on streets to encourage the adhering of the policy

Effectiveness: Limitations

- Harder to be implemented in rural areas- Reasons for having more children
 - Traditional preference for sons
 - Being farmers, more children needed as farm labour
- Devised methods to reach out to rurals
- May lead to social consequences

Effectiveness: Success

- Very successful: China's birth rates significantly reduced, prevented 400 million births over 30 years (government officials)
- With more manageable growth rate, the strain on the country's resources is lessened. This allows its resources to be channelled to other areas of national development, like dealing with lack of healthcare facilities, thereby improving people's SOL.
- Effective that it has been amended to ensure sufficient people to support elderly in future.

d) Job creation & financial assistance for people in LD regions

- Government plays key role in creating jobs for people. High unemployment rate indicates the inability of people to meet basic needs and a low SOL.
- Case of Philippines
 - 4.3 million poor families, most of them lacked formal education or skills training.
 - Increasing income gap between rich and poor.
 - It is difficult for the poor to gain employment in formal sector jobs, e.g. banking, due to lack of formal education- not equipped with knowledge and skills. Ended up working in informal sector which require low-skills, e.g. delivery services, cleaning services, selling hand-made products.
 - Little attention given to help informal sector develop. E.g. small businesses rarely given loans to build and sustain their business. Many would fail due to lack of financing/proper skills needed for a business

Measures

- 'Linking arms against poverty' plan aims to improve SOL of the poor in Philippines, through increasing employment rate and their income.
- More attention and resources were given to the poor to help informal sector develop. E.g. Pro-poor policies were implemented to help more people establish and run small business, through microfinance. Government works with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to assess viability to business ventures before loans are offered.
- Interest free loans given to ultra-poor, many other private organisations also volunteered to help government in providing financial aid to the poor.
- Also provided training and advice to help their business run effectively and productively. E.g. villagers who wanted to set up their own business were given training courses on self-employment assistance orientation and developing skills.

Effectiveness: Success

- 600,000 agricultural jobs created in rural areas.
- Helped about 3 million people.
- Government provided jobs, through job placement schemes, to about 1.7 million previously unemployed people. Poverty has reduced as more people now had incomes and were able to afford basic needs like food by being employed.

Effectiveness: Challenges

- More has to be done to narrow income gap between rich and poor.
- The poor needs to increase their market access to get more people to purchase their goods and services.
- More volunteers needed in outreach programmes, e.g. providing training for the poor.

Notes: