

**A COMPENDIUM OF URBAN AND
REGIONAL PLANNING STUDIES
IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT
OF MALAYSIA**

MARIANA MOHAMED OSMAN
SYAHRIAH BACHOK
MOHAMMAD ABDUL MOHIT
MANSOR IBRAHIM



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CHAPTER 5

PROBLEMS OF ALLEVIATING POVERTY IN LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (LDCs)

Lukman Hakim Mahamod

INTRODUCTION

The current approaches adopted by LDCs are influenced by capitalist ideology, where funding assistance and rural poverty alleviation programmes are conducted by government agencies, international bodies as well as NGOs. This chapter discusses the concept and development of rural poverty alleviation in LDCs since the 1950s, and disadvantages of the poverty alleviation programmes to the poorest rural people.

ALLEVIATING POVERTY IN LDCS

Rural poverty has been defined from various perspectives that could describe the real problem faced by the rural poor. Furthermore, the rural poor can be divided into two strata – the poor and poorest – so as to highlight the problems faced by each group. The object of this analysis is to provide the most appropriate programme for the alleviation of poverty, particularly for the poorer group. However, despite all these efforts, there has not been a successful solution to the problems of poverty. According to the IFAD (2001), about 60 per cent of the 1.2 billion people who are in extreme consumption poverty will be in the same position in 2005 (p. 15). The main reason why LDCs have failed to alleviate poorest poverty is because their programmes and funding strategies are directly influenced or constrained by capitalist ideology (Dixon, 1990, p. 58; Lea and Chaudhri, 1983).

“Eurocentric” economic growth

The LDC governments have relied on economic growth as a means to alleviate poverty (Rist, 1997; Dixon, 1990). This approach was highlighted by Rostow (as cited in Rist, 1997, p. 97), who stated that development would be achieved only when the Gross National Product (GNP) of the LDCs reached 5–10 per cent. By that stage, the benefits of the GNP would trickle down to the poor. Therefore, the programmes of the first rural development phase from 1950 to 1959 were aimed at maximizing agricultural production. This policy was implemented according to the theory of modernization, which emphasized that poverty could be reduced only by deploying modern technology, supplying a good infrastructure and modernizing the traditional way of life (Webster, 1990). Western donors such as Rockefeller, the Ford Foundation and the World Bank have played an active role in the technology-based, rural economic programmes. The Community