

Preface to the Special Issue

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We are pleased to present this special issue entitled, “*Developmental Challenges in Rural India: A village level examination in Himalayan Mountains.*” This issue is a part of the results of the 2017 Onsite Training conducted in K Village, Uttarakhand State, India. Graduate students and academic mentors who attended this training contributed research papers to the HINDAS e-journal, *Journal of Urban and Regional Studies on Contemporary India*.

The Taoyaka Program, a graduate program at Hiroshima University, aims to provide students with the knowledge and skills for an in-depth understanding of the societies and diverse cultures unique to the region of their interest/research areas. The goal of the program is to create a “flexible, enduring and peaceful society of coexistence” capable of addressing global challenges. The main aspects of this educational program are established on onsite education. Onsite education focusses on disadvantaged regions facing multiple issues, which will provide students with learning opportunities. We focus on south Asia in particular, a region that is struggling with poverty and wealth disparity. We thus selected Uttarakhand State—one of Himalayan States—as a study area, because its rural regions face many developmental issues due to the disadvantages caused by its mountainous terrain. One more reason is that the Hiroshima University research project had been conducted there and produced fruitful results.¹

The Onsite Training was conducted between March 4 and 13, 2017, focusing on rural development in the mountain regions in India. We made a survey in K Village near Nainital and expected students to grasp the actual conditions of the village and understand the challenges they face through a general household survey and an in-depth interview with the residents.

As a result, we published four papers written by graduate students focusing on agriculture, tourism, migration, and water-related problems. These papers were revised based on readings by academic mentors, including myself. We contributed a research paper discussing the recent transformation of K Village.

Acknowledgement

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Finally, I would like to thank Prof. Ishikawa and Prof. Chen for collaborating in the field and at Hiroshima University.

Note

1. Major papers published in English are found in the references listed below.

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