The Activities and Agenda of TINDAS

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1. Activities of TINDAS during the past five years

To clarify the features of past economic development and their impact on Indian society, TINDAS has listed the following activities:

1. to collect primary sources in digital form;

2. to construct databases;

3. to construct all-India GIS base maps;

4. to advance GIS-based studies by preparing an 'India Place Finder';

5. to analyse geo-spatial features of historical development through GIS, and publish the results.

1. Collecting Primary Sources in Digital Form

- Colonial records, such as committee reports, have been acquired from the British Library and the National Archives of India (http://www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~zushima9/bl_datalist.html)

- Census, NSS, ASI (Annual Survey of Industry), BPL, Season and Crop Reports, and other statistical data available in digital form have been acquired (http://www.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~tindas/database_j.html)

2. Construction of Databases

- A few records, such as the records of joint stock companies starting from the colonial period, have been ordered for processing (this project is not yet completed)
- The original, individual ASI data has been processed as database.

3. Construction of all-India GIS Base Maps

- Around 4,800 topographical 1:50,000 maps have been assembled to produce an All-India GIS base map. Approximately 0.9 million natural hamlets are included in the base map in point.

- Polygons of villages, sub-districts, districts, and states in the 2001 Census have been acquired and combined into shape files. All of the polygons of Census villages include village level information from the Census.

4. Advancing GIS-based Studies through the 'Indian Place Finder'

- The 'Indian Place Finder' (http://india.csis.u-tokyo.ac.jp/), which enables users to locate places by place names (down to hamlet level), has been put up in the web. The users can get information including latitude/longitude, the 2001 Census location code and other attributes of the places. Spatial information about all of the hamlets is also downloadable.

- Polygons of administrative villages, however, cannot be provided because of agents' copyright. The Census Office needs to produce polygons of the village and other places for further development of GIS studies in India.

- Polygons of NSS and other major units are made and shared among project members.

5. Analysing the Geo-spatial Features of Indian Historical Development through GIS

- Studies focusing on the dissolution of barriers between rural and urban areas were encouraged and highlighted.

- Studies involving the emergence of Census towns, the spread of industrial/educational/commercial units into rural areas, the development of agro-based industries in rural areas, the commutation or temporal migration of the rural labouring class to urban centres, and other topics have been conducted.

- Five volumes of studies under the general title, *India in High Waves,* were published in Japanese last year. Some of these clarified the spherical features of economic development over the past two centuries.

Agendas

The agendas for the coming years include the following:

1. Knowledge of the spherical features of India's past will generate new interest in the inter/intra regional structure of India. The multi-dimensional development patterns and interrelatedness found in various parts of India will be clarified and integrated through GIS-based studies. TINDAS will continue to acquire statistical information, construct GIS-related databases, and organise projects on this theme.

2. To supplement it and to explore further, the 'India Place Finder' will be converted to an 'Asian/Global Place Finder' by widening coverage; seminars/workshops will be organised at the 'TINDAS Delhi Liaison Office' and elsewhere, involving scholars from other countries.

Some Questions about Research Facilities

1. I know that Chicago University has been spearheading a drive to digitise South Asian historical sources (http://dsal.uchicago.edu/). Can you tell me whether any institute is organizing GIS-based researches in your country?

2. If so, what type of activities are going on at the moment? Whom should I contact to discuss future collaboration?

3. Government restrictions on certain types of information are enforced for foreign researchers. Detailed topographical maps along national borders, for instance, are classified. How do you solve such problems in your country?

4. Most colonial records on India are kept in archives and libraries in India, London and Chicago. It is almost impossible for the staff members of Japanese universities to spend months in such places. How do those in a similar situation in your country cope with this type of problem?

5. How do you solve the problem of copyright, when working with scanned images or printed copies of original sources acquired from foreign institutions? Do you have any special regulations that allow students to use them? Do you share them on the web so that anyone with an interest can freely make use of them?

Some Questions about Historical Studies of India

- It seems that so-called 'global-histories' have attracted more students in recent decades. At the same time, the number of historians among area studies students seems to be greatly declining in Japan. Students' interest in the history of the world also seems to be decreasing. Do you see a similar trend in your country?

- So far as India is concerned, what topics have attracted the most students in recent years? Are any interesting group projects underway in your country? If so, name just a few.

About the Management of the Liaison Office

- None of the INDAS institutions has any previous experience of running a liaison office in India. It would be useful to know how your country runs similar offices in India.