Abstract

The flatted factories of Singapore, which are under the management of Jurong Town Corporation, are designed to accommodate relatively light and labour intensive industries in and around densely populated residential areas and industrial estates. The aims of setting up these flatted factories by JTC are: intensive land use to provide factory premises with low rentals; to offer more employment opportunities for the nearby working population; and the supply of various facilities for the convenience of production activities. This is based on the concept of economies of agglomeration.

Kallang Basin has the oldest and most popular flatted factories in Singapore. By 1973, there were six flatted factory buildings with 72 establishments in this area. It shows that from the results of this survey, every factory located in these buildings has obtained some benefits from being agglomerated together. The concentration of factories into one building enable them to render lower overhead costs by sharing payment of rent and maintenance fees for facilities. In fact, most of the investors were attracted to move into these buildings because of the better infrastructures provided.

Because of agglomeration, most factories are convenient in the linkage with other factories within the same area, they can be easily connected with other flatted and terrace factories, especially the former ones. The industrial linkage here included both commercial and technical. The recruitment of workers was also easy, about 70% of the workers in flatted factories were attracted from the nearby residential areas, and most of the workers were satisfied with the working conditions in flatted factories.

There were, however, some deficiencies in flatted factories. Some of the infrastructures were found not efficient and in consequence causing inconveniences. For instance, the lifts are always out of order and their capacities are small which limit the amount of load (materials as well as products) to be transferred. The refuse treatment is also found to be unsatisfied and the water and electrical supply systems
are also not good enough. These deficiencies, however, seldom occur in terrace factories and as a result flatted factories render less benefits in this respect than terrace factories.

It is no doubt that JTC has had some achievements in providing economies to the establishments housed in these flatted factories. In fact, the inconveniences and disadvantages mentioned above are caused by imperfect design and overwork of facilities provided. It is suggested by the writer that in order to achieve elimination of overwork, it is necessary to increase the number of lifts and to improve the water and electrical supply systems, and that the number of establishments in each flatted factory building should also be reduced.