

19. Study on Changes in Fiscal and Administrative Structure of Local Government Bodies and Realignment of School Education Systems following Municipal Amalgamations

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(1) Purpose and Aim of Study

The recent program of municipal amalgamations has forced reconsideration of the profile of local educational administration. Empirical examination of the impact of municipal amalgamations on school education is a crucial task in light of the present demand for policy evaluation. This study seeks to identify the changes taking place in the environment and conditions of school education by reference to repositioning of educational administration and financing, educational programs and other developments underpinning these changes, and to educe fundamental resources pertaining to issues in educational administration in the context of municipal amalgamations.

(2) Outline of Research Results

- Found through analysis of basic data that populations in pre-amalgamation municipalities tended to be under 20,000, and that in some cases amalgamations to form new municipal units were pursued even where the size of a pre-amalgamation municipality differed significantly from its peers.
- Found that in terms of population and geographical area, the indicators of the size of a municipal unit, cases of absorption into an existing municipality tended to involve larger municipal units than amalgamations to form new municipalities.
- Used the city of Kagoshima as a case study on amalgamation through absorption. Reviewed differences in administrative services between the old municipalities and the newly amalgamated city and confirmed the effectiveness of amalgamation in curbing general affairs expenditure, the majority of which is made up of municipal assembly costs and personnel costs. Also found that the proportion of expenditure on education (including social education, etc.) has diminished.

- Used the city of Joetsu as a case study to compare the per capita value of tangible fixed assets before and after amalgamation. Found large increases in value of property arising from expenditure in areas such as public hygiene and agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and that value from educational expenditure grew 1.5 times—on a par with the overall growth rate.
- Conducted a Survey on Changes and Challenges in Educational Administration following Municipal Amalgamations targeting amalgamated municipal boards of education, and found that amalgamation had led to a raising of standards in education and school environments, deployment of characteristic projects throughout the local area, improvement of systems for facilities maintenance and development, and expansion of venues and opportunities for lifelong learning.
- Found that conversely, expanded clerical workloads, financial difficulties, lack of coordination among the pre-amalgamation municipalities, and facilities maintenance and school abolition and amalgamation were important issues requiring attention.
- Through onsite surveys, identified differences and commonalities among amalgamated municipalities in terms of the aims, conditions, processes, outcomes, and problems of amalgamation.