

Green Light in a Grey Yard: Challenges towards Green Urban Planning in the City of Kandy through Experts' Viewpoints

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As a central place of production, consumption, and administration, cities are at the forefront of green growth. The eleventh goal of the Sustainable Development Goals also stresses the importance of sustainable cities and communities. Hence, green urban planning approach could be recognized as a promising method of achieving sustainability by increasing the ecosystem services that green infrastructure can supply. Kandy, being a city with unique environmental identity can be easily adapted to green planning concept to improve environmental quality. Yet the upcoming challenges for such ongoing endeavours should be addressed mindfully. Therefore, this research makes an attempt to explore challenges towards green planning interventions in the city of Kandy. The study methodology includes a qualitative inquiry carried out as a descriptive analysis of semi-structured questionnaire survey and key informant interviews. The sampling method includes a purposive sample of officers in the UDA of Kandy selected based on higher involvement in Kandy urban planning. Research findings convinced that there are few major challenges towards green planning in the Kandy urban planning scenario, which are structural as well as institutional. Among them, the pressing challenge is the inadequate fund allocations by the government to introduce environmental-friendly technological advancements. Green infrastructure: a strategically planned network of high quality natural and semi-natural areas designed and managed to deliver a wide range of ecosystem services is not yet locally identified as a cost effective strategy. Moreover, inadequate collaboration between responsible authorities and planners, informational gap between stakeholders and authorities, and lack of perceptions are also unmasked by this study. Thus, it is suggested that experts should be trained on green infrastructure planning. In conclusion, green light is really obscured at the moment in the urban planning mechanism of Kandy. Therefore it is essential to acknowledge green infrastructure planning as an economically and environmentally viable environmental management approach to promote green planning.

Keywords: Green urban planning, Green infrastructure, Challenges, Kandy