

CHALLENGES TO GREEN URBAN PLANNING IN KANDY

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Green urban planning is popular as a useful tool to create beneficial urban communities, to both people and the environment, by minimizing consumption. As a new concept, it brings together scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to look at innovative approaches to mitigate the adverse impacts of urbanization. As an emerging field in the urban planning arena, green urban planning application has created lots of controversies that are needed to be sorted out immediately to generate positive consequences. Therefore, identification of challenges towards green planning and finding feasible solutions would essentially help to achieve sustainability in cities. It was found that the downward spiral in the Kandy urban development blueprints was inevitable due to the lack of firm intervention to support sustainable solutions and encourage green aptitude in urbanism among city planners. Hence this research makes an attempt to explore challenges towards implementing green planning interventions in Kandy. The methodology used in this study is a qualitative inquiry. A survey that utilized a semi-structured questionnaire and face-to-face interviews were conducted with key informants in Kandy UDA and KMC. A perceptual study was incorporated by interviewing permanent residents and daily travellers in KMC area selected through the convenience sampling technique. The study found lack of awareness on urban planning in Kandy among the travelers and residents. While giving more weight on physical planning, they depicted very narrow understanding on green concept. Key informant interviews revealed five major challenges towards green planning in Kandy. The first and foremost one is lack of funds since the government fund allocations are inadequate to introduce new urban planning associated with technological advancements to the city. Other findings include inadequate collaboration between responsible authorities and planners, lack of an applicable knowledge base among professionals and informational gap between stakeholders and authorities. The challenges unmasked by this study suggests that the green city concept is still new to the Kandy urban planning platform though it has been successfully incorporated by many South Asian countries. Experts who engage in urban planning require indepth understanding on the theoretical dimensions of the green city planning concept and green infrastructure planning. In conclusion, it can be stated that the green light is really dim at the moment in the Kandy urban planning mechanism. It is essential to push forward the green infrastructure planning as an economically and environmentally viable planning process.

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