

Conforming to standards could improve Sri Lankan urban quality of life

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Standards such as well-managed parking, clean drinking water, affordable housing, proper street lighting, green environment, robust information technology connectivity and many are important for cities to function well, according to research from Sri Lanka. A number of plans and projects to build "Smart cities" are currently underway in Sri Lankan urban development policy framework.

A research article published in the Sri Lankan journal *Cities People Places: An International Journal on Urban Environments* gives an overview of international and national standards and their role in improving the quality of life in urban environments in Sri Lanka.

According to the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, over half the population of the world lives in cities. All statistics and trends show that urban population numbers will only grow in the coming years. In developing countries, the growth rate of urbanization is even faster. Sri Lanka is an emerging country, as it is slowly growing economically following the turmoil of armed conflict that tore apart the country for many years.

According to the research article, 20% of the current Sri Lankan population lives in urban areas. This proportion is expected to double by 2030, adding considerable pressure to the already-strained urban infrastructure.

"An increasing number of people are migrating from rural to urban areas

every day," says Ganiesha De Silva, lead author of the [research article](#) and Assistant Director (Agriculture) of the Standardization (Scientific) Division of the Sri Lanka Standards Institution. "As a result, a high rate of traffic congestion, large-scale environmental pollution, overuse of non-renewable natural resources, increasing numbers of slums and shanties, recurrent heavy flooding and the threat of landslides have become common noticeable problems in Sri Lankan [urban areas](#) over the last few years."

In 2015, the Sri Lankan government introduced the concept of "Megapolis", which was aimed at driving economic growth, prosperity, social equity, harmony, environmental sustainability and individual happiness. In this context, cities need a way to assess where they are, aim for where they need to be and measure their progress along the way.

"Standards can play a major role in creating sustainable urban [environment](#) while improving quality of life of urban dwellers", adds Ganiesha De Silva. Implementation of such standards provides mechanisms to measure and monitor progress of the urban development projects over time, assess their performance and tailor toward more sustainable and resilient communities."

De Silva says: "I strongly believe that with the implementation of standards with the national urban policy framework 2015-2030, we could build, manage and operate our cities smartly. And it will be the single biggest determinant of our people's future".

The article "Role of international and national standards in improving quality of life in [urban environments](#) in Sri Lanka" appears on pp 1-9, in the latest volume 2 of *Cities People Places: An International Journal on Urban Environments*.

More information: P H Ganiesha Jayamini De Silva. Role of

International and National Standards in Improving Quality of Life in Urban Environments in Sri Lanka, *Cities People Places : An International Journal on Urban Environments* (2017). [DOI: 10.4038/cpp.v2i1.15](https://doi.org/10.4038/cpp.v2i1.15)

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