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Assessment of Visual Impacts Associated with the Construction Work of the Colombo Port City Development Project

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Abstract

Galle Face Green is considered to be Colombo's most-prized open-aired public space where more than 1,600 visitors spend time during weekends. The ongoing Colombo Port City Project adjacent to Galle Face Green is considered to be the largest development project ever evolved in Sri Lanka with a construction period lasting for more than 25 years. This study was carried out to assess the visual impact on the beach view for the Galle Face Green visitors due to the ongoing construction work of the Colombo Port City Project. A perception survey was conducted at Galle Face Green with random selection of a sample of 200 individuals. Respondents were asked about how often they visit the area, the reasons for their visits, and their perception of the severity of the visual impact caused by the ongoing construction, which was measured on a scale. Additionally, socioeconomic information was collected to identify factors that might influence differences in perceptions. Results indicate that a moderate negative visual impact to the beach view is experienced by the majority due to the construction work of Port City site. Ordinal Logistic Regression was employed to investigate the influential factors of the visitors' perception of the negative visual impact on the beach view, using the SPSS software package. Results from the statistical analysis revealed that the level of education and being a frequent visitor positively influence the perception of the negative visual impact while the distance to the site has a negative influence. Accordingly, when the distance to the site from the residential area of the visitor decreases, the visitor perceives the negative visual impact to a higher extent. Also, when the visitor has a higher level of education and if a particular individual is a frequent visitor, the visitor perceives the negative visual impact to a higher extent. This study emphasizes that project developers are responsible for remedying the negative visual impact by incorporating green scaping, to create a visually pleasing environment and protect the recreation value of Galle Face Green to the future generations.

Keywords: *Visual impact assessment, Colombo Port City Development Project, Ordinal logistic regression, Green scaping.*