

STUDY ON SOCIO – CULTURAL AND ECONOMICAL IMPACTS OF SOUTHERN EXPRESSWAY: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The new concept of "Southern Expressway" was introduced by the Ministry of Highways & Road Development Authority during the later part of 80th decade for the fulfillment of the demand of transport facility for the increasing population and the requirement of rapid development of Sri Lanka, in 1996, as an initial step. Road Development Authority conducted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in collaboration with the University of Moratuwa in order to predict environmental and social consequences would cause due to the implementation of this project. The project was commenced in 2002 with the estimated cost of 80 billion rupees. The financial assistance was given by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Japanese Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC). The construction was started as separate three parts by three construction firms under two international supervision consultants.

Even though construction of the area which was selected for this study was started in 2003, it was decided to stop work in 2007, due to the lack of financial assistance. The length of this part is approximately about 34 km and the area considered for this study was 8 kilometers which included Welipitiya divisional secretariat area in Matara district. The construction work was completed and opened expressway to public in 2014. The numbers of complaints were received from affected peoples to government organizations, Road Development Authority during the constructing period of southern expressway. Most of the complaints were received in Welipitiya divisional secretariat area. Hence, the main objective of this study to investigate socio-cultural and economical impacts due to southern expressway and to investigate the effectiveness of asses the negative and positive impacts of the expressway for the society.

In fact, the secondary objective of conducting such a study is to identify the impacts arising as a result of the implementation of southern expressway project subsequently how their impact effects on the social stability, living style of the people, attitudes of people.

This thesis consists of five chapters and the first chapter explains the introduction, the background of the study, the methodology and the strategy used for data collection. The theoretical background through literature review, the sustainable development and Environmental Impact Assessment procedure elaborates well in chapter 2. Third chapter explains the area selected for the study and it includes, physical conditions, the population, income status, land use patterns, agriculture, educational & health status of the people in the area. Fourth chapter explains how the data collected from the field has been analyzed. Hence, the data collected based on how the project affect on people's residency, employment, family relationship, education, health and culture .in this chapter these data analytically elaborated.

The conclusion & recommendation included in the final chapter. The main conclusion is that any major development project cause both negative & positive impacts on the environment and on the society as well. The negative environmental factors cause to social problems. The positive impact helps the country to accelerate the development process and the negative impacts affects badly for the development. Hence, in this study several suggestions were made in order to minimize the negative impacts as well as maximize the positive impacts arising due to implementation of any development project for the betterment of the country and the society as well.