



Editorial

In this issue of *Bhumi*, the planning journal, we deal with the important issues of community empowerment in low income settlements, nominated subcontracting practices, urban water body development for recreation and heritage designation of property value in urban settings. This journal issue comprises research studies of global south academics and makes an important contribution to the planning literature and profession. In the first article, Noman Ahmed and Fariha Tahseen from the University of Engineering and Technology in Karachi, Pakistan explore the proliferation of informal settlements and the ever growing demand for housing in Karachchi, process of peri urban land invasion at the peripheral boundaries and the impacts and outcomes of unregulated urbanization. The authors further investigate how such conditions affect poor communities who remain underprivileged and deprived of decent living conditions in Karachchi. What is striking about their original article is that the findings have informed urban planners that community based mapping could be employed as a tool in initiating and supporting development works in less privileged areas for community empowerment.

M.N.N. Perera and B.A.K.S. Perera from the Department of Building Economics based at University of Moratuwa have tapped an important and timely issue in the planning and construction industry in Sri Lanka. They explore the issue of absence of proper nominated subcontracting (NSC) system in Sri Lanka. The method of selection of NSCs in Sri Lanka and the mode of payments made to them are same as those of other countries. Similar to other countries, in Sri Lanka, a subcontract is entered into between the Main Contractor (MC) and the NSC. In Sri Lanka, however, the form of subcontract used has not been prepared to specifically suit the local requirements. In this article authors have identified issues associated with NSCs from the recent literature and validated later for Sri Lanka through interviews and were ranked through a questionnaire survey. The results inform the most critical issue that can arise due to the improper selection of NSCs is 'Delays caused by the NSC' and the most suitable solution to resolve this issue is to 'Make the NSC's program to fall in line with the MC's program'.

Continuing this theme of planning issues in Sri Lanka, but the shifting the focus from subcontracting practices to open water body developments, Rangajeewa Ratnayake, Naduni Wickramaarachchi and Prem Wattage from the Department of Town and Country Planning located at University of Moratuwa explores public perception and their willingness to pay for open water area recreational development at Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte, Sri Lanka. In this study, the authors gauge the monetary value of urban water front development by using payment card approach which is based on contingent valuation method. This study is significant as there is no contingent valuation method study has been carried on water body development in Sri Lanka. The results indicate enjoying peace and relaxation, taking children to play and breath clean air appear as most important aspects of open water body areas. Furthermore, according to authors, willingness to pay is significantly associated with income

and occupation status. This study indicates the applicability of contingent valuation method in valuing economic value of non-market goods in developing countries. The findings could assist future open water body development and conservation and the authors argue the need of considering community views and expectations in relevant public spaces and policies.

The final article in this issue of Bhumi is an interesting study from Uditha Jayampath and Prathibhani Bandusena based at the Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Moratuwa. This research focuses on the investigation of the impact of heritage designation on the residential property value in Kandy in Sri Lanka with reference to the methods introduced by Jack Harvey in 2004 on preserving a historic building through the given methods. These two authors report that the small-scale properties owners have less possibility to increase their present capital value of the property than the clear site value of the property. The authors provide some recommendations for the planning of heritage sites, in particular to consider the scale of the property and the level of its contribution to the city image as a heritage property when declaring heritage properties.

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