

## ABSTRACT

In the past two decades inadequate road capacity and poorly-maintained roads, growing traffic, congested streets and approach roads, and inadequate parking have become a perennial problem in almost every major city and town in Sri Lanka. These are mostly concentrated in Colombo, and a few larger towns such as Gampaha, Kandy and Galle. Congestion is particularly bad during peak hours surrounding opening and closing times of schools and offices. Sri Lankan roads are also now considered to be among the most dangerous with a relatively high rate of road fatalities.

The general objective of the dissertation was to identify the major technical, management, socio-political and cultural factors responsible for the Colombo traffic and parking congestion and propose short-term and long-term remedies for them.

There were two major values of this study. First, the usual road network and traffic study was more an engineering study that heavily concentrated on traffic flows and infrastructure needs. This study was conceptually holistic and multi-disciplinary in approach. It elucidated the inter-connectedness of technical problems, management, socio-economic, political and cultural issues in urban traffic problems and planning. This study could be more useful to policy makers in a developing country such as ours where decisions have to be taken under conditions of severe resource constraints while adhering to norms of good governance in a democracy where public opinion matters. The latter consideration requires that road networks and traffic be developed and managed taking into account what the people need and want and the desperate interests of different stakeholders. It only by understanding the problem in all its complexity that effective solutions could be found. This study was aimed at accomplishing that task.