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**AN EVALUATION OF THE APPLICABILITY OF  
COMPACT CITY STRATEGIES IN SRI LANKAN  
URBAN FORM**

**CASE STUDY - BANDARAWELA TOWN , SRI LANKA**

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## **Abstract**

The study on “An Evaluation of the Applicability of Compact City Strategies in Sri Lankan Urban Form” examines the key issues related to urban form of Sri Lankan cities and evaluates the applicability of strategies adapted for compact city development by the Western Countries in addressing the issues related to barriers in optimization of scarce land resources with cost effective infrastructure usage and meeting the challenges of exorbitant land prices prevailing in urban areas as against the present practice of enforcing standards and regulations in such areas.

Urbanization and urban development is a continuous process throughout the World which is occurring in an ad hoc manner and in haphazard way if the process could not be regularized through planning which is the existing issues characterized by the urban centres of Sri Lanka, thereby mostly cities are experiencing sprawling along major transport corridors in an uncontrollable manner which does not make any sense on sustainable development, strong urban- rural linkages or economic development to the region so that the growth associated with commonly visible problems where none of the urban centers provides or act as engines of growth for their peripheral areas. This pattern of growth and inefficient use of urban space lead to a multitude of problems which in turn affects to the wellbeing of the city dwellers as well as commuters to the city daily. The projections and forecasts show that the urbanization and related issues will become a severe threat in the quality of life in the future of Sri Lankan cities unless otherwise the situation becomes unmanageable to the city administrators and the city planners together with city designers and architects as the cities make unsustainable in future.

Compact City Strategy is a basic model which involves with sustainable urban design. European Commission introduced the “Compact City” concept as the archetypal sustainable urban form for European cities by publishing the “Green paper on the urban environment” in 1990. The basic idea of this model is to have high density, mixed use development with high quality public realm. This approach to urban planning and design is well established among proponents of the New

Urbanism, Transit Oriented Development (TOD) and Smart Growth movement too. Compactness is a way to save limited resources such as land, other natural resources, and time, attracting people to enjoy with facilities developed in relation to interchanges developed in expressways and highways as well as many valuable aspects in urban areas. Compact City is a collection of coherent compact urban districts and a compact form. Increasing densities requires improving the quality of urban areas to attract people to live and work and its long term sustenance of its existence.

This study examines how to incorporate the basic concepts and strategies of Compact City Model in Sri Lankan urban form and discuss how it could be used and what limitations exists in urban design point of view. The applicability of model, methods and strategies in problem solving of the urban areas and the results anticipated in adapting of such a model will be analyzed by a case study conducted in Bandarawela Urban Council area. The research methods of the case study evolve mainly through an interview with a selected sample of knowledgeable people of the locality who have the ground based knowledge of the area, in depth interview method with the professional practitioners like planners, architects and designers who have engaged in planning and developments of urban areas and direct observations through field visits by the researcher.

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