

SMART CITY READINESS OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA: PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

United Nations projects that 60% of the world population will live in urban areas by 2030. 11% of Sri Lankans live in Colombo district suffer from urbanization challenges stemming from population density over 10 times the national average. Smart city concepts are emerging as a solution. This study focuses on empirically assessing people's perspectives of the smart city readiness of Colombo. Quantitative methodology was used in developing a conceptual framework with five independent variables: Readiness of people, economy, environment, governance, and technology. A simple random sampling method was employed. The required sample size was 384. Valid primary data was collected via a questionnaire from 208 Colombo citizens and analyzed to test the hypotheses, and a smart city readiness model was formed. All independent factors show a positive influence on smart city readiness, where technological readiness influences the most and governance readiness the least. The proposed model covers 59.7% of the influencing factors, while age and education are identified as key demographic factors affecting the success of a smart city in Colombo. Minimal smart city readiness literature targets Sri Lanka and it does not focus on neither people's perspective nor an empirical study. This study brings empirical smart city readiness assessment frameworks to Sri Lankan researchers' knowledge base from people's perspectives to bridge the gap between people and decision-makers. International smart city readiness assessment frameworks proved to be valid in the Sri Lankan context. Practitioners are encouraged to uncover hidden factors local to the Sri Lankan context.

Keywords: Colombo, Smart cities, Smart city readiness, Sri Lanka, Urbanization