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A study of the general spatial form characteristics of the urban areas of Ampara district

B Z Jaheez and W S W J Fernando

University of Moratuwa, Department of Town and Country Planning

Urban form is dynamic in nature and changes with new developments reflecting economic, technological and transportation conditions in an increasingly competitive framework. Changes in urban form have implications for environmental sustainability, integration and cohesion and long term quality of life in and around cities.

In Ampara district, some urban areas are growing rapidly in an unplanned manner and sprawling into the surrounding paddy fields. Thus, it may cause conversion and haphazard development of the natural environment. Another problem is that of inefficient use of land resulting in the expansion of horizontal development. Therefore, identifying such characteristics and finding the general form in the urban areas of Ampara can explain the reason why it happens and provide solutions to make the urban form efficient. In the regional context, investigating the general characteristics of urban spatial form in Ampara district is essential in the identification of regional policies and also will be useful in the formulation of plans by planners.

This research was conducted in the urban areas of Ampara district to find out the general characteristics of its form, relevant potentials and issues. First of all, the study was conducted on the regional perspective, in the Eastern Province and environmental features, road networks, economic activities, and other relevant factors were analyzed. The physical features, the district capital and urban concentrations, institutions, networks between urban centers and historical context and structuring of Ampara were studied. As case studies three urban areas in Ampara were selected to find the general spatial form characteristics by the application of relevant spatial theories and methods.

The initial field study conducted in Kalmunai indicated interesting results pertaining to Sainthamaruthu showing some distinct physical forms in terms of the selected characteristics. The findings contribute to the conceptual basis explaining the formation of urban areas in terms of the identified determinants.