

The impact of the Southern Expressway on social and economic well-being of people living in proximity of Dodangoda area, Sri Lanka

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The quality of life and socio-economic conditions can be significantly affected by transport. In this sense, transport and economic development are interdependent and their relationships are both complex and dynamic. This paper investigates empirically the impact of southern expressway development on socio-economic conditions of the people living nearby. It points out the connection between the new road infrastructure development and the survey respondents' socio-economic wellbeing, while investigating the impact of the Southern expressway on family life. A set of attitudinal statements were formulated to test the hypothesis, "the Southern Expressway improve the quality of life of the citizens living in proximity through increased economic opportunities, reduced travel time and traffic congestion resulting in more time spent with families". These statements were included in a structured questionnaire; then pre-tested for validation, and was administered with a sample of households (n = 80) living in Dodangoda Divisional Secretariat division in Kaluthara District during March to April 2015. A number of quantitative methods, including nonparametric regression were applied to analyse the data. The results indicated that the Southern Expressway provides the residents living in proximity with greater transport mobility and connectivity with surrounding communities. Yet it failed to improve the quality of life through increased access to the various economic opportunities. To overcome this issue facility for people for income generation activities should be increased through government policy planning.

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