

# EVALUATING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION EFFECTIVENESS IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN AND PLANNING: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PASSAIYOOR AND RASAVINTHOTTAM PARKS, JAFFNA

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## Abstract

*The majority of Sri Lankan context projects were planned and developed less prioritizing the community's actual needs. As a result of this top-down approach, when it comes to execution, there are certain disagreements between the government and the community. Many contemporary planning theorists acknowledge that public participation in the planning process can produce or create credibility, trust, and commitment. Even though a fairly modest number of landscape architectural projects have been carried out in Sri Lanka incorporating community participation, the effective integration of such data into public landscape design and development is yet to be explored.*

*Therefore, this paper investigates the effectiveness of community participation in the design and planning process of Passaiyoor Park and Rasavinthottam Park in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. The methods of data collection include interviews, questionnaires, documents, and project reports. The effectiveness of public participation was evaluated by a toolkit of indicators derived from the literature. (indicators such as Administration, Information, Objectives, Stage, Targeting, Technique, Legitimacy, Common values, Fairness and equality, Equal power, and responsible leadership).*

*The research outcomes were able to portray that the overall satisfaction level of the community participation process is 75% in Rasavinthottam Park and 77% in Passaiyoor Park, while the overall satisfaction level about the project outcome is 45% in Rasavinthottam Park and 22% in Passaiyoor Park. In fact, evidence that the execution of the community's vision in the real ground seems to be lacking. Therefore, without putting pre-initiated projects (by the government) into action, identify the problems that are most relevant to the public and pay attention to engage the community early and throughout the process, not only for one stage, and make sure the process is transparent to all the community and the outcome of the project is their real need.*

**Keywords:** community participation, landscape design and planning, Communities' need, effectiveness indicators, effectiveness of community participation.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Public involvement in landscape planning and design is essential to identify the issues that are important to the public community. It helps to develop the most appropriate and sustainable solutions in landscape planning, design, and management (American Society of Landscape Architects, 2008). Community involvement can build up the quality of being trusted and believed regarding the process of putting a decision or plan into effect (Broody, et al., 2003). Consideration should be given to community involvement before implementing the finalized plan. In a democratic participation process, instead of waiting until the end, disagreements are resolved early in the planning process (Moote, et al., 1997). Even the community's input into the planning process is identified as essential; planning projects have a vast diversity of involving the community in the process. The primary cause of this is that various community participation processes are viewed from different perspectives (Bishop & Davis, 2002). Although public participation is considered to be a best practice in planning and design, it is observed that there is little consistency in its application and effectiveness (Owusu-Ansah & Atta-Boateng, 2016; Poplin, 2012). As the literature suggests one of the fundamental issues of community participation is ineffectiveness, which is mostly found in developing countries (Muse, 2014)

In Sri Lankan context public participation in Landscape design and planning is rather a novel approach. Despite the significance of public participation, urban development in Sri Lanka is affected by political involvement, social inequality, and poor management of projects. Limited opportunities for communities to participate in development projects such as urban outdoor spaces lead to inadequate consideration of citizens' interest in the aforementioned development. In this context, poor planning decisions may lead to ineffective use of the space, and abandonment may result in disputes (Ocheni, et al., 2013).

Although community participation in landscape development and construction projects has been observed in Sri Lanka, the extent to which local government authorities have initiated and effectively implemented such participation is unclear. For instance, the restoration of the Muthurajawela Wetland Sanctuary involved community participation in the design planning stage (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2018). However, the effectiveness of community involvement in the process remains unexamined. Similarly, the Uda Walawe reservoir conservation project was designed with the aim of involving the local community in the planning stage, (Department of Wildlife Conservation, 2018). However, there is a lack of research examining the level of community participation and the effectiveness of public involvement in the project's execution. Thus, this study aims to examine the level of community participation in landscape development projects and evaluate the effectiveness of public involvement in the process. In addition, the study findings will act as a guideline for Sri Lankan landscape architects and planners to gain a deeper insight into the importance of effective community participation to execute resilient, sustainable designs.

## 2.0 Philosophy of Public Participation in Planning

The involvement of community members in projects to address local problems is a general definition of community participation. When possible, people should be given the option to "participate" in projects that affect their lives, but they cannot be forced to. This is seen as a key democratic concept and an essential human right. It indicates the truth that in social matters, the general public is qualified to be involved without conditions or limits in any interest-related

environmental decision activities because it is essential to ensure that all the decisions represent the actual need of the majority of the public (Li, et al., 2012).

Although public participation in the planning field has already been widely accepted and welcomed by planning theorists and scholars, various factors, such as the administrative structure, planning goals, and the current status of the project, can influence the level and scope of public participation. Arnstein's ladder of public participation has been a leading tool for criticizing the level of public involvement since 1969. Building on this model, in 2000, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) developed a "spectrum of public participation.

	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>COLLABORATE</b>	<b>EMPOWER</b>
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL</b>	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
<b>PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC</b>	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

**Figure 1: Model with five levels of participation**  
 Source: International association for public participation (2018)

According to the IAP2 spectrum, there are five levels of public participation named inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. As fig. 1 shows, there are particular goals and promises to meet for the public at each level. From the left (inform) to the right (empower), the communities' impact on the decision gradually increases.

### 3.0 Effective community participation

To evaluate the effectiveness, it is crucial to identify the factors/characteristics that influence the success of a participation process. Different planning scholars have identified different characteristics of effective community participation. Planning scholars such as Broody et al. (2003) and Burby (2003 (Webler, et al., 2001)) have identified choices that planners can make which can influence the effectiveness of a participation process. Brody et al. (2003) stated that when designing a participation process, planners should take into account six strategic planning choices that can influence the effectiveness of the process, which are:

- 1) **Administration** - Establish an appropriate schedule and assign tasks or resources to support the process.
- 2) **Targeting** - Recognize who are the relevant stakeholders in the participation process

- 3) **Objectives** - Identify whether to inform the general public, look into their preferences, or give them power
- 4) **Stage** - Identify when to start encouraging participants to participate in the planning process. (Which time to include citizens in the process)
- 5) **Techniques** - Recognize the different strategies for involving citizens in the participation process.
- 6) **Information** - Identify what type of information is released to the public and exchange information among parties.

While Brody et al (2003) argue about these six choices, planning scholar Burby (2003) has identified five choices that are similar to Brody et al (2003) s view, which a planner can make to influence citizen involvement. These are namely: 1) Choice of objective, 2) Choice of timing, 3) Choice of whom to target, 4) Choice of technique, and 5) Choice of information.

Even though Burby (2003) and Broody et al. (2003) discuss the planners' point of view, scholars such as Webler et al. (2001) consider the view of the public. According to Webler et al. (2001), five factors form a good participation process. Those can be described as:

- 1) **The process should be legitimate** - Three characteristics contributed to a legitimate participation process.
  - a. Consensus-based decision-making is preferred. - That means decisions should be taken under a general agreement without force.
  - b. Ensure that evidence drives decisions instead of select preferences masked in empty rhetoric - That means all the technical and local knowledge should be gathered, and all the gathered knowledge should be appropriately evaluated and in a way that can be used to make final decisions or recommendations. This gathered knowledge should be open to people so they can participate equally.
  - c. Process should be transparent - Transparent means that the process is evident from beginning to end. In a transparent process, all the information is allowed to be seen, and anyone can attend to the room.
- 2) **The process should encourage a search for common values** - The second factor describes the importance of understanding the different viewpoints of the participants and also, Webler et al.(2001) argues the importance of the dialogue between groups to develop mutual understanding
- 3) **The process should adhere to democratic values of justice and equality** - Allowing all the participants to have a say and making sure that all the ideas are respected.
- 4) **All participants and viewpoints should have an equal voice in the process.** - Decisions should take according to the available facts and information rather than political power
- 5) **The process ought to promote responsible leadership** - Different participants have different ideas about the same issue. So, it is essential to have a council member responsible for the final decision. Decisions taken under this leadership should be allowed to be seen by all the participants, and participants should have meaningful opportunities to affect the decisions. Reaching different groups or a member of a group and gathering local information from them is essential to achieve a good participation process

Illsley (2003) has identified four elements that people consider when it comes to a fair participation process by using previous studies done by Tyler & Lind (1992), Hillier (1999), and Tyler (2001). These four elements can also affect the effectiveness of a participation process. Those are:

- 1) **Voice** - A chance to participate in the process should give to affected people, and it is necessary to make sure that their views or ideas are considered throughout the process
- 2) **Use of information** – It is essential for decisions that are based on reliable information ought to be adaptable enough to change as new information comes into view.
- 3) **Fair treatment** - The procedure should be applied fairly and impartially from one side to another during the period
- 4) **Lack of bias** - Decisions that decision makers take into account should not depend on their self-interests. All the decisions should be impartial.

#### 4.0 Theoretical framework

In this research, the achievement of project goals with a focus on the development of mutually acceptable solutions and their contribution to the overall quality of the project's end was characterized as effective. First, the evaluative indicators for effective participation have been derived from the literature review by considering the key characteristics of effective participation identified by different scholars such as Brody (2003), Burby (2003), Webler et al. (2001), and Illsley (2003).

Brody (2003) and Burby (2003) show that the planners' decisions may have an impact on the effectiveness of the community participation process. Therefore, the six characteristics (Administration, Objectives, Stage, Target, Techniques, and Information) identified can be considered effectiveness indicators. When considering the participation process, the findings of Webler et al. (2001) show that there are aspects from the communities' view as effectiveness indicators. These are named Legitimacy, Common values, Fairness and equality, Equal power, and Responsible leadership.

Illsley (2003) identified four elements that also affect the effectiveness of a participation process. They are namely, Voice [for the case studies, which can be considered under the factors named Targeting as identified by Brody (2003) and Legitimacy as identified by Webler et al. (2001)], Use of information [similar to the information mentioned by Brody (2003) and Burby (2003)], Fair treatment [similar to fairness and equality mentioned by Webler et al. (2001)], Lack of bias [similar to equal power mentioned by Webler et al. (2001)].

Considering the viewpoints of each scholar, a summary chart (fig.02) was developed by mapping each indicator and identifying the key issues under each indicator.

	Brody et al. (2003)	Burby (2003)	Webler et al.	Hilsley(2003)	
<b>Indicators</b>					<b>Key issues to consider</b>
<b>Administration</b>					To determine what resources have been allocated effectively at which time to support the process.
<b>Information</b>					To check the accuracy and relevance of the information exchanged through communication between parties.
<b>Objectives</b>					Confirm the anticipated level of participation in accordance to the process instigator's aims.
<b>stage</b>					To identify as to which stage of the process, the participation is necessary with respect to the decision making
<b>Targeting</b>					To recognize the potential stakeholders of the process from the participants who were invited or selected otherwise
<b>Technique</b>					To identify the many methods of participation used to involve the community in the process.
<b>Legitimacy</b>					To make sure participant input is taken into account and respected.
<b>Common values</b>					Identifying the participants' various points of view and confirming mutual understanding through discussion
<b>Fairness and Equality</b>					To determine the level of interaction quality, trust, and accomplished consensus.
<b>Equal power</b>					To ensure that all participants are given equal opportunity and that the process is open.
<b>Responsible Leadership</b>					This indicator is concerned with identifying an efficient decision-making process through excellent leadership.

**Figure 2:** Effectiveness indicators derived from the literature review  
 Source: author

## 5.0 Research Methodology


According to the theoretical framework, eleven factors are associated with the effectiveness of a participation process. Aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of the local landscape development projects the following case study selection and analysis method was utilized.

**Step 1: Identified suitable case studies** that involved public participation to a certain level using the IAP2 spectrum and through available data (meeting reports, consultation process reports, ESR<sup>22</sup>, SSR<sup>23</sup>, maps, etc.) of the projects and interviews conducted with the consultants.

**Step 2: Key issues identified under effectiveness Indicators** (derived from the literature review) were used to **investigate the success of the community participation process** of the selected case studies, using observation and analysis of available data. Further information was gathered through questionnaire surveys, which were conducted using a small sample representing a balanced cross-section of identified key stakeholders/community and landscape architects/other consultants involved in the community participation process.

**Step 3:** As the process and project outcome cannot be separated, the 'overall **satisfaction level with the process and project outcome**' was measured by (using a 1-10 scale) analysing the data gathered through a questionnaire survey among the public community.

		Data collected through		
		Reports and documents	Questionnaire surveys community	Interviews (with landscape architects/ consultants of UDA <sup>24</sup> and SCDP <sup>25</sup> )
Level of community participation	Inform			
	Consult			
	Involve			
	Collaboration			
	Empower			
Effectiveness of community participation	Administration			
	Information			
	Objectives			
	Stage			
	Targeting			
	Technique			
	Legitimacy			
	Common values			
	Fairness and equality			
	Equal power			
Overall satisfaction	Participation process			
	Project outcome			

 Included  
Not Included

**Figure 3:** Data collection methods  
 Source: author

## 5.1 Case study selection

<sup>22</sup> ESR- Environmental Screening Report

<sup>23</sup> SSR- Social Screening Reports

<sup>24</sup> UDA- Urban Development Authority

<sup>25</sup> SCDP- Strategic Cities Development Programme

SCDP was one of the leading development projects that involved the community in its design and planning process. Under this program, several landscape development projects were proposed in Kandy, Galle, Jaffna, and Anuradhapura cities. Jaffna region was selected as the case study area for the research considering the highest population density. Under this program, ten parks were chosen to be developed in the Jaffna area. Among those, based on the availability of data, two parks named **Passaiyoor Park** and **Rasavinthottam Park** which have already been implemented, were selected as case studies, mainly considering the level of community participation according to the IAP2 spectrum.

## 5.2 Limitations

- Research only evaluates the effectiveness of the community participation process in the schematic design phase (Fig.4) of the initiation and design planning stage<sup>26</sup> of these two parks because projects did not involve the community in the other stages.
- When identifying the level of participation, the stakeholders (who are residents of the context) are considered as the community, as the number of people who participated in the consultation sessions is limited.
- As there was a lack of information about the community consultation session participants, only 72% of the participants of the Passaiyoor Park and 67.7% of participants of the Raasavinthottam Park participated in the questionnaire surveys conducted among the participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the process (Table 2).

## 5.3 Survey Samples

**Table 4:** Total Community Survey Sample

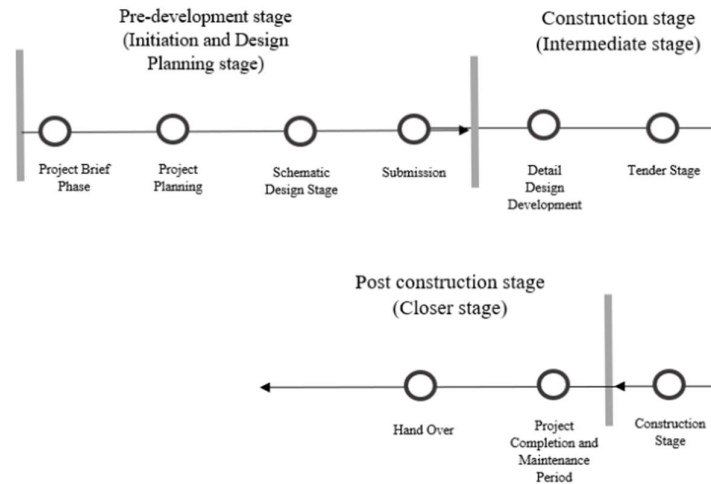
Total number of survey participants (community)	Passaiyoor park (N <sub>1</sub> =85)		Raasavinthottam park (N <sub>2</sub> =85)	
	yes	No	yes	no
Participated in the participation process (yes/no)	n <sub>1</sub> =18 (21% of the total participants)	67 (79% of the total participants)	n <sub>2</sub> =16 (19% of the total participants)	69 (81% of the total participants)

**Table 2:** Questionnaire Surveys Sample of the participants of the participation process

	Community		Landscape architects/consultants	
	Passaiyoor park	Raasavinthottam park	Passaiyoor park	Raasavinthottam park
The total number of participants who participated in the process	26	24	-	-
The number of participants who participated in the survey	n <sub>1</sub> =18 (72% of the total participants)	n <sub>2</sub> =16 (66.7% of the total participants)	n <sub>3</sub> =12	n <sub>4</sub> =10

<sup>26</sup> Initiation and design planning stage can be divided into four sub-stages. Those are (a) Project brief phase, (b) Project planning phase, (c) Schematic phase, and (d) Submission phase.  
 Hanaizal, F. A., & Mansoor, M. (2019) 'A review of project development stages (PLC) in Malaysian landscape architecture industry'. Journal of Built Environment, Technology, and Engineering, pp. 42-49

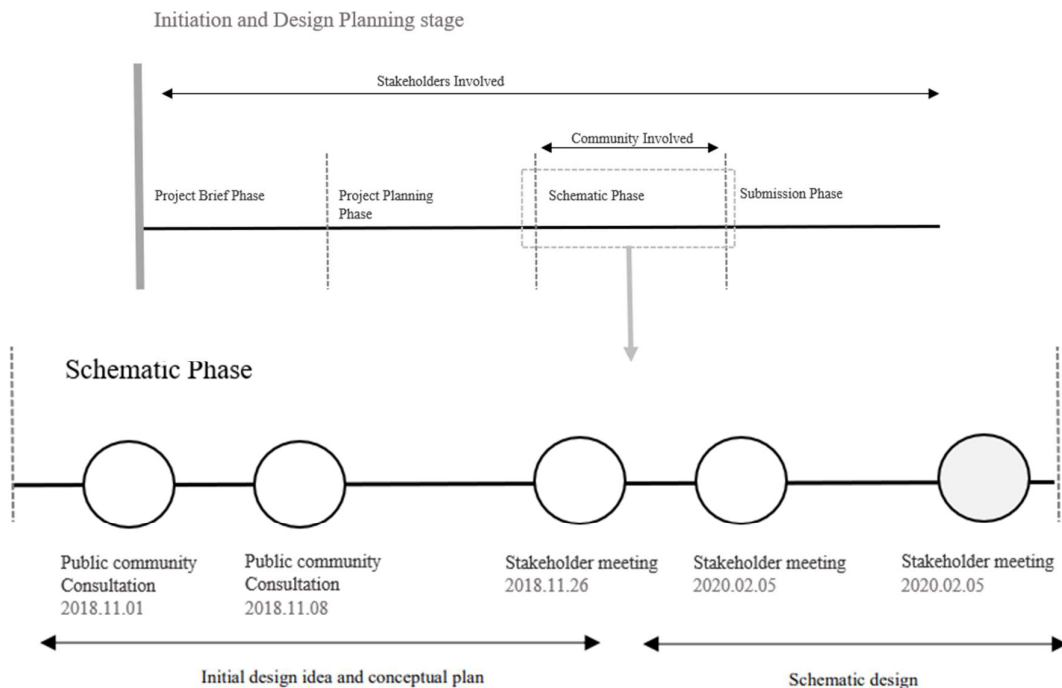




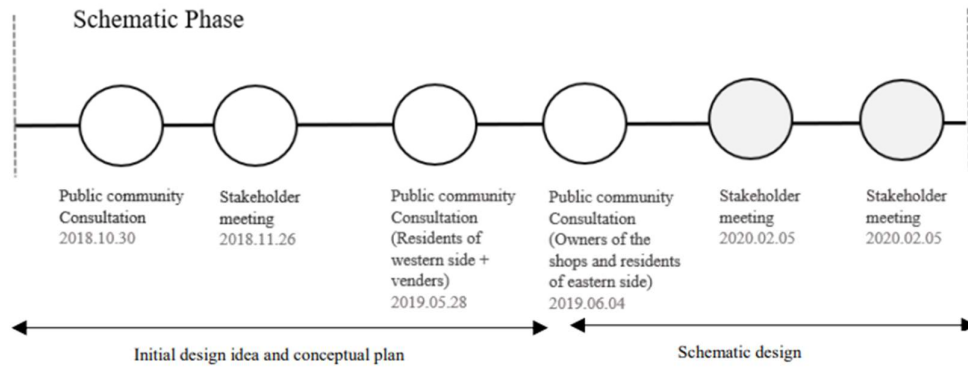
**Figure 4:** Project life cycle stages and sub-stages  
 Source: (Hanaizal & Mansoor, 2019)

### 6.0 Findings, analysis, and discussion

In both Passaiyoor Park and Rasavinthottam Park, community consultation sessions and stakeholder meetings are the main techniques used to engage the public in the participation process. In Passaiyoor Park, three stakeholder meetings and two community consultation sessions were used (Fig. 5), and In Rasavinthottam Park, three stakeholder meetings and three community consultation sessions were used (Fig.6).



**Figure 5:** Community participation process of Passaiyoor Park  
 Source: author



**Figure 6:** Community participation process of Rasavinhottam Park  
Source: author



**Figure 7:** Community consultation meeting 1 (left side) and 2 (right side) Passaiyoor Park  
Source: social screening report, SCDP



**Figure 8:** Community consultation meeting 1 (left side and right side) Rasavinhottam Park  
Source: social screening report, SCDP

## 6.1 Level of Participation

### 6.1.1 Inform and Consult

According to interviews with SCDP officers, the Grama Niladhari was responsible for informing the community about the community consultation sessions for both parks. Community survey details for both parks indicate that all participants who took part were informed by the Grama Niladhari or their neighbors. During the community consultation sessions, initial ideas such as project objectives and the project's need were presented, as well as conceptual design ideas. The community's feedback was then gathered. Although the community was only involved at the schematic stage, stakeholders were continuously part of the process, having participated from project initiation. This gave them an opportunity to understand the issues, alternatives, and opportunities, and to help shape the solutions. The findings indicate that the first level of informing and the second level of consulting achieved a considerable level of success.

### 6.1.2 Involved

Based on the final design layout maps and social and environmental screening reports of both parks, it is clear that the final design reflects many of the concerns and aspirations of both the stakeholders and the community. As the initiators had more stakeholder meetings, the designers worked more openly with the stakeholders, providing them with a clear opportunity to make decisions.

### 6.1.3 Collaborate

As the UDA landscape architects mentioned, without developing the alternatives and finding solutions preferred by the community, the consultants presented pre-developed alternatives one by one with the identified solutions. According to minute meeting reports of both parks, some stakeholders, like the Divisional Secretary and Mayor, were involved in developing these alternatives and identifying solutions, which shows collaboration between the stakeholders and the design team.

### 6.1.4 Empower

There was no public involvement in the final decision-making process, which was entirely in the hands of the SCDP with the approval of the World Bank.

	Passaiyoor Park					Rasavinthottam Park				
Level of participation	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
Achieved/ Not Achieved	Achieved				Not Achieved	Achieved				Not Achieved

**Figure 9:** The level of participation of both parks

Source: author

According to the findings, it's evident that the level of community participation in both parks is achieved at a considerable level (Fig.9) according to the documented data and interview findings with the SCDP and UDA officers.

## 6.2 Effectiveness of the participation process

### 6.2.1 Administration

Based on the meeting documents, ESR, and SSR details, it appears that the timing of consultation sessions and stakeholder meetings was well planned in both projects, as evidenced by Figure 5 and Figure 6. An appropriate timeline was allocated for community responses and feedback.

However, although the documented data showed a positive outcome regarding time allocation, all landscape architects involved in both projects ( $n_3$  and  $n_4$ ) claim that financial constraints directly or indirectly influenced participatory activities in the project.

### **6.2.2 Objectives**

In the case studies, it is clearly identified that the establishment of objectives has been a significant influence on the community participation process. Although the reports of the two projects show that the objective of participation has been achieved to a considerable level (As a regulatory requirement), the questionnaire survey results showed a questionable outcome. According to landscape consultants, the objective of community involvement is to make sure the communities' acceptance of the project outcome, but the community survey outcome shows that the communities' acceptance of the project outcome is low. The reason for that is that the majority of the community did not participate in the community participation process (Table. 1). According to the survey data collected among residents (N=85), 21% of the community in the Passaiyoor park area and 19% of the community in the Rasavinthottam park area participated in the community participation process. Thus the objective of the community involvement of the two projects didn't stand out properly.

### **6.2.3 Information**

In accordance with the community survey details, only at the beginning of the schematic phase of Passaiyoor Park two way communication happens, and in Rasaviththottam Park, two-way communication<sup>27</sup> happens throughout the schematic phase. However, in both projects, two-way communication happens among the government and stakeholders throughout the initiation and design planning stage. But the stakeholder meeting outcome was not open to the public. Consequently, the information was not shared respectively within the parties throughout the process.

### **6.2.4 Stage**

According to the case studies, the logical arrangement of the (community consultation sessions and stakeholder meetings) events, in regard to decision-making points, can have the capacity to improve the credibility of the participation process. According to Fig.14, survey details showed that communities' satisfaction with Rasavinthoddam Park's outcome (45%) is higher than that of Passaiyoor Park (22%). The main difference between community participation processes in these parks was the staging of community involvement (Fig.5 and Fig.6). In Rasavinthoddam Park, three community consultation sessions were conducted, but in Passaiyoor Park, only two community consultation sessions were conducted. It shows that staging can directly or indirectly affect the participation process.

### **6.2.5 Targeting**

In both case studies, the appropriateness of targeting for the participation process is questioned. Because as per the data related to attendance, most of the participants are planning consultants and people with political interests. There was no one to represent the real voice of the community in the stakeholder meetings. At least the community did not have a chance to be informed about

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<sup>27</sup> Two-way communication is the process of sharing information back and forth between two parties.

the modifications and new decisions. These findings put forward that the targeting should be done in accordance with the real objective of the project.

#### **6.2.6 Legitimacy**

When it comes to the indicator legitimacy, both case studies show that the project's openness seems questionable. Because, after the community consultation sessions, the process was only open to the stakeholders, and final decisions were taken by the SCDP. As we discussed earlier, the Rasavinhottam project conducted more community consultation sessions, it was more legitimate to the public, and people accepted the outcome more than the outcome of the Passaiyoor project. However, according to the factors, both projects need to be more legitimate.

#### **6.2.7 Common Values, Fairness, and equality**

According to the survey details, the (community) participants of both projects ( $n_1$  &  $n_2$ ) confirmed that the community equally had a chance to express their opinions, and all the conflicts were resolved within the consultation sessions. Even though the survey details showed a positive outcome, it is a matter of debate to what extent these participants have had equal chances to put their opinions into action.

#### **6.2.8 Equal power and Responsible leadership**

The case study makes it evident that the final decisions of the project were taken by the SCDP. Thus, the equal power factor was not visible. According to the community survey details, the community was satisfied with the leadership throughout the community consultation sessions. In Passaiyoor Park, 89% and in Rasavinhottam Park, 88% of the community was satisfied with the responsible leadership. The survey details emphasize that a respectable effort was taken to build up trust among parties. Even if conflicts (disagreements) happened, necessary actions could be taken to resolve the conflicts.

Indicators	Description	Passaiyoor park		Rasavinthottam park	
Administration	Time allocation	Allocated for a considerable level (in the schematic phase)			
	Financial effort	Financial effort effected the process			
Objective	Main Objective	Mainly to fulfil the regulatory requirements ( to check whether they have any objections, requirements or suggestions )			
	Community	Participation rate for the community consultation sessions	21%	Participation rate for the community consultation sessions	19%
Information	Community	Two way communication only at the beginning of the schematic phase		Two way communication only at the schematic phase (conceptual plan + schematic plan)	
	Stakeholders	Two way communication throughout the initiation and design planning stage			
Targeting	Community	Percentage of participants who participated because they affected by the project	67%	Percentage of participants who participated because they affected by the project	75%
		Percentage of participants who participated because they are interested about the project	33%	Percentage of participants who participated because they are interested about the project	25%
	Stakeholders	Majority of the participants are working with the urban planning or participants with political or commercial interest			
Stage	Community	Participated at the beginning of the schematic phase ( conceptual plan )		Participated throughout the schematic phase (conceptual plan + schematic plan)	
	Stakeholders	Participated throughout the initiation and design planning stage			
Technique	Consultants	Satisfaction about the community meetings as a technique	83%	Satisfaction about the community meetings as a technique	80%
		Satisfaction about the stakeholder meetings as a technique	92%	Satisfaction about the stakeholder meetings as a technique	90%
		Satisfaction about the onsite surveys as a technique	92%	Satisfaction about the onsite surveys as a technique	90%
Legitimacy	Community	Only in the schematic phase ( conceptual plan )		Only in the schematic phase (conceptual plan + schematic plan)	
	Stakeholders	Throughout the initiation and design planning stage			
Common values		Common values are respected and the conflicts are resolved.			
Fairness and Equality	Community	Ability to inform opinions	89%	Ability to inform opinions	90%
Equal power		No equal power final decision is in the hand of the SCDP ( and World Bank )			
Responsible Leadership	Community	Satisfaction about the responsible leadership ( only in the community consultation sessions)	89%	Satisfaction about the responsible leadership ( only in the community consultation sessions)	88%

Achieve a considerable level  
 Not achieve a considerable level

Figure 10: Summary of the data collected about effectiveness indicators  
 Source: author

### 6.3 Overall Satisfaction

#### 6.3.1 Overall Satisfaction with the participation process

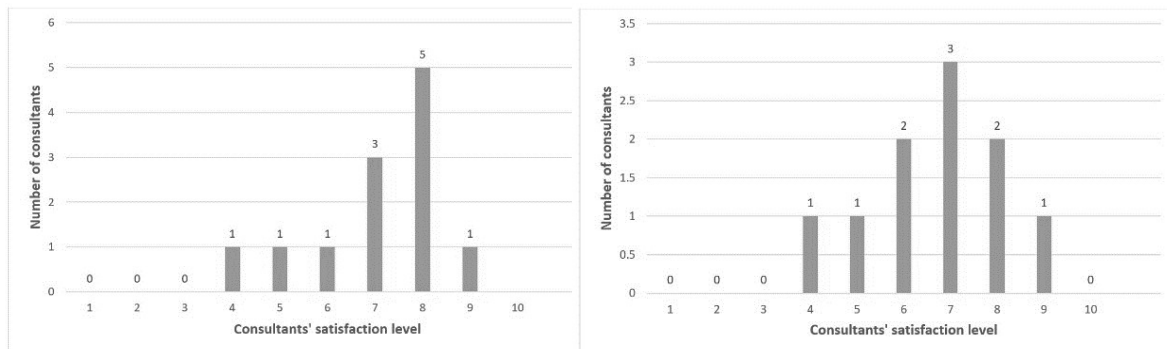
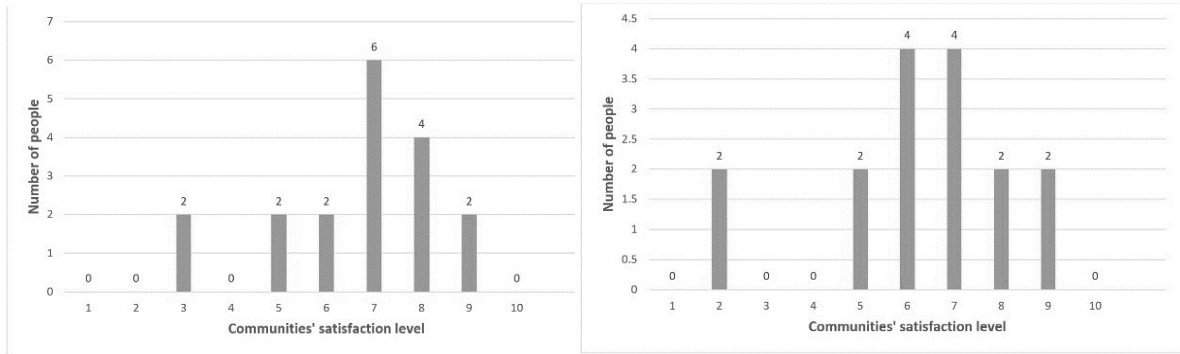
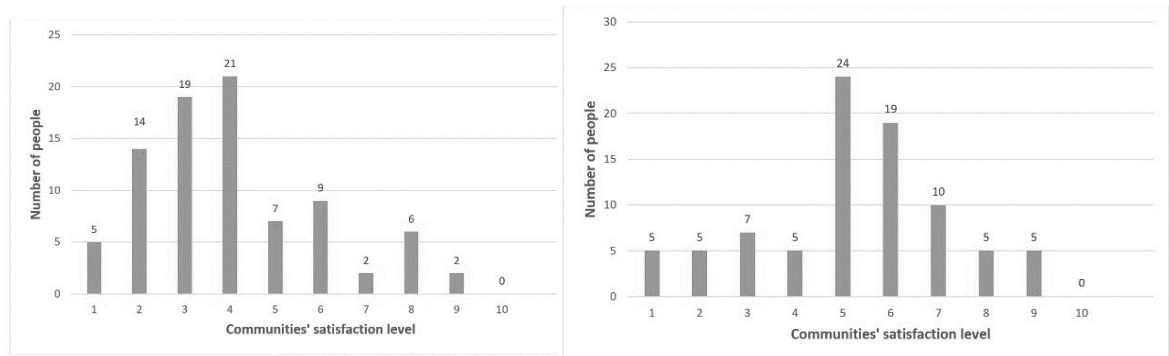


Figure 11: Consultants' satisfaction level of Passaiyoor Park (left) and Rasavinthottam Park (right) with the overall participation process  
 Source: author



**Figure 12:** Communities' satisfaction level of Passaiyoor Park (left) and Rasavinthottam Park (right) with the overall participation process  
 Source: author

### 6.3.2 Overall Satisfaction with the project outcome



**Figure 13:** Communities' satisfaction level of Passaiyoor Park (left) and Rasavinthottam Park (right) with the overall project outcome  
 Source: author

#### Overall satisfaction about the participation process

	Passaiyoor Park	Rasavinthottam Park
<b>Communities satisfaction level</b>	Percentage of the satisfied community (6 or above)	<b>77.72%</b>
<b>Consultants satisfaction level</b>	Percentage of satisfied consultants (6 or above)	<b>83.33%</b>
		Percentage of satisfied consultants (6 or above)
		<b>80%</b>

#### Overall satisfaction about the project outcome

	Passaiyoor Park	Rasavinthottam Park
<b>Communities satisfaction level</b>	Percentage of the satisfied community (6 or above)	<b>22.22%</b>
		Percentage of the satisfied community (6 or above)
		<b>45.71%</b>

Satisfaction levels are measured by using a 1-10 scale (1-5 not satisfied, 6-10- satisfied)

**Figure 14:** Analytical data of overall satisfaction levels  
 Source: author

The survey details in both parks prove that the communities' satisfaction with the community participation process was high, with 77% in Passiyoor Park and 75% in Rasavinthottam Park (Fig. 14). According to the community survey details, the reason for this is that 'at least they had a chance to participate. However, while people feel that they were heard, the actual situation indicates that they tended to think they were heard. As a result, the final phase of the initiation and design planning stage was not open to the whole community. Not only that, but the satisfaction level with the overall project outcomes of the two projects was generally low, with 22% in Passiyoor Park and 45% in Rasavinthottam Park (Fig. 14), according to the legitimacy factor.

## 7.0 Conclusion

Public participation in landscape planning and design is essential to identify the community's perception and issues. Public involvement helps to develop the most appropriate and sustainable solutions in landscape planning, design, and management. Public participation in landscape design and planning in Sri Lanka is still in its initial stage. Most of the projects conducted within the Sri Lankan context were planned and designed without concerning the actual need of the community. Thus, a considerable amount of landscape development projects have become unwelcomed and problematic over the past few years. Therefore, the primary goal of the research is to look into the effectiveness of the community participation process in landscape design and planning projects in the Sri Lankan context.

Here the indicators to analyse the effectiveness were derived from the performed literature review. Namely, those are; Administration, Information, Objectives, Stage, Targeting, Technique, Legitimacy, Common values, Fairness and equality, Equal power, and Responsible leadership. Thereafter, two case studies (that involve the public in the design planning process to a certain level) were analysed under each indicator.

As the results inform, these indicators were beneficial for the analysis individually. However, the case studies have shown these indicators have a reciprocal influence/relation with each other. Accordingly, the factor "Stage" should be evaluated with the use of resources and the process objectives. The logical arrangement of the community consultation sessions and stakeholder meetings/events, especially when it comes to decision-making points, has the potential to affect the credibility of the community participation process. The equal power and fairness and equality indicators should not be considered independently as they can affect the quality of the input of the public's real opinion. Finally, even community is satisfied with the community participation process, the project outcome is not accepted by the community reason for that is a generous portion of the public didn't participate throughout the process. Thus, participation should be encouraged throughout the progression; as the process is more legitimate, the outcome is more likely to be accepted.

Apart from those findings, as per the satisfaction level with the participation process, it is evident that "participants believe that they were heard". However, the way they were heard was not much effective as per the satisfaction level of the final project outcome. Now is the time to rethink engaging the community through an effective participation process, not just to fulfill the regulatory requirements but to bring out projects for the real need of the community. The following are the recommendations to assist and guide Sri Lankan landscape architects/ planners (government/ private sector) to engage the community in landscape planning and design projects effectively.



- Without putting pre-initiated projects (by the government) into action, identify the problems that are most relevant to the public by engaging the community before the project initiation by conducting surveys or any other method.
- Strengthen the current communication methods (such as informing through a person or using newspaper articles) into new communication methods like using social media to encourage information sharing and collaboration among the community and the government.
- Engage the community early and throughout the process, not only for one stage, and make sure the process is transparent to all the community, and the outcome of the project is their real need.
- While using physical methods of participating, such as physically participating in consultation sessions or stakeholder meetings, also gives the opportunity to participate online in those sessions to engage the community more in to the process.
- Create and implement a legal and regulatory framework to ensure community participation in landscape design and planning projects and promote it by educating people.

Landscape architectural projects in Sri Lankan context that involve the public in their design and planning process are limited in number. Thus, this research mainly focused on the initiation and design planning stage of landscape projects because it was the only stage the public was involved in these projects. Based on this shortcoming, there is a pressing need to investigate the factors that hinder public participation in landscape architectural projects in Sri Lanka. To address this issue, it is crucial to identify barriers to public participation and provide solutions. Future research should explore ways to improve public engagement in landscape projects, considering cultural and social factors that may influence participation. It is also important to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and regulations related to public participation and to compare public participation in Sri Lanka with other countries in the region or globally, in order to identify best practices and innovative approaches.

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