

**Environmental factors influencing living comfort: A case study from Peliyagoda-Gangabada and Gampaha-Keselwathugoda Sri Lanka**

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The preference to comfort is not only a choice of the mankind but also of other living organisms. Many studies are reported on comfort inside houses, working environments, on seating etc. but very few studies are reported on the environmental factors influencing the living comfort in an area. An attempt was made to evaluate the living comfort in two Grama Niladhari (GN) divisions (Peliyagoda-Gangabada and Gampaha-Keselwathugoda) from Gampaha district considering the peoples' perspective on the factors affecting living comfort. The objectives of the study were to identify the factors which influence the living comfort and their contribution (positive, negative, and both) to comfort based on the peoples' perspective, to compare the two study sites on overall living comfort and to propose an index to express the comfort in an area. Fifty households from each study sites were randomly selected and a preliminary survey was conducted to identify the major factors influencing their living comfort and to get an indication on their expectations on the factors influencing living comfort. A questionnaire was developed based on the results of a preliminary survey and data on the identified factors were collected covering the two study samples. Collected data were analyzed using  $\chi^2$  test and two sample t-test. Twenty factors that influence the living comfort in an area were identified. Out of the twenty factors, land facilities, natural beauty, shade, biodiversity, drinking water and drainage influences the living comfort positively while stray animals, insects and vectors, flood, noise, dust, bad odor, garbage, smoke and vibration influences the living comfort negatively. Rainfall, wind, humidity and drinking water has no significant impact on living comfort at Peliyagoda-Gangabada while dust, garbage and stray animals have influenced significantly to the living comfort in Gampaha-Keslewathugoda. Living comfort index proposed a reasonable methodology and accuracy to compare the comfort of living in an area, which is easy to estimate and compare with either a standard or estimates from other areas.

**Keywords:** Living comfort affecting factors, living comfort index,