Application of Geographic Information Systems for Government School Sites Selection

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ABSTRACT

The application of GIS has become more popular among the policy planners and decision makers of the education sector in many countries. GIS application in the education sector has several advantages such as effective education planning and more particularly in the estimation of numbers and identification of site for the location of new schools. In Sri Lanka today defining the school catchment area and determining the shortest and safest school route is one of the problems facing education authorities at present.

The purpose of this study was to develop a public school site selection model using Graphical Information Systems (GIS) integrated new approach. The study has used GIS based MCDA technology to improve the accuracy of school site selection model. The model appeals to school development planners as well as to the education decision makers and higher authorities of the school education system in both local and central governments who seeking the optimum selection of the site of a public school facility in the country of their competence.

The first step of the study focuses to evaluate the existing school system of the country and also the study area. It was most important to identify and analyze the current situation of the resource allocation to schools and the school education planning system in the area. Secondly, the collected data was analyzed in order to identify of the potential school sites for developing as national level based on geospatial technology using the ArcGIS Software tools.

Next, developed model was applied to determine the suitable school sites for development in the study area. As a result, it was possible to identify most suitable two sites for locating principal schools for the area. According to the evaluation of the current development project locations, there is considerable evidence that because of
poor geographical accessibility, current school development project does not reach the equitable quality education access to the population in the study area.

This study reveals the consideration factors of education system for equality resource allocation process to optimum and sustainable development within the society. Hence, this model can be used for any spatially related resource allocation applications by changing parameters based on concerning subject. The study is very opportune and timely as GIS application used for education sector development is very rare in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the present research would be an offer for the use of GIS application in the education sector in Sri Lanka.

**Key Words:** GIS, Education, Multi Criteria Decision Analysis, MCDM,
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... i
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................... v
List of Figures ....................................................................................................................... vi
List of Abbreviations .......................................................................................................... viii
Abstract ............................................................................................................................... ix

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................... 1
   1.1. Background ............................................................................................................. 1
   1.2. Research Problem .................................................................................................. 5
   1.3. Significance of the Study ..................................................................................... 9
       1.3.1. Significance of Global, National and Regional Levels ................................. 9
       1.3.2. Importance to Socio Economic Development of the Country .................... 15
   1.4. Objectives ............................................................................................................. 17
   1.5. Limitations of the Study ...................................................................................... 17

2. LITERATURE REVIEW .............................................................................................. 19
   2.1. Introduction ........................................................................................................... 19
   2.2. Importance of Education and Education Status of Sri Lanka ....................... 20
       2.2.1. Education for Source of Human Capital ..................................................... 20
       2.2.2. Education Disparities in Sri Lanka ............................................................. 21
   2.3. GIS for Better Educational Planning and Decision Making ............................ 23
       2.3.1. GIS Applications for School Development ................................................. 26
2.3.1.1. GIS Integrated School Enrollment Projection........................................ 28
2.3.1.2. GIS for Student Transportation Development...................................... 29
2.3.1.3. School Facility Location Modeling..................................................... 30
2.3.1.4. GIS Network Analysis for Determine the Service Area.................... 30

2.4. Multi Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA)................................................... 33

2.5. Experiences of School Site Selection Policies and Criteria.......................... 40

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS........................................................................... 45

3.1. Introduction ..................................................................................................... 45

3.2. Study Area....................................................................................................... 45

3.2.1. Geographical Location ............................................................................. 45
3.2.2. Existing School System of the Study Area............................................. 47

3.3. Methodology................................................................................................... 48

3.3.1. GIS and MCDA......................................................................................... 50
3.3.2. Conceptual Framework of the Study...................................................... 53

3.4. Data Collection and Preparation................................................................... 53

3.4.1. Identification of Criteria and Defining Policies........................................ 53

3.4.1.1. Distance from Principal Schools.......................................................... 54
3.4.1.2. Population Density................................................................................ 55
3.4.1.3. Distance from Main Roads................................................................. 55
3.4.1.4. Distance from Industrial Zones......................................................... 55
3.4.1.5. Distance from Commercial Area...................................................... 56
3.4.1.6. Slope of the Land ............................................................................... 56
3.4.1.7. Lands Availability for Development............................................... 57
3.4.2. Data Collection Method, Data and Data Sources .............................. 57

3.4.3. Data Storage Method of Study ................................................. 60

3.5. Data Analytical Procedure .................................................................. 62
  3.5.1. Evaluation Selected Criteria with MCDA Approach ......................... 62
  3.5.2. Identification of Potential School Locations .................................... 63
    3.5.2.1. Reclassify All Input Layers ................................................... 64
    3.5.2.2. Weighting and Combining the Suitability Maps ......................... 64

4. ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION ........................................... 67

4.1. Introduction ......................................................................................... 67

4.2. Analysis ............................................................................................. 67
  4.2.1. Geospatial Data Layer for Schools ............................................... 68
  4.2.2. Model for Identification of Potential School Locations .................... 68
    4.2.2.1. Distance from Popular Schools to Potential Sites ...................... 71
    4.2.2.2. Calculating Population Density and Grouping ............................ 73
    4.2.2.3. Analyzing Distance from Main Roads to Potential Sites ............ 75
    4.2.2.4. Distance Between Commercial Areas and Potential Sites ........... 77
    4.2.2.5. Distance from Industrial Zones to Potential Sites ..................... 79
    4.2.2.6. Analyzing and Ranking Land Availability ................................ 81
    4.2.2.7. Deriving Slope from Elevation Data and Ranking ....................... 83
    4.2.2.8. Weighting and Combining the Suitability Maps ......................... 85

4.3. Result and Discussion ........................................................................ 86
  4.3.1. Developed Geospatial School Data Layer ....................................... 86
  4.3.2. Developed Model for School Site Selection .................................... 90
4.3.3. Selection of Suitability Schools for Development ........................................ 90
4.3.4. Comparing Result With the Existing System................................................... 94

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS............................................................. 97
5.1. Conclusion ........................................................................................................... 97
5.2. Recommendations............................................................................................... 99