

# AN INVESTIGATION OF KEY FACTORS FOR NIGHT TIME FUNCTIONS IN COLOMBO: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

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## Abstract

Night functions are vibrant of 24 hours, and key income fact in a lot of countries around the globe. Many Asian towns and cities are also becoming fond of this night time entertainment as it can be considered the main income generator. Ex: Bangkok, Hong Kong, Tokyo However in Sri Lanka night time entertainment is not in its full form as many parties bear differential opinions with that. Night functions can divide into entertainment sector and industrial sector. Here, it only considers entertainment sector. Although past few decades several institutions were started some sort of night functioning projects targeting tourists, not implemented well because of lack people participations and none of the researches have been provided to fulfill that gap because of this research attempts to identify important factors and investigate present condition of night functions in Colombo. Generally, public open spaces are the places where night functions are occurring as considerable level. This research was provided the basis of the reasons why Colombo people couldn't clutch night functioning. As identified through the literature, safety, variety of activities, infrastructure provision, the brand of products, cultural initiatives, planning and policy framework etc. provide strong night time entertainment and it exploring the role of these factors in Colombo night functioning on people and institutional perspectives. Thus this research attempts to argue about the gap between both perspectives. Research methodology basically comprised with background survey, literature review, data collection comprehensively discussed under two phases combined with Colombo community gathering public open spaces case study analysis and implementing issues relate to finding factors in responsive authorities through semi-structured interviews. As outcomes each of the two phases identified, no significant different among selected factors according to people requirements and all are important for night functioning. However, according to the present condition, there are significant differences competing with people requirements and existing situation. Thus the responsive authorities also having issues with the implementation. Once, it will fill the gap between people requirement and percent level of factors by the responsive authorities Colombo will success with night functioning.

**Keywords:** Night functions, Public open spaces,

## 1. Introduction

Night functioning is a key income fact a lot of countries around the world. There is no exact definition for night functioning which is practically specified. It can be defined as activities which occur from evening to early hours of the morning which involve the economy and the entertainment requirements of the people. Examples: Food culture, Shopping activities, Cultural events, Restaurants, live music, etc. This income finding sources would get the attraction of tourists and other visitors for their entertainment purposes.

The origin of Night time entertainment occurred in British cities as alcohol related entertainment.(Roberts, 2006) After the industrial revolution, it expanded in different ways and added with new characteristics from towns and cities all over the world. Many of the Asian cities are also becoming fond of this night time entertainment which can be considered as the main income generator. Examples: Bangkok, Hong-Kong, Seoul, Tokyo etc. Such Asian cities develop night entertainments as a center of the tourist attraction by implementing youth-oriented culture like night clubs, gambling, dance culture.(Hong Kong Tourism Board Annual Report 2014/15 - Existing events, 2015)

However, today many people parties bear different opinions about having negative opinions about having night time functions because of its negative effects on the society. Furthermore, people argue that Sri Lanka has a written history over 2500 years and rich with cultural values but the people believe that some night activities like night clubs, gambling, casino culture may harm the Sri Lankan culture. The majority of Sri Lankans still a bit reluctant to accept night time entertainment.

In Sri Lanka night entertainment is not in its full form functioning. If there any possibility to develop night time entertainment except cultural harmful activities it will be an opportunity to upgrade national contribution as well as social community benefits like improved participation for cultural activities and to enhance the relationships of people with other community groups.

However, in present-day Sri Lanka, the home for many evening and night life activities are city centers. However, considering the scale of this industry in Sri Lanka it is too small comparing with other cities in the world and their festivals, recreation areas, carnivals are not fully supported by attract foreign and other visitors to the island. At the same time, most of the streets and shops close after 10.00 p.m. and some streets are full of shady and catch up unpleasant appearance.

Though Sri Lanka has good resources to develop this industry, it has become useless without getting maximum benefits. As an example, Sri Lanka has amazing natural beaches that are ideal for beach parties and cultural events and some foods are unique to Sri Lanka. However, according to the Tourism Development Strategy (2011-2016) expresses the idea of that, the island is rich

with its unique geographical location, diversity, quality human resources, peace and stability alike all the ingredients in place here to play a key role.(2011) As a matter of fact, the potentials are here to develop night time events in Sri Lanka.

Considering the instructional background in Colombo NF, the UDA together with CMC has done several projects to develop NF such as illumination projects, Night street functioning project but it discontinued and failed due to lack of people arrivals. Up to now above institutional idea is useless to start new night programmers without changing attitudes of people. However, still, there are some projects planned to support night time functions which involve Megapolis development plan has introduced some strategies to change working hours at night(Western Region Mega Police Plan - 2030, 2015) and Beira lake project which implement have some night function supportive programs. Sri Lanka Tourism Promotion Bureau also introduced Colombo night until 12.00 o'clock for the foreign tourists with some sort of stops. Though these projects implemented or not still we couldn't reach the positive level in night functioning. This research is being focused on finding out the reasons for the inability of Sri Lankans' (specified Colombo people) to engage in night time functioning. This research attempt to identify factors important for night time functioning and To investigate the present condition of the factors with reference to the public Open Spaces Colombo.

The paper structure begins with an introduction to the study followed by a literature review on Night time functioning to identify factors important for night time functioning. The next section presents Important factors to functioning night time. The subsequent section briefs research methodology with data collection, analysis and research findings. The final section presents the gap between the responsive institutions and present level of night functioning derived from the findings.

### **1.1 Night functioning entertainment**

Several decades ago, people define night time entertainment was an alcohol base drinking culture. *“Alcohol is the core commodity that attracts individuals into the night time city* (Dick Hobbs, 2005)but laterally authors explain that *“The night-time entertainment economy is a hedonic space directed at pleasure and relaxation”*(Maris, 2009)

Night time entertainment has its own characteristics different from the country. Further, it can change the physical urban structure of the city and it is a combination of a private and government partnership. The government has to provide infrastructure and make the safe environment for people and private sector requires carrying out the production and consumption process.(Roberts, 2004) In particular, in conviction that night time entertainment functioning is one of urban phenomenon, which involves number of people gathering in a particular location and make their

commercial, leisure, pleasure ,shopping and activities from evening to early hours of the morning, such as cafes, clubs, cinemas, concerts, live music etc. This affects the physical patterns of the city, such as new development projects, street layout, infrastructure etc.

Marion Roberts put forward her idea to explore the transformation as origin, process, Impacts and policy response. In 1990's municipality of major cities in England needed to structural change in night industry and first thing they made in this industry and introduced liquor licensing laws with regard to numbers of premises and special permissions to open after 11 p.m., resulted in dramatic increases in night time entertainment and numbers licensed premises more than doubled. For example, between 1997 and 1999, there was a 243% increase in the capacity of licensed premises.

Up to now structure of alcohol-related entertainment industry has changed. It is not based on alcohol related and more characteristics were added. In the 'first wave' of expansion, the industry became as youth orientated dance culture and leisure activities. Night time entertainment have been catching up the majority of cities in the world because of the huge benefits of this industry (Roberts, 2004).

- **Economic benefits**

In 2005 Hobbs highlighted the idea that night time entertainment “*provision of services towards a focus upon nurturing economic growth*”. Most of the western and Asian cities adapted to this industry for this economic impacts. As an example according to the estimations in night functioning (NF) industry in the UK running at around £1 billion per year and growing at a rate of 10 percent per annum and it equals of 3% of national GDP. Considering about how this huge revenue was generated, attract tourists and visitors to the city centers and pay them entertainment, shopping, foods, festivals, music etc. Similarity, the job creation also one of best opportunity. As an example estimated that the ‘hospitality sector’ employs over half a million staff and contributes over 3% of GDP in England (Time for Reform: Proposals for the Modernisation of Our Licensing Laws, 2000).

- **Social benefits**

NF not only boosts the local economy but also it can be creating a huge development of the community. Basically, the day time people work hard and NF makes relaxation relate with leisure and pleasure activities. People move the entertainment actives as a cultural led it will be a great opportunity to highlight the culture to the world cities like Hong-Kong always highlighted their culture with these night events such dragon dancers, own Chinese foods. (Hong Kong Tourism Board Annual Report 2014/15 - Existing events, 2015) And also the local people engaging these cultural events and make relationships with other community groups and make safe living environment.

## 1.2 Challengers of night functioning

There are some challenges arise to public authorities by night time activities. Marian Roberts has been discussed about some problems which ranked by night time activities such as,

- Lack of night transport
- Litter/Rubbish
- Street fouling
- Area feels threatening or unsafe
- Notice disturbing (Roberts, 2004)

An addition to that most of crime and disorder also arise in part of alcohol base night time industry. Bromley and Nelson argue that there is relationship between context NF and alcohol consumption. Space and time dimensions of alcohol-related crime patterns of functions in different urban space. According to their argument, most of the alcohol related crimes occur at night (Rosemary Bromley, 2001).

## 2.0 Research Methodology

A comprehensive literature review was conducted referring journals, conference proceedings, and books to identify factors and attributes important for night time functioning. Preliminary survey was carried out to finalize factors & attributes according to the Sri Lankan context. For that structured Interviews was carried out through fifteen numbers of professionals who are working in the respective agencies such as Colombo Municipal Council, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority, Sri Lanka Police, Road Development Authority, Urban Development Authority. Base on expert opinion finalized factors & attributes important for night time functioning (Table 01). Four public places were identified as a cause study located in the Colombo Municipal Council area namely Gall Face Green, Floating Market, Archade Independent squire, Viharamaha Devi Park.

Comprehensive survey was carried out to find People willingness for night functioning, to find out the existing situations of found out factors of night functioning in selected sites, to understand the existing night functioning position on selected sites. Further photographic survey, question air survey, non-structure interview and time series observation were used to gather preliminary data. Analysis was carried out based on bench marking and content analysis. Further selected sites and adopt stratified random sampling method and for the easy of explaining value 0 to 2 considering as low level 2 to3 consider as moderate level and 3-5 consider as high level.

### Important factors for night time functioning

*Table 01: Rearranged factors according to the expertise*

Finalized factors and attributes	
Safety and security	Feeling safe environment
	Illumination provision
	Police enforcement and security
	CCTV systems
	Moving anywhere without harm from other people

<b>Infrastructure provision</b>	Sanitary and water facilities
	Street layout, urban parks, shelters etc.
	Parking facilities
<b>Night transport and easy access</b>	Public privet transport
	Taxi servicers
	Can access all part of the community
<b>Brand of the venue and quality products</b>	Brand and quality items
	Brand of the venue
<b>Cleanliness</b>	Having litter bins
	Clean environment
<b>Creativity and type of activity</b>	Creative and variety of events
	Public privet partnership for night activities
	Activities for different gender groups and age groups
<b>Place interactions</b>	Natural beauty
	Attractive locations
	More activities in one location
<b>Threshold population</b>	A minimum number of people in that area as customers or users.
<b>Cultural initiatives</b>	Cultural activities and festivals
	Cultural foods and items
<b>Planning and policy framework</b>	Regulation and policy plan
	Development plans

(Source: Compiled by author Based on expert opinion)

**Safety and security:** Wilson and Kelling's 'broken windows theory' highlights that the importance of a preserved urban environment with combating anti-social behavior. Before preparing night functioning people have to adapt to an outdoor safe environment. However, illumination increase the safety of the place CCTV is extra security can promote for a better safe area.

**Infrastructure:** Infrastructure gives their magnitude in the urban context. Infrastructure like roads, public places, sanitary facilities, public transportation etc. brings physical development of a particular area. Infrastructure will certainly allow the city to restructure its present functional structure. (Magalhaes, 2003) If there are adequate levels of infrastructure to the concentration of services and it support of the emergence of new uses (like tourism) as an alternative to the consolidated residential use.

**Night transportation and easy accessibility:** Public transportation makes dynamic role in night functions. Service types of transportation can public or else private. Night transport can provide safer routes home for late night passengers. Night buses and taxi services can facilitate as better transportation mobility.(Roberts, 2004)And also it should be easily accessible all part of the community with the free of charge.

**Brand of the product and quality of the venue:** Visitors who come to the night functions, as customers they always looking for branded items. Present condition the structure of the night time industry has changed and most of the visitors attract for branded venues.(Roberts, 2006) Branded items always highlighted among tourist and local people too.

**Cleanliness:** Cleanliness is a general factor should have any environment condition but in night functions cleanliness impact to attract people and dirty environment straight away people. Municipality provision servicers for keep clean such having litter bins but has a responsibility for all part of the community keeps it as it is.

**Creativity and type of activity:** Creativity flourishes in night functioning and create benefits such people attraction and obtain supplementary income. Various kinds of activities bring people into night functions. Multi-agency public privet partnership also part of creativity.

**Place interactions:** People never attract dirty and unpleasant physical conditions. Attractive locations bring benefits to night time entertainment (Salim Jiwa, 2009) such beach sides, lakes likewise places should have an attracted phenomenon to interest people.

**Threshold population:** Should have a minimum number of populations for night functions in particular location as a customers or service gainers.

**Cultural initiatives:**The majority of European and Asian countries how attract people for night functions showing their cultural initiatives. The office and residential developments that either incorporated or pointed to the cultural facilities of the center, the promotion of the city as a culturally vibrant realm. (Andylovatt, 1995)

**Planning and policy framework:** Regulation and policies always trying to protect the people and create a decent and friendly environment for all. Regulation and policy plans and development plans contributed to arrange night functions safe and cleaner at night and reduce crime and corruptions.

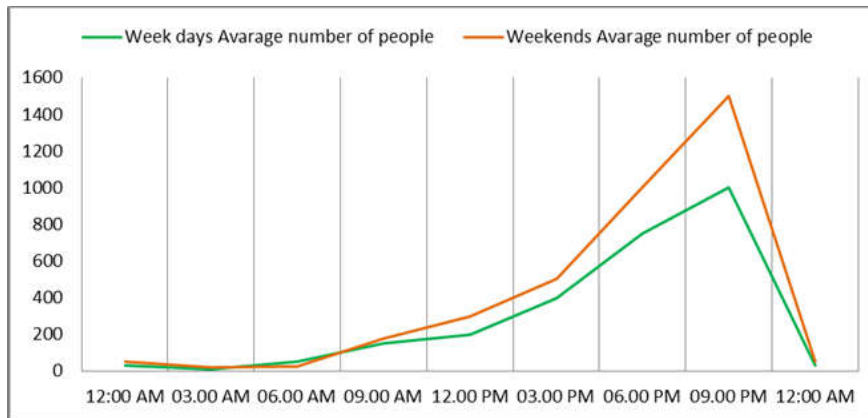
### 3.0 Case study Analysis

Before initiate night time functioning it is important understand about people willingness for night functioning. Find out this information conducted questionnaire survey 88% have positive posture about night functioning (NF) based on Colombo.

There is three analysis were carried to identify present NF level in Colombo. Semi-structured interviews and time series observations methods carried to understand peak times of the people. Photographs also used for visually understand the locations.

### 3.1 Galle face green

- **Analysis of peak time of people in Galle Face Green**

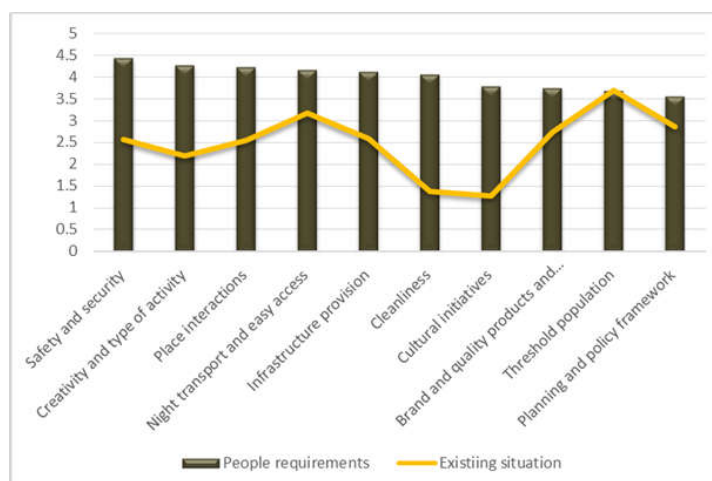


**Figure 01: Peak time of people in Galle Face Green**

Source: Compiled by author base on Survey

According to the observations, peak times of Galle face usually it is 6.00 pm to 11.00 pm but in weekends it is grown up 5.00 pm to 12.00 am (Figure 1). Photographs survey visually show that how people gathering in the night time to Galle face and their activities. Observations founded that Galle Face green is accessible to anybody walks by anytime of the day. However, it will find this place crowded between 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. According to the police guards’ people were there until early hours of the morning.

- **Percent level of night functioning according to people perceptions of Galle face green**



**Figure 02: Existing level of night functioning in Galle face green**

Source: Compiled by author based on survey



According to the existing situation in peoples' perceptions (Figure 2) how act selected important factors in Galle Face green factors of safety, the creativity of activities, place interactions, infrastructure, brand and transport play moderate level, cleanliness cultural initiatives are being low level however in here the factor of threshold population at the level of people requires.

For ensuring safety in an area having booths and conducted by police in entire night two or three police officers are being operational. Considering about creativity and verity of activities, there is food and enough space for kids to play. However on another hand, the place lacks the range of activities for different age categories. Most of the time adult men tend to get together here at night to have foods and snacks.

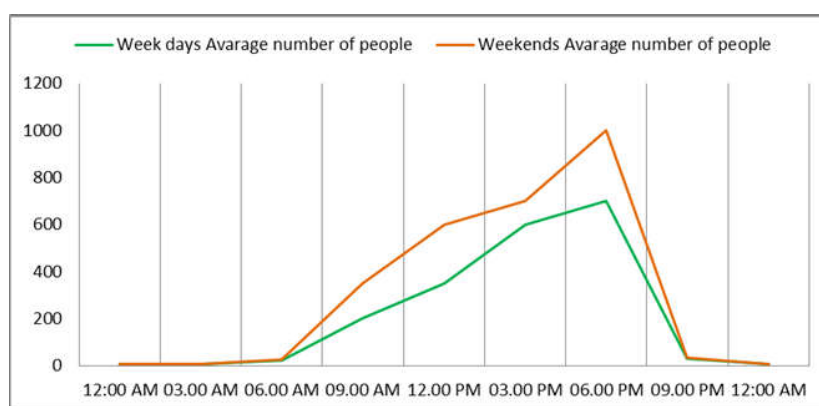
Considering about the cleanliness CMC provide their duty well. Every morning CMC provides cleaners to clean the site. But the day time until night people generate waste and throw it away as they want. Further people also have a responsibility to clean the environment.

Although some features are missing, the basic infrastructure for people is here. As an example, it is hard to find shelters for people to protect from the rain and sunshine and lack of benches for the people to sit down during the day or night. Whoever comes here will have to scorch in the day so no proper arrangement for that.

There is no branded items sale here. However the locals and foreigners who choose to visit here don't mind that. There are no cultural initiatives on regular days but the places interactions and the magnitude will be the sea and beach to relax people minds and enjoy them. Threshold population circulates around here till midnight.

### 3.2 Viharamahadevi Park

- **Analysis of peak times of people in Viharamahadevi Park**

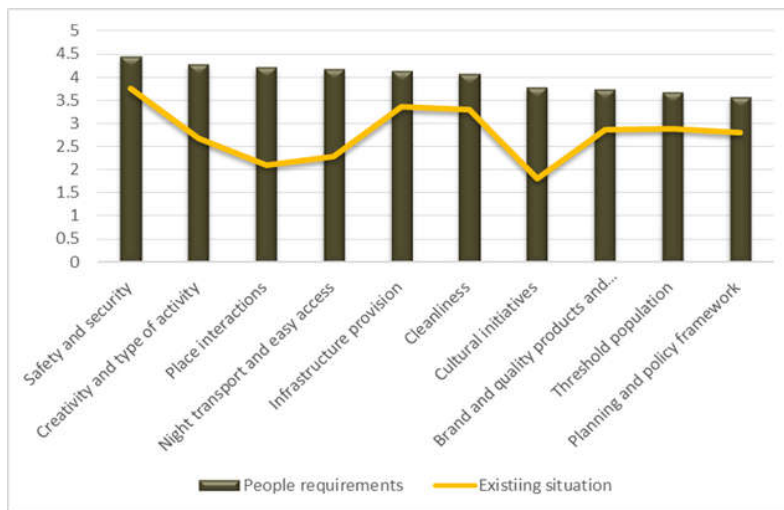


*Figure 03: Peak times of people Viharamahadevi Park*

*Source:* Compiled by author based on survey

According to the analysis only cultural initiatives have in low-level others are in moderate and high levels but no any factor could fulfill at the level of people requires and also 3 p.m. to 8 .p.m. can be recognized as the peak time. The most functioned segment is the children playing area.

- **People perceptions for present situation in Viharamahadevi Park**



**Figure 04: Existing condition of Night functioning**

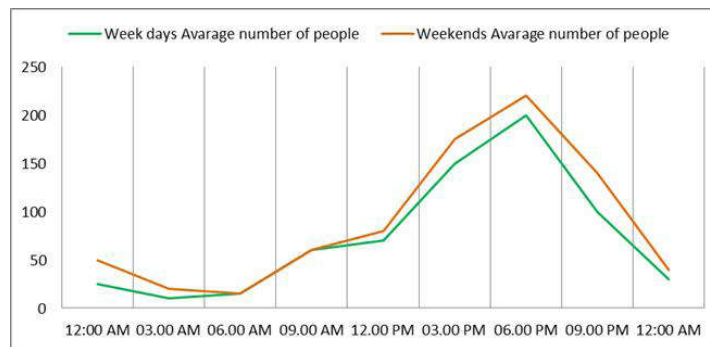
*Source:* Compiled by author based on survey

In Viharamahadevi Park availability of food items and the creativity of activities are less. Romantic couples and other people visit most in the evenings. The peak is open to public regardless of its day or night. Police booth and army personnel are available throughout just in case. For the security, the police were provided 15 Gramarashaka and 4 police officers operational in the entire night for the safety of the people.

Representing by the project of Metro Colombo was lightning each and every tree is equipped a light in Viharamahadevi Park being observed. Yet the light in the night not adequate according to the observations those light are not having brightness. Therefore people don't pay a night visit to the areas where there are more trees. No place is interaction available at night time in Viharamahadevi park side.

### 3.3 Floating market

- **Analysis of peak times of people in Floating market**

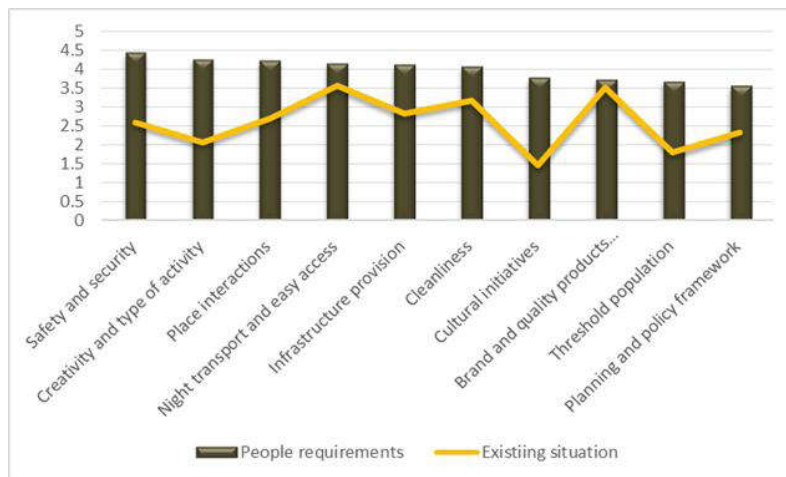


**Figure 05: Peak times of people in Floating Market**

Source: Compiled by author based on survey

According to above analysis (See figure 4-9) most of the people coming and peak time Floating Market are known as 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and the majority of shops and stalls here are close by 9 p.m. But there are three food stalls open and functioning in the entire night people are there getting dinner and having some chit chats. And also in front of those stalls have some open space with having some benches and trees to stay.

- **People perceptions for present condition in Floating Market**



**Figure 06: Existing level of night functioning in Floating Market**

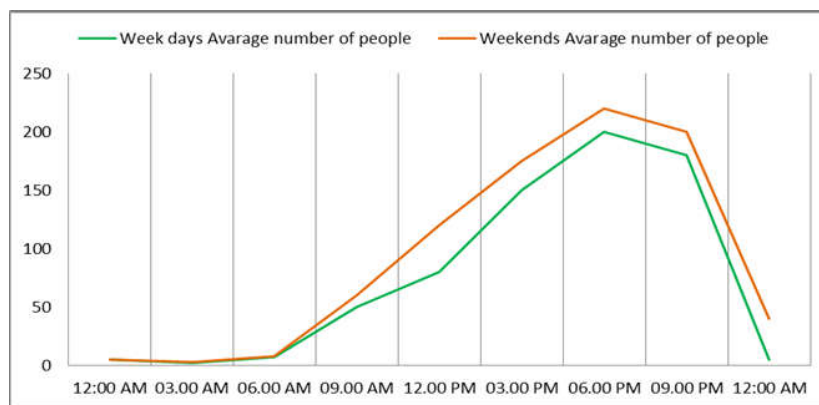
Source: Compiled by author based on survey

Here the factor of cultural initiative in low level, Branded items, place interactions are in high-level others are in moderate. However here no any factor fulfills at the level of people requires in Floating Market.

This place consumes safety issue as Pettah is renowned for its all sorts of antisocial activities and criminal history, therefore, people might lazy to make trust the location at night time. As well as this reason affects to the factor of place interaction too. Floating market is located at the heart of the commercial capital closer to the main bus stand in Colombo where thousands of people from all over the country are moving here and there. Hence, can't rely on 100% safety when people walk along the roads here.

### 3.4 Arcade independence square

#### Peak time in Arcade independence square



**Figure07: Peak times of Arcade Independence Square**

*Source:* Compiled by Author based on survey

The majority of people coming to Arcade Independence Square to fulfill recreation requirement such relaxing and pleasure activities. Here it has more inclusive shopping activities and night time it has a night opening restaurant. Peak times of this location during 4.00 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.

- **People perceptions for percent condition in Arcade Independence Square**

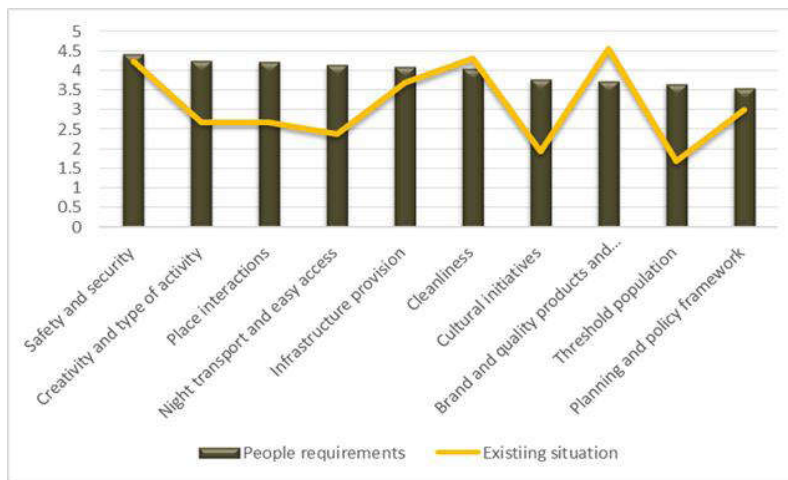


Figure08: Existing night function condition of Arcade Independence Square

Source: Compiled by Author based on survey

In Arcade premises cleanliness have achieved the level of people requires. Although no any factor has in a lower level in Arcade, the factor of Band and quality of the location exceed the level of people requires then the price of items have been increased. Therefore it has been affected by the factor of “threshold population” in that area.

Varieties of activities are available in Arcade Independence square premises. Inclusive shopping activities, cinema, restaurants and cafes and much more. At night, this area is having fully of lightning and attractive place. Cinema theaters, food outlets, and night restaurants are also remarkable features are which targets the rich population around the vicinity of Colombo.

### 3.5 Concluded case study analysis

Important Factors	Galle Face Green	Viharamahadevi Park	Floating Market	Independence Square
Safety and security	●		●	●
Creativity and type of activity	●	●	●	●
Place interactions	●	●	●	●
Night transport and easy access	●	●	●	●
Infrastructure provision	●	●	●	●
Cleanliness		●	●	●
Cultural initiatives		●	●	●
Brand of the products & quality of the venue	●	●	●	●
Threshold population		●	●	●
Planning and policy framework	●	●	●	●

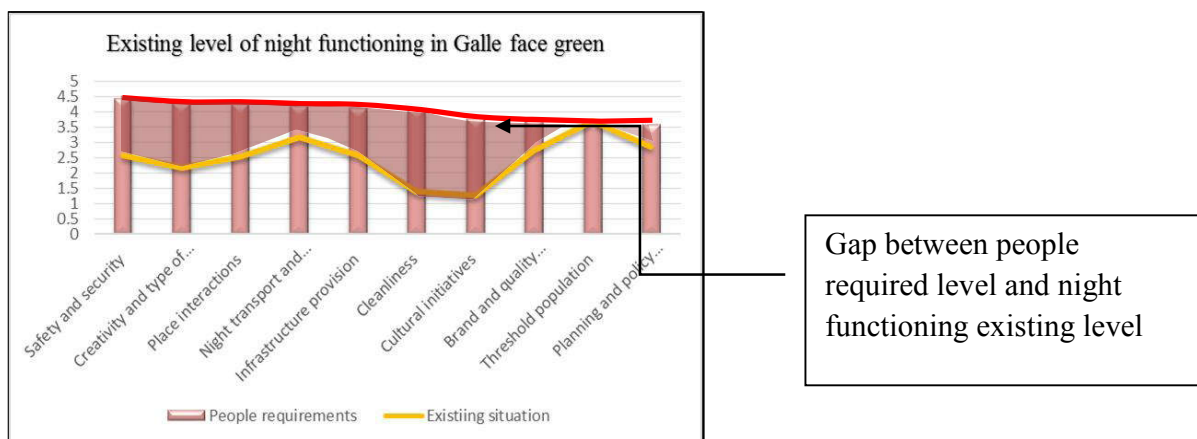
Legend	
High level of factors	●
Modarate level of factors	●
Low level of factors	●
Up to the level of people required	●
Exceed the level of people required	●

**Table 2: Concluded case study analysis**

*Source:* Compiled by author based on survey

Table 2 represent the existing roll of night functions in selected case studies. It visually representing that most of the factors are having in moderate level. If it fills the gap between people required level and existing level one day Colombo will achieve night functioning. As an example figure 09 representing the gap in Galle Face Green. Therefore in phase 02 investigating what are the implementing issues and capacity to the relative institutional perspective.

**Figure 09: Example for gap between people required level and existing level**



*Source:* Compiled by Author based on survey

#### 4.0 Conclusion

This research was attempt to investigate the realistic gap between the responsive institutions and present level of night functioning. Once when the gap has been filled, Colombo can develop successful night functioning industry.

The research findings have been created the clear path to carry out night functioning programs which filling the gap between people requirements and implementing issues. Basically the research has been identified eleven important factors.

In addition to the findings can use for further night time development projects and making development plans. And also literature have been represented some solutions to implementing issues. Public privet partnership (Explained in literature chapter) is one of best solutions foreign countries used in night time entertainment. This research found the level of important factors in people requirements and existing situation another hand it has been found responsive institutional capacity and issues. If any responsive group wish to do night functioning program, first they should fill the gap of above explained.

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