EDITORIAL

This issue presents a collection of papers chosen from the first digital ICCPP conference held in 2020, along with some who had been presented earlier. In 2020, the conference requested the participants to examine the issue of the Covid-19 and its impact on cities. Needless to say that this impact has been huge. However, it has also not made it easy for many of the participants to conduct research in the cities during this time for understandable reasons.

The first paper, by Koen De Wandeler and his colleges / students in Belgium examine how everyday life has been interrupted in Belgium and Sri Lanka due to the Covid-19. It employs 'rhythmanalysis' as a methodology derived from the theoretical ideas of Henry Lefebvre, who saw the interrelatedness of time and space, the public and the private realms, the state-political and the personal life-sphere, all diverse facets of everyday life. The paper presents numerous rhythms as related to the Sri Lankan students in Belgium, and those who returned to Sri Lanka. An interesting narrative of life during the Covid-19, the paper provides deep insights into the nuances of change imposed by the pandemic.

The paper by Afrida Afroz Rahman, & Zareen Habiba Islam, on the open spaces in the residential neighbourhoods of Dhaka, Bangladesh, in adapting to the Covid-19, gets to the city and its spaces. As we all now know, the cities in the developing countries were the most affected, because of the overcrowded, poor neighbourhoods, where social distancing was hardly possible. The paper explores modification of open spaces within the housing units and the buildings focusing on how people fulfil their space-based interactions. The paper concludes that the use of verandas has increased significantly and the insides of the houses leaving urban spaces less occupied. It shows that the organically grown neighbourhoods as well as spaces within the apartments are used more, due to availability of space.

Kavisha Charukshi de Silva, Ajitha Ilangaratne, & Jeewanthi Senadheera focus their attention to the use of ICT Devices in the urban public spaces of Colombo for virtual socializing and social distancing during the pandemic in Sri Lanka. They explore the formation of private realms due to the usage of ICT devices in public spaces and the physical elements which facilitate them. The paper offers an understanding of the design considerations that can facilitate social distancing. It argues that the ICT devices can become a useful tool in maintaining public interaction and social inclusion in countering the adversities brought upon by drastic preventive regulatory actions in the face of an unprecedented event.

This issue also presents other papers that do not examine the covid-19 situation and its impact on cities. Among them, the paper by Akila Ranasinghe, Narmada Wijekoon, & Janaka Wijesundara focus on the relationships between physical attributes of streets and the perception of pedestrian safety in Kandy, Sri Lanka, in the pursuit of safe streets. The paper concludes that the perception of safety of a pedestrian depends not merely on the physical aspects of pedestrian space, but also on the positive combinations of physical and psychological attributes.

Finally, Ironi Padmaperuma, Ubesingha Buddhinie, & Jeewanthi Senadeera present the findings of an examination into the architectural responsiveness of entry threshold spaces of public buildings, focusing on the physical attributes and people's perceptions. They reveal that height-width ratio and human scale of entry threshold spaces contribute least to people's perception of public buildings. The paper finds that the entry threshold spaces of public buildings are well perceived by the people despite their poor responsiveness to physical attributes of architecture.

Overall, this issue throws light on an interesting array of issues that relate both to the city in general as well as the cities in distress.

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