

MGT/PP/07

Factors Affecting the Success or Failure of Government Development Projects in Anuradhapura District

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Background: Government development projects are vital for driving socio-economic enhancement, particularly in rural areas like Anuradhapura District. Despite significant investment, many small-scale development initiatives fail to meet their intended objectives due to administrative, financial and socio-cultural and political challenges.

Objective: This study aims to identify the key factors influencing the success or failure of government development projects in Anuradhapura District to inform future project management practices.

Methods: An inductive, qualitative research approach was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with ten beneficiaries involved in or affected by government development projects. Purposive sampling ensured relevant participant insights. Data were analyzed thematically to identify key patterns and underlying factors.

Results: Thematic analysis revealed four major factors affecting the project failure; Misuse of Funds, Socio-Cultural and Political Influences, Poor Planning and Lack of Project Governance. Successful projects were characterized by Community Awareness of Long Term Benefits and Effective Consultation. Findings highlight the need for strengthened governance and context-sensitive planning.

Conclusion: Improving project governance, adopting strategic planning and enhancing stakeholder participation are critical to ensuring the success of development projects. The study's recommendation can aid more sustainable and effective government-led development initiatives in rural areas of Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Government Development Projects, Project Success, Project Failure, Beneficiaries