

## **Transformation of Public Space in Kandy City: History to Present**

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Transformations that occur in public space with time, within a limited area can be seen both materially and non-materially. The concept of “public space” refers to a space of collective actions and collective encountering where people can be brought in to a verity of common worlds and thus, deals with common problems.

As long as Kandy city is concerned, the notion of “public space” has become a key aspect of its landscape. Both time and space, which are common to landscaping, deserve a significant place in the current study. Thus, the transformation of public space, which is a sub-class of landscaping, demonstrates a transformation of landscape at the same time.

The theory of “landscape as a theatre” is used in the study. Actors possess a special space in that context. The public space in a town is also somewhat similar to that context. We have imposed a limitation on the present study of public space in Kandy town based on the above mentioned theory. This study attempts to focus on: (1) how public space is designed; (2) how the existing public spaces are declining; and (3) how some public spaces are transformed. This study was conducted using a case study, interviews, references to historical resources, studies based on some earlier photographs and participatory observations.

The public space in present-day Kandy city has been subjected to a complicated transformation. The public space in the city has been changed based on neo-liberal economic ideologies. The most significant factor is the City Centre. The Dialog office, banks, KFC, Keells and Cargill's supermarkets have emerged as new public spaces. It can also be seen that all the public spaces have been centred around one area depending on economic factors.