ROOT CAUSES FOR THE FAILURES OF EXISTING
SEWERAGE SYSTEM IN COLOMBO MUNICIPAL
COUNCIL AREA

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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Department of Civil Engineering

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February 2013
DECLARATION

A Study Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Science in Environmental Engineering & Management

I declare that this is my own work and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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Prof. (Mrs.) Niranjanie Ratnayake
ABSTRACT

The ageing Colombo Sewerage system has been deteriorating over the years and the system was unable to cater to the increased demand and led to many environmental issues. Therefore, certain improvements were carried out in the last 3 decades to address the prevailed issues. But, sewer pipeline stoppages and collapses were increasing gradually with the dilapidated condition of the system, even with the newly introduced improvements. Collapses, blocks and chokes are experienced regularly in the system. This has led to overflows and short-circuiting which has caused serious pollution in water bodies and the environment as a whole. As most of the major collapses and overflows had not been attended to and not been given necessary priority due to various constraints, the situation became critical day by day, so that life styles of the public have been badly affected.

Though a few studies have been conducted to develop the existing sewerage system in Sri Lanka by various non government organizations, the expectations were not achieved successfully and some issues still remain. Only a few recommendations of these researches were implemented. Therefore, it is vital to identify the issues in the existing Sewerage Systems in Colombo Municipal Area to improve it into a smooth running, environmental friendly sewerage system. Thus, there is a need to conduct a research to explore the root causes for the failures of the existing sewerage system.

The case study research approach was used to investigate the research problem, by interviewing key stakeholders, including the Engineers, within a selected administrative district. Further, a questionnaire survey was carried out among the other five administrative districts in the CMC areas to observe whether the identified root causes through the case study are similar and common to the other districts too.

This study revealed that there are several types of failures in the existing sewerage system. The related root causes for the failures were further disclosed after evaluating the common reasons for the failures. Furthermore, it was observed that the root causes for the failures are common and acceptable to the entire sewerage system in CMC area through the survey. Further it is recognized that these root causes are generated in all three stages; design, construction and maintenance. Finally, good practices to improve the existing sewerage system are also explored through this study.

Key words: Root causes, Failures, Sewerage system, Colombo Municipal Council
Dedication

To all who assist me

I see
The whole world
Around me
Through your help
So,
This may be simple
But,
It is dedicated for you
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# Table of Contents

1. **Introduction** ....................................................................................................... 1  
   1.1 Background ..............................................................................................................1  
   1.1.1 Research Problem ...............................................................................................3  
   1.1.2 Aim .......................................................................................................................3  
   1.1.3 Objectives ..........................................................................................................3  
   1.1.4 Scope and limitations .........................................................................................4  
   1.2 Existing Sewerage System in CMC area  
      1.2.1 Colombo Municipal Council ............................................................................5  
      1.2.2 Existing Sewerage System in CMC area ..........................................................6  
      1.2.3 Rehabilitation and System Extension Program ...............................................7  
      1.2.4 Types of the sewerage System .......................................................................7  
      1.2.5 Current Operation ............................................................................................8  
   1.3 Structure of the Thesis ............................................................................................12  

2. **Literature Review** .............................................................................................. 13  
   2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................13  
   2.2 Sewerage Systems ............................................................................................... 13  
      2.2.1 Sewage ........................................................................................................... 13  
      2.2.2 Sewerage Systems ........................................................................................ 14  
      2.2.3 Sewer Appurtenances .................................................................................. 16  
      2.2.4 Sewage Treatment ...................................................................................... 18  
      2.2.5 Pumps for Lifting Sewage ............................................................................. 19  
      2.2.6 Pumping Stations ......................................................................................... 21  
   2.3 Key Issues of Sewerage Systems .............................................................................22  
   2.4 Common Failures in Sewerage Systems............................................................... 23  
   2.5 Reasons for the common failures in sewerage system ....................................... 25  
   2.6 Root Causes for the failures Sewerage Systems ................................................. 27  

3. **Research Process and Methodology** ..................................................................31  
   3.1 Research Approach ...............................................................................................31  
   3.2 Case Study approach .......................................................................................... 32  
   3.3 Questionnaire Survey ......................................................................................... 35
4. Research Findings ............................................................................................. 37
   4.1 Existing Sewerage System and Its Function ............................................... 37
   4.2 Issues in Existing Sewerage System .............................................................. 40
   4.3 Failures in Existing Sewerage System ............................................................ 41
   4.4 Root Causes for the failures ...................................................................... 64
   4.5 Good Practices to eliminate root causes for the failures ......................... 69
       4.5.1 Design Stage ...................................................................................... 69
       4.5.2 Construction Stage ........................................................................... 70
       4.5.3 Maintenance Stage ............................................................................ 70

5. Conclusions and Recommendations .............................................................. 72

6. References .................................................................................................... 74

7. Appendices .................................................................................................. 76
   Appendix I
   Appendix II
LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Station Net Work In Greater Colombo Area
3.1 Case Selection
3.2 Hierarchy of the Interviewees
4.1 Sewer Net Work In District 5 Area
4.2 Station Net Work Serving The Southern Part Of Greater Colombo
4.3 Locations of The Collapses
4.4 Abundant Pumping Station at Bambalapitiya
4.5 Highly corrosion environment at Bambalapitiya Pumping station
4.6 Flowing of Sewage To Wellawattha Canal
4.7 Water Level of The Sump
4.8 Damaged Force Main Pipes
4.9 Grease Build up in the Manholes and Sewers
4.10 Non Standard Grease traps
4.11 Root Intrusion at Mahanama College
4.12 Deterioration of Pipes Due To H2S Stagnation
4.13 Function of Junction Box at Wellawattha
4.14 Illegal Cross Connection from Sewers to Rain Water
4.15 Vent Pipes are Damaged
4.16 Discharging Rain Water With sewage to the Sea at Moor Road
4.17 Ventilation Pipes are not maintained properly
LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Estimated Wastewater Flows
2.1 Summary of The Literature Findings
3.1 Details of the Interviewees
4.1 Drainage Complaints In 2011
4.2 Cost of Repairs of Collapses
4.3 Current Status of the Pumping Stations
4.4 Observations on Blockage
4.5 Observations on Collapses
4.6 Observations on Overflows
4.7 Observations on Odour
4.8 Observations on Ground Water Pollution
4.9 Observations on Big particles are mixed to the Sea
4.10 Observations on Raw Sewage is mixed to the Sea
4.11 Issues in the existing sewerage system
4.12 Failures in the existing sewerage system
4.13 Reasons for the failures in the existing sewerage system
4.14 Root Causes for the failures in the existing sewerage system
4.15 Root Causes for the Failures in Different Stages