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**APPENDIX 01**

T.M.Alamouti,  
M.Sc. in Project Management,  
Department of Building Economics, Faculty of Architecture, University of  
Moratuwa.

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Questionnaire for Master Thesis**

I am a Master thesis students of Department of Building Economics at University of Moratuwa and undertaking the Master of Science in projects management. In fulfillment of this degree program, I am engaged in a thesis with the topic of **“Challenges face by foreign professionals in Sri Lanka construction industry.”** The research is supervised by to **Dr. Y.G. Sandanayake** (Head of Department of Building Economics), who is one of senior lecturer at Department of Building Economics, University of Moratuwa.

Purposes of this questionnaire are:

- Involvement of foreign professionals in construction industry.
- Challenges faced by foreign professionals in construction industry.
- Investigate the foreign professional’s involvement in Sri Lanka construction industry.
- Identify problem and challenges faced by foreign professional in Sri Lankan construction industry.
- Propose mechanisms to overcome challenges faced by foreign professionals in Sri Lanka construction industry.

I would be grateful if you could complete this attached questionnaire within your busy work schedule. The information provided will be treated with strict confidence, result would be summarized and there will not be specific referees to individual firms.

Yours faithfully

Tel.0773378116

E-mail: tmalamouti@gmail.com

**Interview Guideline**

**Section 1: General Information**

1.1 Details of the respondent

1.1.1 Nationality

.....

1.1.2 Designation

.....

1.1.3 Name of the project currently involved

.....

1.1.4 Education qualification

.....

1.1.5 Professional qualification

.....

1.1.6 Total years of experience

.....

1.1.7 Number of years of experience in your home or other countries

.....

1.1.8 Number of years of experience in Sri Lanka

.....

1.2 Do you willing to involve in future projects in Sri Lanka?

.....

1.3 Do you suggest to your friend colleague to come and work in Sri Lanka?

.....

1.4 Do you live with your family?

Yes  No

If 'No', why? Please provide reasons.

.....

1.5 If 'Yes', what are the challenges faced by them at Sri Lanka

.....

**Section 2: Foreign professional involvement in Sri Lankan construction**

2.1. What are the professional areas that foreign professionals involve in your project?

.....  
.....

2.2. Why did you decide to work in Sri Lankan construction industry?

.....  
.....

2.3. What are the differences between Sri Lankan and foreign practices relevant to your professional field?

.....  
.....

2.4. What are the advantages or benefits that you can gain by working in the Sri Lankan construction industry?

.....  
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2.5. Are you happy about selecting Sri Lanka as your present work place?

.....  
.....

**Section 3: Challenges faced by foreign professionals in Sri Lankan construction industry**

3.1 What are the problems or challenges faced by you as a foreign professional work in Sri Lanka construction industry in related to following areas? Please explain the challenge related to your own profession.

3.3.1 Language

.....

3.3.2 Culture

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3.3.3 Construction safety

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3.3.4 Project management

.....

3.3.5 Construction standards

.....

3.3.6 Construction technology

.....

3.3.7 Construction process

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3.3.8 Contractual agreements

.....

3.3.9 Construction output or quality

.....

3.3.10 Training period

.....

3.3.11 Salary and incentive expectation

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3.3.12 Facilities at work

.....

3.3.13 Working hours

.....

3.3.14 Tension and job stress

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3.3.15 Physical working conditions

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3.3.16 Foods

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3.3.17 Weather / environmental condition

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3.3.18 Any other

.....

**Section 4: Strategies to overcome challenges**

4.1. Propose strategies to overcome the above identified problems or challenges under following headings.

4.1.1 Identify the strategies that foreign professionals can use to overcome the challenges.

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.....

4.1.2 Identify the strategies that construction organisations can use to overcome the challenges.

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4.1.3 Identify the strategies that Sri Lankan government can use to overcome the challenges.

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**APPENDIX 02****Interview Guideline****Section 1: General Information**

- 1.1 Details of the respondent
  - 1.1.1 Nationality
    - Pakistanis
  - 1.1.2 Designation
    - Site in charge
  - 1.1.3 Name of the project currently involved
    - Project 1, Respondent 1
  - 1.1.4 Education qualification
    - MSc. Civil engineer
  - 1.1.5 Professional qualification
  - 1.1.6 Total years of experience
    - 4 years
  - 1.1.7 Number of years of experience in your home or other countries
    - 1 year
  - 1.1.8 Number of years of experience in Sri Lanka
    - 1 year

1.2 Do you willing to involve in future projects in Sri Lanka?

Yes, Our Company has started another new project, and they have planned for long-term business in construction in Sri Lanka which is make long-term opportunity in my job career since I'm satisfied with this job and I can continue on the next project with them in future too. There is some other construction project under negotiation with my company which is located most probably out of Colombo.

1.3 Do you suggest to your friend colleague to come and work in Sri Lanka?

Yes obviously, the environment is very good, the weather is almost the same and I feel comfortable in this kind of weather condition. I also thinking, country just finished the civil war and there is a lot of construction going on in the whole country, and there is good relationship between my country and Sri Lanka government ,it rings the bell my friend can have good opportunity here too, as I'm feeling satisfied they will be satisfied too.

1.4 Do you live with your family?

Yes  No

If 'No', why? Please provide reasons.

I'm single so there is no wife or any children to live with me and also Company not provide the visa for our family too. To me, Family means mother and sister only, but if company provide visa I willing to bring them as well. There is no restriction from Sri Lanka government only that is related to company policy.

1.5 If 'Yes', what are the challenges faced by them at Sri Lanka

.....

## Section 2: Foreign professional involvement in Sri Lankan construction

- 2.1. What are the professional areas that foreign professionals involve in your project?

The main company is a developer and contractor. Basically, as the project client they dealing with customers, construction authorities, the local contractor, relevant agency and also dealing with the project construction process. Therefore, they have engineers such as project manager, quantity surveyor, surveyor, civil engineer and administrative people such as sales manager, accountant, C.E.O and so on. Supervise and manage the project is another professional area involvement.

- 2.2. Why did you decide to work in Sri Lankan construction industry?

The major reason was that I worked with the main contractor earlier in Pakistan on some other projects. Later when my company came and studied the Sri Lankan work environment, they started a project here and by them invitation, I join them as a site in charger. My company has a plan for 6-7 years job duration in Sri Lanka and I'm willing to work with them. A lot of opportunities are available here, and I have more benefit to working in Sri Lanka.

- 2.3. What are the differences between Sri Lankan and foreign practices relevant to your professional field?

I can just differentiate between Pakistani and Sri Lankan construction industry because I been only in this two countries for purpose of work. The environment is almost the same, in Sri Lanka due to they don't have the seismic zone (earthquake area) they started to construct many high-rise building. But Pakistan is under the seismic zone, therefore there is some restriction for constructing high-rise buildings. And also this is a very small country with limited land compare to Pakistan. Even lower grade of labors they can communicate in English, so we can't feel any difficulty in

coordinating and working with them, but in Pakistan, the literacy rate is not as much as Sri Lanka, Pakistani labor cannot speak English well. With Sri Lankan, there is no problem regarding English communication. But at the professional level, the Pakistani people are better in communicating compare to Sri Lankan, because they have the high-level education. In a big country such as India, China, and Pakistan the literacy is low. By increasing the population literacy rate coming down. But in Sri Lanka average literacy is high.

- 2.4. What are the advantages or benefits that you can gain by working in the Sri Lankan construction industry?

The first advantage , salary rate is high, I don't know about the other Pakistani company but my company pay me a higher salary and the food, insurance, vehicle are free but high salary is the main reason. When you work in your country your rate is lower than abroad, if you go in some country such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar you earn a better rate than homeland.

- 2.5. Are you happy about selecting Sri Lanka as your present work place?

Yes, obviously, my financial condition is in satisfaction level, weather condition is comfortable and I can work in this weather like my country, this country is safe and I never feel any difficulty to go out or somewhere else for any reason. Sri Lankan are a very helpful community, especially in behave with foreign people. They are very calm people compare to other countries. I have no problem with them during the work process. There are some issues but it is manageable.

### Section 3: Challenges faced by foreign professionals in Sri Lankan construction industry

3.1 What are the problems or challenges faced by you as a foreign professional work in Sri Lanka construction industry in related to following areas? Please explain the challenge related to your own profession.

#### 3.3.1 Language

If you know English there is not much problem but if you don't know English then its big problem for you. Sri Lankan labor able to speak English but Pakistani labor can't speak English like them. In professional's level, the English language is better between Pakistanis to compare to Sri Lankan professionals.

#### 3.3.2 Culture

For neighbor countries, culture is not that much different. Most of the time they don't answer their phone from the whole day, actually, they are working according to their conditions. For example, there is a different culture in answering the phone, imagine we need some kind of materials and we meet some supplier to provide those materials, someone agreed to provide the pieces of stuff but when we call for that purpose they are not responding our call. This culture is existing between all of them and we are really suffering from that. If they have the product they will pick the phone if not they will not respond. After we live in the Sri Lankan community we understood when the Sri Lankan not answering the phone the meaning is no, and you should not try anymore. In Pakistan industries are much wider, they are just waiting for us to give them some order, but here the industries are limited. The work environment is very good you will never go for a fight with Sri Lankan. Sometimes we get a bit angry and that is because of the human nature. But generally, the environment is good and manageable.

### 3.3.3 Construction safety

Overall safety for the worker is good. Actually, when you are going for high-rise buildings we have to prepare a specific safety because you are working in height, working with heavy machineries and dangerous tools. Therefore in all the project life cycle, we are facing the risk of the project. The risk could take the human life easily. There is the H.S.E engineer who is responsible for managing the safety at the site. HSE team have an instruction for people safety and they are trying to manage the people to do job process in a safe manner. But to teaching safety to the normal labors it's very difficult and they can't understand the degree of the risk which the HSE officer trying to teach them and it's create problem in the construction site.

### 3.3.4 Project management

Actually management is always depends on man power. How many man power you have, if staff be sufficient, you are not facing much issues. We feel some management problems, that's why we changed our previous project manager. Foreigner should arrange some staff from their own countries.

There is some differences between the working style of Sri Lankan and Pakistani people. For example it's noticed, one steel fixer from Pakistan is equal to 3 steel fixer from Sri Lanka, they have less capability compare to our persons in matters of quality wise and quantity wise. Naturally its Sri Lankan nature in work capability. In my opinion they are not doing more work but their maximum work capacity comparing with our people capacity its 60 - 70 percent. If you can have good management abilities, they can get more works from labors, it can't be like others but it can be better. I think they are working with foreign manager efficient than local management. They can work better if they feel you are owner of project then they will work with maximum capacity in the project.



### 3.3.5 Construction standards

It's good, if we go to Altair project they are doing really well, we don't have problem in standards, there is non-write standard in construction. Each company has its own standards. It's difficult to find a national standards which really followed by foreign construction industry companies. If a company is from Pakistan that project follow the Pakistanis company standards in that project which is applying with Sri Lankan rules and regulation by relevant authorities. They can put some training with a good standard for them to bring the quality and progress in the construction process.

### 3.3.6 Construction technology

Technology is okay, any technology is needed can be order from the manufactured country and received it in the certain time .The problem is Sri Lankan are not much familiar with those new technologies .they haven't enough experienced in the high rise building and it need some more time to they get the knowledge to work with those new technologies.

### 3.3.7 Construction process

It is depend on some item such as: Owner Company, man power, construction machinery and all other resources. If these item is in good condition then we can have good process in project lifecycle. If we work with Pakistani teams we will be able to complete a concrete slab during 4 days but here the work progress is low because Sri Lankan can't proceed fast.

We should spend a lot of money to cover the wasted time due to low speed of work but for the quality, it is not easy to rectify since is very costly. Anyway, the quality is low, might because their experience is not enough in construction. for example in Pakistan, we have much better quality and better construction experience and recruiting people are easier. When recruiting a carpenter for work, he is not only as a carpenter. He is able to do the aluminum work and some other work as well. Quality mostly gaining by

experience. The experience in construction will increase after 20 or 30 years. The government has planned for the BOI project. They invited many other investors from various countries to Sri Lanka. BOI project are taxes free for many construction project items .therefore different investors enter in Sri Lanka from the different countries. Through those plans, by entering foreign investors in Sri Lankan construction industry Sri Lanka will developing sooner and all the involved involve sectors benefit from it.

### 3.3.8 Contractual agreements

There are the strict rules in agreement, it is not reasonable if any project start without proper agreement. Generally, the top management dealing with this part.

### 3.3.9 Construction output or quality

It is depends on the quality of working of construction team and standards of the education institution which if it is good, the output of the quality will be in a satisfactory level. With Pakistani labours, it is possible to have the better work quality. I think, they have no global ranking in the quality of educational institutions. There is a direct relationship between quality and construction team experiences. Another reason of the quality problem is because of their low experience. Certainly quality will improve in future by improving in construction experiences. At this time it's not comparable with other countries. With the current experience of these people, can't expect them to have high work quality. It is not so much bad but through our people quality of work is better. Might it is better decision if companies bring more people from their countries at the beginning.

### 3.3.10 Training period

Obviously it will be useful especially for local forces, training many advanced tools and equipment's which I think not available in Sri Lanka or are very new to the industry, the person which teach the knowledge in training period must have enough experience. In Sri Lanka, you couldn't find that much training

institutions compare to Pakistan. For professionals which will come to Sri Lanka no need any training they are good in their fields already.

### 3.3.11 Salary and incentive expectation

It deepens on the company which you are recruited. My company is good but if you work whit Sri Lankan Company can't expect high salary from them compared to foreign companies which they pay good enough. Even they will pay higher salary to Sri Lankan man power. Just comparison of the people salaries in the different work levels .there are some difference between Sri Lankan and Pakistani people salaries in the project. Since the Pakistanis earning more than Sri Lankan even though they have the same work position, designation and experience, therefore it leads to a bad imagination in their job incentive and mostly Sri Lankan doesn't have the good feeling about it. But the point is Pakistanis are far away from their mother country and many of them are in distance with their family so they have expected higher salary to come and work in a foreign country compare to when they are work in their countries.

### 3.3.12 Facilities at work

Facilities are like other countries, company providing the facilities such as food, flight with limitation time, residency, insurance and car for top management. But always who is involved in the construction projects, they are suffering from the environment since the construction site is not similar to the other jobs condition. Daily even hourly we are dealing with the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labors. Their understanding and expecting from life is different so that managing and living with them is really difficult. Being at the construction project sites. Anyway, we are involved with labors therefore sometimes we prefer to be a bit in distance from the construction site to use the better facilities.

### 3.3.13 Working hours

8 hours, same as other countries and more than normal hours they will pay us over time.

### 3.3.14 Tension and job stress

Tension is high, project client needs speed in the construction process, if we complete a concrete slab in one week, the company expect that we complete next slab in five days if we complete it in five days they expect less and less duration for concreting a slab. That means every second of construction work is under tension. Besides, we can gain more experiences by handle those tensions so that it makes us have a better ability in the future. Mostly Tension comes from upper management if they decrease their expectation and leave the technical matters to us most of the job stress will be over and the project process will run in a smooth way. I think with their pressures on us or without that mostly work speed is in the same condition. Sometimes they are successful by pushing us, but not for all the time. We are not transferring any tension to labors because by my experience if we put tension and stress on them, it will not work. With encouraging them they will work better from any were in the world. There is two option to complete a task, first, put the labors on the pressure to finish it and second encourage them to complete the task in a certain time. By pressure it never work, they are much more efficient with encouragement and this is a common rule everywhere.

For example: suppose there are 12 columns in a floor of the project, If I put pressure on the carpenters and tell them you have to finish 8 columns in one day they never finish those columns but if I suggest them, by finish 8 columns I will pay 1 hour extra over time they will finish all 12 columns in one day. Actually, I tested it several time and I understood the encouragement work well and I got the good result from that test. When testing somebody, he gives his maximum ability continuously for two, three and four times, after that, should not test them again since they showed what they could do. If you ask them to do that job again and they reject your request you knew that they can

do that but they won't, because before they were tested and we know their ability so they have to do the job.

### 3.3.15 Physical working conditions

It is good, internally we have very good relations between the staff and us and labors, we giving the plan to work and everybody going according to that plan.

### 3.3.16 Foods

We face difficulties for food because in Sri Lanka they only using rice as food but our dishes are bread basis. Foods are not good here, our company provides food with some Pakistanis food provider, but if the company does not provide the Pakistani food taste, site facing many problems, the items of food not available in Sri Lanka like my country. We can't find even proper vegetables. Regarding food, this country is not good.

### 3.3.17 Weather / environmental condition

It depends on which country you are coming from. Overall weather conditions are good. During the rainy season, we are facing a lot of difficulties due to heavy rain.in Pakistan, there is some construction pattern for the rainy time. In my country, until rain begins it will take some time so that we can forecast within next 2 hours we will have a rain and become ready for that rainy condition. In Colombo, rain will start suddenly and their forecasting is not that much accurate. We have to be more careful if we going to concrete the slap during this heavy rain. We have to setup the activities according to the rain, especially for the concreting.

### 3.3.18 Any other

Normally company provides everything, but suppose If we want to print an A0 paper individually we are facing a lot of difficulties, you can't find the shop for printing that size paper easily. But in Pakistan, anything's you need you can provide quickly.

Their productions or manufacturing is really less in whole parts of the industry. For example, if we need an electromotor when we going to buy it, need to try so hard. Construction materials or even some other items are very scarce. For example, in Sri Lanka, if I need simple things there is only one shop but in Pakistan, we have many shops for such a purpose. There are no competitions in Sri Lanka construction market, that's why the prices are high in the construction market.

The market must be adjusted with the huge construction projects which are going on in Sri Lanka. But still, they didn't increase that needs much. The government has to do something. More people have to enter in the market to increase the supply of the construction products. The government had planned to bring many investors from other countries, therefore, the government should support them to encourage more investors to come in Sri Lanka. They have good planning for investors but they have not good planning for balance the construction market. to procure the construction needs we have to provide the procurement list and make a planning for that list and take the step based on that plan. We should purchase construction needs two months in advance. If we need any construction materials urgently we never could be successful. Even to order for the concrete we should order few days in advance. If we need some urgent concreting we can't provide it. Concrete casting doesn't have good system. as an example yesterday I called steel supplier for the whole day but he didn't respond therefore I had to call my upper manager and they should do the same.

## Section 4: Strategies to overcome challenges

4.1. Propose strategies to overcome the above identified problems or challenges under following headings.

4.1.1 Identify the strategies that foreign professionals can use to overcome the challenges.

We have to be more careful during the construction process. Have a good planning for the process can help a lot. The foreigner must adopt themselves with many things which will solve many of those problems. The professionals must be more flexible compared to the time they were worked in their countries. When professionals facing challenges in the new country they should be patient and learn about those challenges and find the most efficient way to overcome those challenges or at least going along them.

4.1.2 Identify the strategies that construction organisations can use to overcome the challenges.

There is some association who working in different part of the construction industry, such as NCASL (National Construction Association of Sri Lanka), CIDA (Construction Industry Development Authority) and CCI (Chamber of Construction Industry). They should be more involved in the foreign construction projects and should establish a research section in their organization regarding foreign construction projects in Sri Lanka and Inference some good result from those research to improve the Sri Lankan construction industry and make some basic standards of those result to use them for the foreign construction industry in Sri Lanka and for future Sri Lankan projects.

4.1.3 Identify the strategies that Sri Lankan government can use to overcome the challenges.

The government can play a very vital role. There is a lot of construction projects under construction in Sri Lanka but the construction market did not grow well like construction industry. The government has very good plan in investment but not good planning for the supply the construction products. The government must recognize the requirements of the foreigner and attempt to provide them their needs or at least help them because foreigners and their funds are one of the major sources to developing the country and improve the people and especially construction industry.