

Assessment Of The Quality Of Urban Parks In Kerala Context

Urban parks and green spaces can provide multiple benefits to the people and the surroundings, from tangible socio-economic values to intangible quality of life. Growing urbanization in the city has resulted in pollution, congestion and lack of efficient utilization of spaces. Thus, open spaces can give a structure and life to the city, where urban parks are breathing spaces. These breathing spaces are multi-functional and are a social necessity in an urban context as it contributes to a healthier life both mentally and physically. Hence the planning strategies should reflect a wider vision by including consultation and involvement of multiple stakeholders. This study aims to formulate a tool for assessing the quality of urban parks in the Kerala context by analysing various literature and case studies that define the concept of quality for an urban park. As a result, the quality criteria is defined based on four factors: Natural factors, Social factors, Design considerations, Maintenance and services. The formulated tool is applied on to a primary case study, Subhash Park in Ernakulam within the KCR (Kochi City Region), since it is the most urbanized metro city in Kerala context and faces rapid growth with lack of planned open spaces. The determined quality was assessed at Subhash Park using three categories of the tool: Questionnaire survey on 30 people chosen at random, Key informant interview and Observation to understand the activity pattern. It was concluded that this tool gives scope to understand the need to maintain public urban parks, to identify deficiencies, to secure new provision, and to improve its quality while planning for a location, purpose and need of a park. The result of this study is being used to guide future research regarding the development of a framework in planning to define aspects of the quality of urban parks in the Kerala context.

Keywords: *Urban parks; Green space; Open space; Quality; Assess; Activity pattern; Subhash park; Ernakulam; KCR; Kerala*