

# Green Spaces in the Urban Environment in Delhi

Dr. Pratibha Bhalla

Associate Professor, University of Delhi, India

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### Corresponding Author

Email: drpbhalla@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

*This research focuses on studying the visitors of parks in the urban city of Delhi, in terms of the reasons of people to visit such parks, their perception towards the environment and green space, knowledge of biodiversity etc.*

## 1. Introduction

The urban environment of Delhi is dominated by high population density, vehicular congestion, industrial and commercial activities and the resultant high Greenhouse Gas emissions and build-up of other pollutants in the atmosphere. Water both surface and ground is highly polluted in the city by the dumping of domestic and industrial sewage water into streams and lakes and by surface runoff. The land in the city has a dominant residential, commercial and industrial land use interspersed by green spaces in the form of locality parks, heritage parks and urban forests. These green areas give a breathing space to the city and are made use of by the locality residents for fitness, leisure and recreational activities.

The present research aims to understand how important are these green spaces for the residents of the city and in turn how well do the residents understand the biodiversity of the green space they use for their various activities. This work is a case study of Gulmohar Park which is frequented by residents in the densely populated nearby localities of Gulmohar Park, Hauz Khas, Gulmohar Enclave and Gautam Nagar. It also houses an old historic structure near the entrance which dates to period of the Lodhi dynasty in Delhi according to the signboard installed by the Department of Archaeology, Government of the N.C.T of Delhi near the monument. The signboard also notes that its history is largely unclear, apart from its name that refers to a general term referring to a revered saint, however it may have been important in the past as indicated by its proximity to the nearby historical Siri Fort. The park has a rich flora of trees, shrubs, seasonal flowering plants and other vegetation. Trees in the park are the Ashoka Tree, Neem, Vilayati Kikar. Sacred Fig (*Peepal*), Banyan, Mulberry, Blackboard Tree, Cluster Fig (*Goolar*), Chamror, white Bark Acacia, Thorny Ronjh and a lone Silver Oak.

## 2. Literature Review:

Paul and Nagendra(2017) studied the cases of 4 parks to understand various perspectives of the visitors of these parks. It was found that a majority of the visitors appreciated the environmental and psychological benefits that may be provided by such green spaces. It was also noted that while most park visitors were from the areas located in the park's proximity, however some travelled from greater distances, even when they had smaller parks in their neighbourhood, as they appreciated large parks such as those studied in their case.

Bhalla and Bhattacharya(2015) stated that feel pleasant under tree shade and aesthetical value of trees in green areas were major benefits for nearby residents. They noted that diversity of trees in the parks is a concern.

## 3. Methodology:

A semi structured interview was conducted from the visitors to the park in the morning (6:00-8:00 am) and evening (5:00-7:00 pm). Daily around these times there are 150-200 visitors to the park and around 100 visitors during morning and evening were randomly interviewed. They were asked about the reasons of using the park, their perception towards the environment and importance of green spaces, knowledge of biodiversity etc.

## 4. Findings

The visitors to the park were asked the reason for their visit and 90% said they come for walk, exercises and yoga. Many come to do exercises and yoga in large groups taking care of their fitness as well as socialising. Around 30% include jogging after walk. The green area has a pleasant feel and 10% of the people come to the park to sit and feel this aspect. The

park has a monument and 5% visitors are there to feel the historical ambience.

The park caters to the residents in the nearby localities within a radius of 1km and its entry gates open towards Gulmohar Park, Hauz Khas SFS and Y block Hauz Khas. Majority of the people walk down to the park from a distance of 500 metre.

With reference to gender, there were equal number of males and females visiting the park and the age group that visited parks daily in the morning were the working age group and elderly, children and teenagers visited the park daily in the evening and sometimes in the morning during weekends.

There is a lot of greenery and dedicated walking path, open gymnasium, play area for kids and grass covered lawns. All the visitors were happy to have this park at a walking distance from their homes. The park outer boundary by trees and in spite of having of heavy traffic roads on its three sides namely August Kranti Marg, Balbir Saxena Marg and Hauz Khas.Road, the visitors said they were not disturbed by traffic noise inside the park.

The people surveyed were asked as to how frequently they visited the park, 70% said they came to the park every day, 20% said they come on weekends and 10% said they come whenever they feel the need to take a walk and feel the ambience of the greenery of the park.

Those who frequently visited the park were asked the reason for doing so and they said it was because this was the nearest park to their home and it had a clean natural environment. Those who visited the park only on weekends or occasionally said that the park was not very near their home or because of their time constraints.

People were asked about their opinion on the role of green spaces. 70% said that green spaces are to relax and refresh the mind and body. 10% said that parks should have an ambience which promotes peace of mind, 20% of the people stated that green space was important for maintenance of a clean environment.

The park has a variety of flora and the visitors were asked if they can name a few but 80% of the people were not able to name the plants, 10% could name some flower and tree species and 10% felt that is not necessary to know the names of the plants here.

The results reveal that green spaces benefit the people in the urban environment. Visiting the parks provides them relaxation and peace of mind besides helping them maintain their fitness by providing space for walks, jogging, lay area for children, exercises and yoga. Parks become a meeting ground for people from the neighbourhood and promotes socializing.

## References

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