

Study Leisure Time in Urban Space (Case study: Gorgan city)

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Abstract

With the new social, economic, and cultural conditions in the new era, leisure has been raised as one of the important aspects of life and its quality has become more important. Considering the conditions and problems of urbanization, the issue of leisure time and leisure spaces has become one of the main axes of urban planning and management. The purpose of this study was to study leisure time in urban space. The statistical population included citizens of Gorgan city, as well as the data measurement tool, was the questionnaire and Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS software to find the relationship between the variables. The results show that there is a relationship between the increase of leisure spaces and the promotion of urban culture and also there is a relationship between the extent of leisure space and the citizen participation rate.

Keywords: Leisure Time, urban space, citizens, Gorgan.

INTRODUCTION

In the new era, the best way to spend leisure time is one of the most important needs of individuals. Part of the criticism that has come from the cities is related to the uniformity and dullness of life in the city and the urban spaces. Construction has taken a dramatic step and statistics and evidence indicates the physical and material expansion of cities (Torabi, 2003).

The daily life of human in modern society is a mixture of work and leisure. Humans share a great deal of work in terms of work. Work in industrial society follows the same rules despite the variety of appearance. What makes people different from one another is not their job, but how they spend their free time. Humans are trying to maintain their individuality, and leisure is the only area that can satisfy this demand.

Different styles of life are shaped according to how leisure time is spent. Leisure time as a free time and without work

requirements is a significant consideration in human life. It is necessary and vital in the conditions that each moment has been thought of the value of the above. Especially in the city, the time is more limited and space is denser and the activities are more complex, and humans have many choices to choose. Leisure time, with activities in line with the culture of the society and in the direction of personal development, will provide valuable results for both the individual and the community, but if it goes through destructive and harmful activities, will have inappropriate social and cultural consequences. Open urban spaces are one of the important components that urban planning and management need to decide about it. Also, with regard to all metropolitan issues, especially in the area of air pollution and vehicle congestion, and the lack of public spaces in the city, It virtually expands with the dominance of cars and the passing of the day, it is necessary that urban open spaces should be maintained and developed (Sanai, 2013).

New approaches to urban planning for the creating leisure spaces, have put their new approaches at the forefront of urban planning, creating leisure spaces and providing recreational facilities, sports, education and art for the general public and considered that the development of these spaces as essential factors in promoting the quality of the environment and urban life. Leisure activities are also referred to any type of occupation that is performed

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at this time, which can include sports, artistic, scientific activities, etc. Performing such activities requires their appropriate spaces and the necessity of paying attention to urban centers and predicting spatial spaces for proper leisure time is necessary for cities. Hence, recognizing the types of suitable leisure spaces and improving the quality of these spaces can be effective in solving problems in many cities (Falahat, 2008).

Iranian cities have similar characteristics in terms of their physical appearance; in many of them, the old urban structure has been disrupted by the development of the city and the use of the automobile, and the new city structure has been developed with unbalanced growth in various areas. On the other hand, imbalance in social aspects and cumulative City Centers of the city has caused social problems, one of which is the lack of space for spending people leisure time especially for young people (Rezazadeh, 2003).

Reviewing different opinions suggests that leisure activities can include a variety of activities. This is in accordance with the individual's taste and activities, and activities can usually not have any financial benefit for the individual. When dealing with these activities, the individual tries to achieve goals such as relaxation, physical or mental enhancement, displaying individual skills, communicate with others, and generally preparing for the continuation of work and life. (Rezazadeh, 2003).

URBAN SPACE

Urban space is an organized phenomenon that manifests from the information in different forms, function, and meaning. The formation and enhancement of the social life of a society, which expresses the culture and way of urbanization of a civilization, the objective urban space arising from the integration of social relationships, in the physical setting, in a semantic field and in line with collective humanitarian needs.

Today, what is observed in our cities is not the urban space, the empty traces of the product are the combination of the remains of the masses that bring less meaning to the mind. It may be that, in our city first buildings are built and what remains is the urban space. Cultural distance, away from the criteria and principles that in all scientific and academic circles, are considered as necessary parameters of any urban space, getting away from what is a valuable background for these spaces, are low aesthetic qualities, urban development regardless of the importance and special place of urban space in social life and its negative effects on the morale of the city (people and activities), the inevitable use of citizens from the gaps among the masses as urban spaces,

etc., are among the issues that can represent the status quo. If any urban environment is a material space with its social and psychological dimensions. Urban space not only is not the arena of moving models and economic theories and monetary systems, but also it is a place for everyday life and is a place for different and memorable experiences (Soozanchi, 2008).

The Role of Public Spaces in the Morale of Citizens From the Point of View of Urban Planning

Urban public space is the scene of the everyday life of the people, and is defined in contrast to the private life space. The importance of public space is due to the role that played by the development of a democratic society and it is defined by the unconditional accessibility to everyone. From the point of view of urban planning, the main characteristic of each city is the public spaces, parks and squares of the city. The public space in the city provides the field of people's participation and connect them together.

At the moment, the creation of citizenship joyful is missing element in urban management. Urban planning is following this missing element in the urban public spaces. Therefore, the existence of depressed, indifferent citizens, with a lack of sense of happiness and vitality, is considered to be the biggest problem of cities. Although the major part of this approach can be attributed to the difficult conditions of urban living and modernity. But the lack of a public urban space with recreational and joyful facilities in this area has not been ineffective. From the perspective of urban planning, creating beautiful landscapes in the public spaces of the city has a significant role in mental health and the Citizens general joy (Kiani and Nasiri, 2013).

Citizenship and Urban Public Spaces

Urban public spaces have become a major necessity in urban development programs, which illustrates the role of these spaces in strengthening the socio-cultural landscape of the city. Public spaces are an expression of social relations. These spaces are of particular importance on the urban scale as the realization and visualization of the new social mentality. Public spaces are a place for people to see and be seen, and have great importance in the analysis of social life. In fact, urban spaces can change the type and amount of social relationships by changing the behavior patterns of individuals. Urban space in the general sense is the interaction between relationships and behaviors. Meanwhile, the neighborhood of individual identities, in one's urban life, is the most important factor in authentication and have effects on human behavior and relationships. In addition, urban space as a public space is the place for the emergence and survival of individual and social thoughts and desires, that is, the most important center of human collective perception, and that is why

it plays an important role in the development of human societies.

In addition, urban space is referred to a combination of activities, various cultural, social, administrative and similar structures, and urban elements and components that are elegant, harmonious and well-ordered, and therefore can be formed with visual values, and physically has an enclosure shape. In other words, the urban space is part of a city, which is a public domain of urban activities. In the meantime, citizens engage in this context as public activists and urban space users. Naturally, their satisfaction with these spaces will affect their social interactions.

Urban public spaces have long been the physical context of social interactions of the people. Although, quantitative and qualitative features of urban spaces have changed over time and due to various factors, citizens and other users of the city have always needed such spaces. Throughout human history and from ancient Greece Urban public space has always been the field of implementation of the social functions and institutional initiative schemes, and related activities to private sector entities, such as the family, have been placed in the public domain and in urban space. On the other hand, urban space plays a significant role as a platform for social functions in facilitating these functions and related dynamics that arise in the form of institutions, organizations and. and facilitating relationships and refinement of social construction (Rafeian and Khodaei, 2009).

The book aims to highlight and analyze the criteria and factors that contribute to creating and increasing citizens' satisfaction from urban public spaces. By reviewing three main factors have been identified that social security, spatial identity and access to services are considered as the most important factors affecting citizens' satisfaction from urban public spaces. In the social security issues, the term security, security senses, dimensions, types and levels of security analysis has been briefly reviewed. After reviewing the related topics has been paid to the theoretical and practical definition of urban security and its relation to urban planning, the impact of the urban security situation through the mechanisms and urban development variables, especially the use of urban land in urban areas. Urban green space from the urban perspective includes a part of the city face that consists of a variety of vegetation coverings and as a living and vital agent alongside the dead body of the city, it determines the city's morphological construction.

Plants are a source of freshness and vitality. Maintaining the desirability and natural beauty and the type of vegetation in urban public spaces can affect the security of the spaces. If a person feels that he is seen and monitored and controlled by the environment, fear of the environment is removed,

thereby helping with more relaxed and reliable space. (Rafiyane and Khodaei, 2009).

The Concept of Leisure Time

Leisure time, in words, is meant to comfort and relieve from everyday work. In fact, leisure is the opportunity that a responsible person does not undertake any duties, and time is at his authority to work with personal desire and motivation. Leisure does not mean unemployment, free time or dead time, but it's a necessity that resigning person from his professional, educational, and social tasks, with his full consent and authority, will be responsible for his life. Social science experts consider leisure time as appropriate criteria for the recognition of the health and well-being of the community's educational structure. Hence, Proper exploitation of leisure time leads society to build and prosperity, and, conversely, improper use of these opportunities will increase social anomalies.

In the research literature related to leisure, the concept of leisure is studied through three interrelated concepts of time, practice, and mental conditions. Leisure is a time when a person is free from obligations and obligations to work, family, religion, and so on and decides on how to do it without the external factor involved in his decision making. But this definition is ambiguous because it does not provide a definite definition of leisure. Leisure is an exercise that facilitates these activities, which are some of the more commonly used to watch television, sport and participate in outdoor activities and listen to the music. These activities are accompanied by mental and physical comfort (Pourmohammadi, 2011).

In order to benefit as much as possible from a physical environment, it is necessary to have a special physical and semantic features. According to the stated contents about urban open spaces and spending leisure time, it is expected that these spaces will be designed in such a way that, having certain conditions and specific features, they will provide the context for appropriate performance and behavior for Leisure time in that physical environment.

Leisure time can be considered as the most important opportunity and time in human life. For believers, the moments of prayer with the god, for scientists and thinkers, are minutes of thinking and contemplation and for artists, time to create and innovate, and for some bodies, if there is no specific plan for using it, it will be the most frustrating moments.

Sometimes, the closest link with the spiritual and cultural life of individuals, which are spent willingly on learning, creation, research, education, voluntary social participation, and so on. Since man in his leisure time can do what he

Table 1: Summary of statistical analysis related to the role and importance of using leisure space and promoting urban culture

Index	N	Mean	df	T statistics	Sig.
Urban culture	384	3.9746	383	17.266	0.000

Table 2: Summary of statistical analysis related to the role of leisure space area with the level of citizen participation in cultural affairs

Index	N	Mean	Df	T statistics	Sig.
Citizen participation	384	2.146	383	1.266	0.000

likes, he reveals his main character and expresses it, hence his capabilities often appear in leisure time (Mahdavi Nejad, 2009).

Such activities are so important that they are referred to as the “mirror of culture” (National Youth Organization, 2002). To better understand the meaning of leisure, look at the history of this phenomenon is useful, because what is nowadays expressed as leisure time and throughout history, many changes have taken place. Hence, we should not attribute the modern conception of leisure to the past, but we must try to better understand the concept of leisure at any time. For example, what has been considered as leisure in ancient Greece, cannot be compared to the concept of modern leisure because the social, economic, and cultural conditions have changed completely. In addition, the concept of leisure itself has been constantly changing throughout history (Sanai, 2013). Leisure time in ancient times was especially for wealthiest members of society. In the middle Ages, it was fully influenced by the culture of Christianity. Therefore, leisure time was more valuable. In the new era and at the end of the middle Ages and the beginning of the industrialization of the Western societies, the relationship between work and leisure began to change substantially. As leisure was as a lost time and work was considered as value (Jalali Farahani, 2012).

The Importance of Leisure in Life

To fill leisure intelligently is important because it is a double-edged sword, the edge of which can be a growth and reformer, and the other edge is losing a young force and even futility and corruption. For this reason, one can claim that spending leisure time, both in terms of positive and constructive aspects and in terms of destructive and corruptive aspects, is enough to overwhelm other aspects of each person’s life. Therefore, activities related to leisure, depending on the constructor or the unfavorable, are effective in the growth and development or, in other words,

in the degradation of the character of the adolescents and young people (Karimian, 2009).

Hence, the lack of attention to leisure will bring risks. As leisure in our age, instead of finding cultural value, can be a means of pleasure and cause neglect and forgetfulness. Although leisure is the result of the free choice of people, are against life opportunities, but the lack of attention to their way of life will lead to catastrophe.

Open Urban Spaces and the Extent of the Leisure Space

Leisure time, like any personal and social activity, requires a physical environment that has the ability to meet its mental and physical needs. Although different sports, recreational and functional spaces in the cities have been created to spend the leisure time of people of different ages, but open and high quality urban spaces can serve as a behavioral settings of many leisure needs. To analyze the relationship between urban spaces and leisure, the concept of behavioral settings can be used.

Behavioral settings or location-behavior are an element for analysis of the environment and explains the dependence and coordination of the two concepts of place and activity. Environmental psychology uses the term “behavioral settings “to analyze the behavior of individuals in the environment. Behavioral settings is a small social unit of a combination of a sustainable activity and a place, so that in a regular process it can fulfill the essential functions of the environment. In behavioral settings, recognizable stimuli include physical and social aspects of the environment, and there is a great deal of similarity between people who are in the same behavioral settings. Behavioral settings is a living system that has the following characteristics (Lang, 2002).

Study Area

The city of Gorgan, with a total area of 40 km², has a population of 480541000 inhabitants in the southern province, and equivalent to 71.25% of the province’s population. This city from the north is limited to the cities of Aghghala and Bandar Turkmen, from the south is limited to the Semnan, from the east is limited to the city of Aliabad and from the west is limited to the Kurdkoy city.

Research Methodology

This is descriptive survey research. The statistical population consisted of all citizens of Gorgan city and using the Cochran formula, 384 people were selected as sample population. A random stratified sampling method was used and the research tool was a researcher-made questionnaire. The validity of questionnaire was obtained using the opinion of the professors and experts and the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained using the

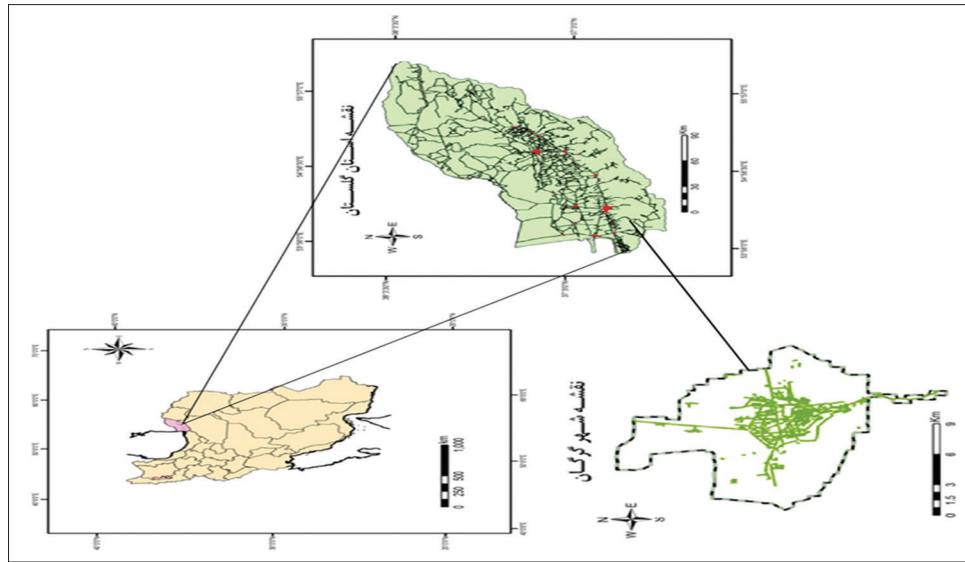


Figure 1. Location of Gorgan city relative to province and country

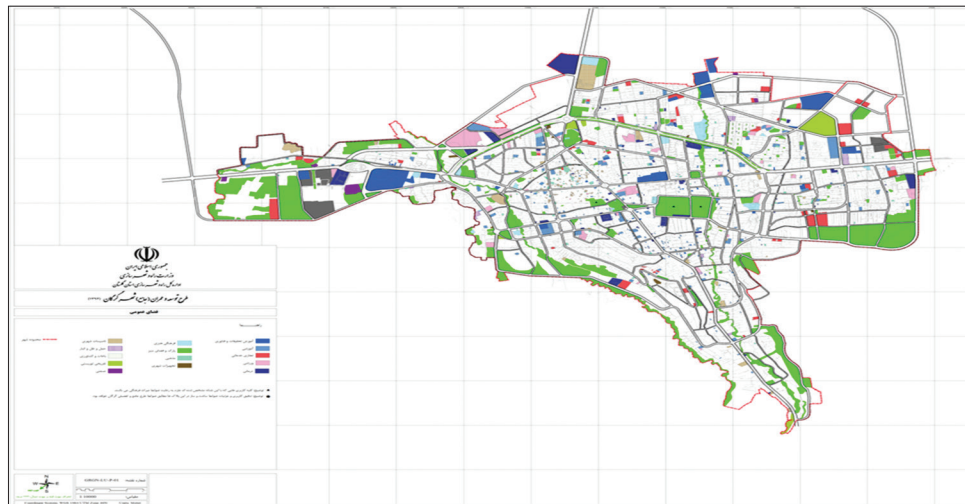


Figure 2. Distribution of public places for spending leisure time in Gorgan
Source: Golestan Province Road and Town Planning Office

Cronbach's alpha coefficient 0.86 and confirmed. Data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Findings

According to the values in the table, the calculated t value (17.266) of the table with a degree of freedom of 383 (1.99) is larger with a probability of 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is concluded from the viewpoint of the sample population, the use of leisure space has effect on the promotion of urban culture.

To answer the above question, five options have been used in the Likert spectrum that the values from 1 to 5 were "very low, moderate, high and very high".

As you can see from the analysis, according to the values in the table, the calculated t value (1.266) is smaller than

the T table with a degree of freedom of 383 (1.99) with a probability of 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected and It is concluded from the viewpoint of the sample population that the role of leisure space has effect on citizen participation in cultural affairs at moderate and high level.

CONCLUSION

The quality of leisure-time spaces is one of the most important urban issues that, along with other urban issues, such as work, residence and transportation, city planning and the quality of urban life, as well as balanced development of leisure facilities, directly and indirectly effects on the socio-economic development indicators of cities. Cities consist of different spaces, each of them

forms to support and facilitate some individual and social activities and to create the meanings that citizens need for them. Given that, each activity requires space with a specific feature, in the absence of suitable space, the quality of the occurrence of the type of activity is difficult and eventually, the existence of the city will be faced with a variety of social, cultural and identity disorders.

The study of urban open spaces for use in leisure time in Iranian cities shows that most cities in providing these spaces, quantitatively and qualitatively are not at the appropriate level. That is, the spaces in most cases are not according to the needs, interests and characteristics of the users. This has led to a lack of coordination and belonging between the individual and the environment and the lack of proper use by the people, especially the youth.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on this, can be made suggestions to improve the quality of their leisure time for citizens.

- 1- To preserve and improve the status of traditional open spaces in order to preserve the identity of the city and to coordinate them with Today's needs, so that while solving urbanization problems, attention should be paid to the cultural and social sustainability of the urban community.
- 2- Attention to open urban spaces of the city as one of the structural elements of urban design in such a way that in urban design, to take shape other urban elements based on open urban spaces. Therefore, should be avoided from the allocation of municipal waste spaces.
- 3- Planning, designing and creation of open urban spaces in terms of number, area and location in accordance with population in different regions of the city.
4. Quality improvement in urban open spaces based on the design criteria and the physical and mental needs of individuals, especially young people.
- 5- Considering the time of using these spaces in summer and at leisure, that they are mostly used.
6. Planning, designing and creation of appropriate urban open spaces in terms of number, area and location in accordance with the population in different regions of the city.
7. Avoid allocating waste spaces to urban spaces.
- 8- Designing urban open spaces based on the characteristics of the urban climate and creating a climate comfort in these spaces for users.

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