

Impact of Green Space on Social and Psychological Well-Being of the Urban People: Literature Review

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Introduction

Green spaces (GS) are vital environmental assets that significantly impact human life. Many countries have recognized the importance of green spaces and are prioritizing their development more than ever before. These spaces are highly effective in promoting sustainable health and well-being (Rao, 2021, p. 2). Urban green spaces represent a crucial investment that local authorities can make for the benefit of their citizens and their overall well-being (WHO, 2017, p. 3). This study aims to address this issue by examining the sociological implications of green space access on the social and psychological well-being of urban populations in Sri Lanka. It will contribute to the academic discourse on urban sociology and environmental psychology, offering new insights into how green spaces affect urban residents. Additionally, this research could serve as a model for other developing nations facing similar urbanization challenges.

Considering the above facts, a research problem emerges regarding how green space impacts the social and psychological well-being of urban residents. Green spaces are closely linked to urban planning, as they significantly enhance the city's environment. The literature review identifies several specific objectives for the study: to explore the impact of green space on social well-being, to understand its effects on psychological well-being, and to determine which beneficiary groups are most concerned about green spaces. Addressing these objectives will assist urban planners and policymakers, who are increasingly recognizing the benefits of green infrastructure for improving the quality of life for city residents. This study aims to contribute to the academic knowledge, practical implications, future research directions, policy development, and social relevance related to green spaces and urban well-being. A noted limitation of this study is its focus on only two major types of well-being: psychological and social. This could be expanded in future research to encompass additional dimensions of well-being.

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Methodology

This study employed a historical approach, reviewing past empirical research on the impact of green spaces on the well-being of urban residents. A total of 50 research papers published between 1990 and 2021 were selected as the sampling units for this analysis. The purposive sampling method, a type of non-probability sampling, was used because a comprehensive sampling frame was unavailable, and the entire population was not accessible. The literature sources for this review were found through electronic searches. The selected research papers represented a diverse range of journals including 14 types of journals. The data analysis began with data entry and data processing, conducted using Microsoft Excel. Key factors were summarized according to the main categories and headings. Descriptive analysis was used for this data analysis.

Results and Discussion

According to the research papers reviewed, most studies focus on the psychological well-being of individuals. The findings indicate that green spaces or nature have a positive impact on psychological disorders. Specifically, contact with nature has been shown to reduce stress and alleviate various mental disorders. People often experience relaxation and recovery from depression and anxiety through their closeness to nature. Additionally, students who regularly engage with green spaces tend to experience improvements in their educational outcomes, reduced stress levels, and enhanced overall mood. Many people seek happiness through their connection with green spaces. The study also found that exposure to plants and nature can lead to faster recovery from injuries. Furthermore, research suggests that individuals with higher psychological well-being are likely to lead healthier and longer lives. Environmental activities positively influence the psychological well-being of the elderly, especially those in long-term care. The study also observed that window views of nature significantly impact the mental well-being of people living and working in high-rise buildings within urban settings. Considering these findings, it is evident that green spaces have a substantial impact on psychological well-being.

The study found that urban green spaces can enhance social inclusion and community cohesion. It identified several social benefits of urban green spaces, including recreational opportunities, aesthetic enjoyment, and improvements in psychological and physical health, strengthened social ties, and educational opportunities. Literature indicates a connection between social relationships and health, highlighting that leisure and recreational activities, as well as amenities provided by green spaces, contribute to increased happiness. Urban green spaces offer numerous social benefits, such as opportunities for recreation, education,

aesthetic enjoyment, and social interaction. The review revealed that residents, adults, and urban dwellers are particularly concerned about these green spaces.

Conclusion

In conclusion, examining the impact of green spaces on social and psychological well-being reveals their crucial role in enhancing urban life. Understanding these effects helps identify which groups benefit most from green spaces, guiding more targeted and effective urban planning. By addressing these dimensions, we can better appreciate the comprehensive value of green spaces in improving quality of life and inform policies that support healthier, more resilient communities.

Keywords: Green Space, Impact, Well-Being, Psychological, Social

References

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