



## **The Assessment of the Quality of Existing Parks along Phewa Lake, Pokhara, Nepal**

Luna Thapa<sup>1\*</sup>, Samikshya Kandel<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Pokhara Engineering College

\*Corresponding email: lunathapa88@gmail.com

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to identify the quality criteria to assess the quality of parks and examines the quality of urban parks along Phewa Lake in Lakeside, Pokhara. After a comprehensive study of relevant literature, six criteria are selected for the quality assessment of the urban parks under study; Accessibility, Distinctive Characteristics, Activities, Condition of landscape elements, Condition of utilities and services, and Cleanliness. The criteria are further divided into sub-criteria for the study. Field visits, observation, and key informants' interviews were conducted to collect data and triangulate results. The findings revealed the existing quality of the urban parks in terms of the selected criteria of assessment. The quality condition of a park differs from one criterion to another and also differs from one park to another. The results from the study will be beneficial in improving the quality of the parks by focusing on the criteria where the park is lagging.

**Keywords:** *Urban Park, Quality Criteria, Phewa Lake, Pokhara*

### **1. Introduction**

Parks are public spaces that encourage both social and individual well-being. The parks serve as venues for a variety of social and athletic activities and provide diverse options for people regardless of age, gender, class, or religion. People can actively participate in leisure activities and passively develop experiences in the park. (Pokharel & Khanal, 2018). Parks as one of the major community features, provide various physical, psychological, social, economic, environmental, ecosystem services, sustainability, and many other benefits. The significance

of urban parks is related to the well-being of the urban population and plays a vital function in the urban system. The parks provide a backdrop for various physical activities, which helps boost mood and sense of well-being. It helps to break the monotony of buildings in urban areas by offering green and attractive glimpses of nature. It is also a place of social value, as it facilitates social interactions, enhancement of social capital, better social integration, and attracts people. The areas around a park typically have better economic values and also provide environmental benefits such as environmental preservation and purification, pollution reduction, and temperature moderation. (Bedimo-Rung, Mowen, & Cohen, 2005). Various empirical evidence shows that the availability of parks and other natural assets like forests, and greeneries in urban areas helps to enhance the quality of life and improves the livability of places through environmental, social, economic, aesthetical, and psychological benefits (Chiesura, 2004).

First, the parks need to maintain their quality to capture the various benefits of parks. Various research on quality assessment has been conducted, but a unified set of assessment criteria has yet to be determined due to the varying nature and scale of the environment. Furthermore, each study has its definition of environmental quality. In this context, Neighbourhood Green Space Tool (NGST) was developed as a quality assessment tool for quality assurance. The tool is divided into six categories: accessibility, recreation, convenience, natural features, incivilities, and usability. the tool is simple and can be used by an independent observer to assess the quality. The assessment is based on visual quality, maintenance, and the presence and quality of various features (Chu, Li, & Chang, 2021).

The quality of a park is counted as one of the major assets and is explained in terms of different features and characteristics, among which maintenance and cleanliness are some features. Likewise, it describes facilities such as the provision of playgrounds and dog parks. Similarly, amenities include parking, restrooms, pathways, landscape furniture, etc. The aesthetic features of the place are also accounted as park quality. In addition to this incivility, which shows the problematic aspects (such as litter, noise, vandalism, and safety issue) also defines the quality of the park (Chen, 2020). Similarly, The Urban Land Institute has prepared a report based on interviews with related professionals and experts to provide a framework for park quality. The objective of the report is to provide guidelines to the park developers and managers to effectively assess the quality of parks and help them to make proper decisions on investment and different strategies to improve quality. Five features are used to identify the overall quality of parks: the physical condition, accessibility, user experience, community relevance, and

adaptability (Urban Land Institute, 2021). Similarly, five features are used to identify high-quality parks as follows;

1. High-quality parks are in excellent physical condition
2. High-quality parks are accessible to all potential users
3. High-quality parks provide positive experiences for park users
4. High-quality parks are relevant to the communities they serve
5. High-quality parks are flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances

Park quality can be assessed in terms of the relationship between users and the environment based on sensorial, emotional, and mental relationships. The table below shows that the park quality assessment is divided into five broad categories and each category is further elaborated through different points. It covers the diverse aspects of quality assessment from physical aspects to user perception and behavior (Ter, 2011);

**Table 1:** Quality Criteria of urban parks

<b>Users</b>	<b>Activity/ Variety</b>	<b>Access and linkage</b>	<b>Comfort and Image</b>	<b>Sociability</b>
Behaviors	Sitting	Legibility	Safety	Co-
Perceptions	Chatting	Continuity	Sittability	operation
Requirements	Resting	Proximity	Walkability	Friendliness
Personal	Eating	Convenience	Greenness	Interactivity
Calmness	Watching	Walkability	Cleanliness	Diversity
Comfortable	Walking	Accessibility	Landscape elements	Storytelling
Safety	Lying	Connection with	(Benches, pavement,	Friendliness
Health	Celebratio	Transportation	Steps, bins, lighting Units,	
Environment	n	Connection with	ledges, greenery/Trees,	
Needs/expect	Fun	activities	sculptures, buffets, WC)	
ations	Vitality			

Likewise, (Kasyanov & Silin, 2019) developed an assessment tool consisting of multicriteria for the monitoring and management of parks. Table 2 shows that park function and security have been taken as the criteria to evaluate the integrated quality of the urban park (Kasyanov & Silin, 2019);

**Table 2:** Quality criteria of the urban parks (Kasyanov & Silin, 2019)

<b>Park Functions</b>	<b>Criteria for evaluating the park functionality</b>
Ecological function	Protection of the park from external negative factors Park benefits provided by its natural features
Recreational function	Leisure opportunities for individuals Opportunities for holding public events
Ergonomic function	Safety of parks for visitors Park accessibility Park convenience
Aesthetic function	Landscape design of parks Design of pedestrian areas
<b>Park security</b>	<b>Security factors of park functioning</b>
Park legal protection	National legislation on park protection Local legislation on park protection
Financial security of parks	Public financing of parks Involvement of private capital in servicing the needs of park visitors

As urban parks are important urban spaces, their quality assessment can be based on the quality parameter of the same. (Smith, Nelischer, & Perkins, 1997) listed six key factors for ensuring quality in designing urban places: 1) livability, 2) character, 3) connection, 4) mobility, 5) personal freedom, and 6) diversity. A study conducted taking 1000 urban public spaces from different countries found that access and linkage, comfort and image, uses and activities, and sociability as major factors in the qualitative evaluation (Bigdeli & Ngah, 2014). Considering the above factors and the qualitative combination of major activities (Bigdeli & Ngah, 2014) detailed ten factors to consider for the evaluation of urban public space quality:

1. Hygiene
2. Access
3. Attractiveness
4. Comfort

5. Participation
6. Liveliness and dynamism
7. Function
8. Distinction
9. Safety and security
10. Power and health

Thus, various parameters have been developed to check the quality of the parks. To maintain the quality of a park, its quality assessment is very important. Information from quality assessment helps stakeholders to take necessary decisions on development, design, renovation, maintenance, and programming. In addition to this, the allocation of budget and other resources can be planned on a priority basis. (Urban Land Institute, 2021).

Geographically, Pokhara is the largest metropolitan city of Nepal (in terms of administrative boundary) and the center of the western part of Nepal, the headquarters of Kaski district and the capital of province number 4 according to the recent federal restructuring of Nepal. (Pokharel & Khanal, 2018). The city is also considered the country's tourist capital with the spectacular natural beauty of the Himalayan range, lakes, hills, caves, gorges, and other interesting natural and cultural features. Among these, Phewa Lake is one of the most attractive tourist destinations it is the most popular and most visited lake in Nepal. To enhance the beauty of the lake various initiatives have been taken. In this context, some parts of the open spaces along the lakes have been used as parks. These parks are not only important from the tourism point of view but also provide city dwellers with various recreational, social, cultural, economic, health, and other opportunities. The parks directly contribute to the conservation of the natural environment around the lake and also discourage encroachment activities. Management is essential to the long-term viability of public areas. Unfortunately, only 44% of the open spaces in PLMC (Pokhara-Lekhnath Metropolitan City-former local body) are managed, and the remaining 56% are not properly maintained. Therefore, for the improvement in quality of life and better livelihood of local people, priority should be given to the protection, conservation, and development of open spaces. (Pokharel & Khanal, 2018). Therefore, acknowledging the importance of quality assessment of the parks, the general objective of this paper is to examine the quality of selected parks along Phewa Lake. The specific objectives of the study are;

- To find out the relevant criteria for the assessment of the quality of parks under study
- To assess the quality of parks based on the derived criteria
- To identify the strong and weak aspects of the selected parks

The results of the study are intended to be valuable in terms of generating ideas for deriving tools for the quality assessment of parks. The assessment of park quality provides information on areas that need to be improved, allowing required measures and planning to be taken to improve the situation. The evaluation results are crucial not just for improving existing parks, but they may also be used to develop new open spaces. Thus, the rest of the paper has been outlined as follows; Section 2 includes materials and methods with an overview of the study area, data collection, and methodology. Six parks along Phewa Lake have been chosen for the study, and the quality criteria for the research are based on the literature review. Section 3 consists of results and a discussion where the parks under study were assessed through the collection and analysis of both primary and secondary data. Finally, section 4 concludes the research with key findings, practical implication of the paper, research limitations, and recommendations for future studies.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Methodology

A deductive research methodology with objective measures was adopted in this study. The study was conducted in different phases, viz. literature review, data collection, data analysis, and finally results and discussion. Firstly, literature on quality criteria for parks and urban spaces from various academic publications was compiled and studied. After a careful review of previous studies, the criteria for the assessment of the park quality were identified in terms of 6 main criteria and 28 sub-criteria. And these criteria and sub-criteria have been used to assess the quality of parks under study. Accessibility, landscape element condition, utility, service condition, and cleanliness are four of the factors used for the quality assessment which are related to the physical aspect. The other dimensions, however, which relate to sociocultural elements are the distinctive characteristics and activities. The selected criteria for the assessment are as follows;

Criteria	Sub-criteria
1. Accessibility	i. Public transportation connection

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Well-conditioned road access</li> <li>iii. Walkability from a nearby neighborhood</li> <li>iv. Provision of parking</li> <li>v. Distinctive entry and exit</li> <li>vi. Opening round the clock</li> </ul>
2. Distinctive characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Natural</li> <li>ii. Socio-cultural</li> <li>iii. Religious</li> <li>iv. Historical</li> <li>v. Others</li> </ul>
3. Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Sitting</li> <li>ii. Chatting</li> <li>iii. Eating</li> <li>iv. Watching,</li> <li>v. Walking</li> <li>vi. Lying</li> <li>vii. Celebrating</li> <li>viii. Boating</li> </ul>
4. Condition of landscape elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Hardscape (footpath, seating space, shed, sculpture, boundary fence)</li> <li>ii. Softscape (Trees, shrubs, flowers, ground cover)</li> </ul>
5. The proper condition of utilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Lighting</li> <li>ii. Drainage</li> <li>iii. Washroom</li> <li>iv. Drinking water</li> </ul>
6. Cleanliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Cleanliness</li> <li>ii. Sufficiency of bins</li> </ul>

To collect the information on parks as per criteria, site visits to the parks were made. Data were collected through observation and key informant interviews. Both primary data and secondary sources were used to collect relevant information. The collected data were compared and analyzed with the criteria and sub-criteria. Finally, the results were presented and discussed.

## 2.2. Introduction to Study Area



**Figure 1:** Location of Parks under study

To investigate the quality of parks, 5 parks along Phewa Lake, Pokhara, Nepal (Fig 1) were examined. Starting from the south-eastern side to the north side, there lies Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, Damside Park, Komagane/Miteri Park, Basundhara Park, Yog Park and, Gaurighat Park. Even though the parks are located along the lake close to each other, they differ in many aspects like; shape, size, specialty, activities, soft scape, hardscapes, and other features.

### 2.2.1. Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park (MPP)



**Figure 2:** View from Park



**Figure 3:** Manuscript regarding Dam

Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park is located on the southeastern side of Phewa Lake. It is a park with a magnificent view of the Himalayan range and its reflection on Phewa Lake, so the name is Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, meaning the reflection of Machhapuchhre mountain. Besides the sceneries, the park is historically important as this is the place where the dam of



Phewa Lake was constructed in 1961 AD. Even though the dam is replaced with a new one, the inauguration manuscript can be found and is now used as one of the landscape features. Park space is planned with an emphasis on providing the setting to view the scenery. So, spaces adjacent to the lake are relatively better planned and maintained than other parts. Despite the park's aesthetic and historical value majority of the locals and tourists are not aware of its existence. This is partly because it shares the same entrance to the ministry complex and most people think it is a part of the complex rather than a public park.

### 2.2.2. Damside Park (BP)



**Figure 4:** Park Entrance



**Figure 5:** Chautari inside the Park

The park is located in the northern direction of Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, across Phewa Lake. From the park, beautiful sceneries of Phewa Lake, Rani Ban (Forest), and the Mountain range can be seen. The park is planned with seating spaces, greeneries, and a boating access point. Here visitors mainly come to enjoy sceneries, boating, relaxing, walking, etc. Although the park is mostly in use, one can notice its dilapidated condition at a single glance.

### 2.2.3. Komagane Park (KP)



**Figure 6:** Main entry gate



**Figure 7:** Water fountain

Komagane Park is located in the northwestern direction of Damside Park. The park is much bigger in size than Damside and Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park. From the park, beautiful sceneries of the mountain range, and lake can be seen. Park provides access to the Kedareshwor Mahadevmani Temple complex, located on the park's southern side. This has added to the cultural and religious values of the park. The park lacks significant design and planning as a whole but the entrance gate, few pocket spaces, and footpath can be seen as better designed than other parts. Modern stone sculptures in the park can be taken as an interesting feature. This park is more popular among locals than tourists. Religious events, sports, walking, gathering, and picnicking are major activities inside the park.

#### 2.2.4. Basundhara Park (BP)



**Figure 8:** View from the Park



**Figure 9:** Newly constructed footpath

Basundhara Park is located beside Komagane Park on the northwestern side. The location of the park is ideal for watching the uninterrupted view of the Himalayas, Phewa Lake, Talbarahi Temple, and Rani Ban (forest). The park is peaceful and people mostly come for walking,

boating, and playing games. Park is planned with footpaths, boating points, pavilions, bridges, Chautari, green spaces, etc.

#### 2.2.5. Yog Park (YP)



**Figure 10:** Yoga spaces in the park



**Figure 11:** Statue of lord Hanuman

Yog Park is a small park in the northwestern direction of Basundhara Park. The park provides space for Yoga and features a traditional water tap, and a statue of lord Hanuman and also covers the area of Sateshwor Shiva temple. In addition to the view of the Himalayas and Rani Ban (forest), it provides space for a wider view of the lake. International Yoga Day is celebrated as a major event in Park along with other occasional religious events.

#### 2.2.6. Gaurighat Park (GP)



**Figure 12:** Communal water tank



**Figure 13:** Footpath and seating

Gaurighat Park is located between Gaurighat and Ratna Mandir. The park consists of a community water tank, gate, Chautari, fountain, pavilions, seating spaces, Maiko Than (worship space), sculpture, etc. Enjoying the scenery, resting, playing table tennis, and having temporary exhibitions are major activities in the park.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Assessment of parks in terms of selected criteria

##### 3.1.1. Accessibility

Accessibility is one of the major components to influence park usage. The existence of urban parks with good accessibility contributes to the quality of life of the urban population (Błaszczuk, Suchocka, Wojnowska-Heciak, & Muszyńska, 2020). The table below shows that all the parks under study are well connected to public transportation with access roads in good condition. Similarly, they are easily walkable from nearby neighborhoods. On the contrary, the provision of parking and distinctive entry/exit seems to be missing in Damside Park and Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park respectively. Both Yog Park and Basundhara Park are universally accessible, the universal accessibility can be found in Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, and Komagane Park partially only, whereas Damside Park is devoid of universal accessibility.

Thus, in terms of accessibility, Basundhara Park and Gaurighat Park are found more favorable than others, as they fulfill all the sub-criteria under the heading. Following the same, Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park was found least favorable among others. In this park, universal accessibility is limited to some parts only, there is difficulty in finding proper entry because most first-time visitors hesitate to enter as it looks like the premise of the Ministry

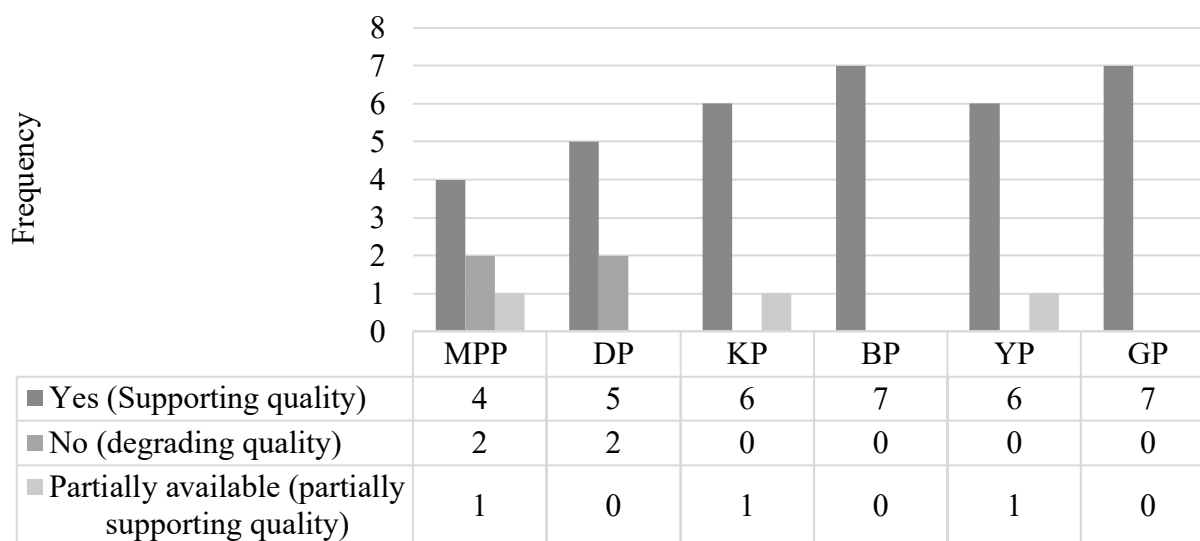
complex rather than a public park. Along with this people are not allowed to enter the park after it gets dark.

**Table 3:** Accessibility condition of the parks

3.1.	Accessibility	MPP	DP	KP	BP	YP	GP
3.1.1	Public transportation connection	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.1.2	Well-conditioned road access	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.1.3	Walkability from a nearby neighborhood	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.1.4	Provision of parking	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.1.5	Universal accessibility	PA	N	PA	Y	PA	Y
3.1.6	Distinctive entry and exit	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.1.7	Opening round the clock	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

MPP- Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, DP- Damside Park, KP-Komagane Park, BP- Basundhara Park, YP-Yog Park, GP- Gaurighat Park

Y- Yes, N-No, NA- Not available, PA-Partial, NE-Nearby



**Chart 1:** Comparison of overall accessibility in parks

The chart above shows that accessibility in Gaurighat Park and Basundhara Park is better than other parks as the parks fulfill all the sub-criteria supporting quality. Whereas Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park is found to be the weakest as it only fulfills 4 sub-criteria.

### 3.1.2. Distinctive characteristics

All of the parks lie along Phewa Lake with beautiful views of the lake, mountain range, hills, and, forests making them naturally beautiful. In addition to this, some parks are socio-culturally distinctive as they provide the setting for various socio-cultural activities. In the case of Komagane and Basundhara Park, new year programs and mass social gatherings during special events can be found. Similarly, International Yoga Day celebrations and other yoga activities can be found in Yog Park. Likewise, communal water taps and temporary exhibitions make Gaurighat Park socio-culturally valuable. On the other hand, there are no such special socio-cultural activities found in Machhapuchhre Pratibimba and Damside Park.

The presence of religious structures and associated activities in the parks show their religious characteristics. *Nagthan* (place to worship snake god) on Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, Kedareshwor Mahadevmani Temple accessed through Komagane Park, Sateshwor Shiva temple, Statue of lord Hanuman, a worship place for lord Sita-Ram on Yog Park and Maithan on Gaurighat Park, demonstrate their religious identity.

Historic characteristic is associated with three parks. Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park has a history of the dam structure built in 1961 AD. Likewise, Komagane Park is the result of international cooperation and friendship between the Japanese town of Komagane and Pokhara (2001 AD). Similarly, Yog Park is historically important due to its history of the location and the relocation of Sateshwor Shiva temple. So overall, in addition to natural value, Komagane Park and Yog Park have distinctive characteristics in terms of socio-cultural, religious, and historical value. Thus all the parks have a distinctive identity in one or more ways.

**Table 4:** Distinctive Characteristics of the Parks

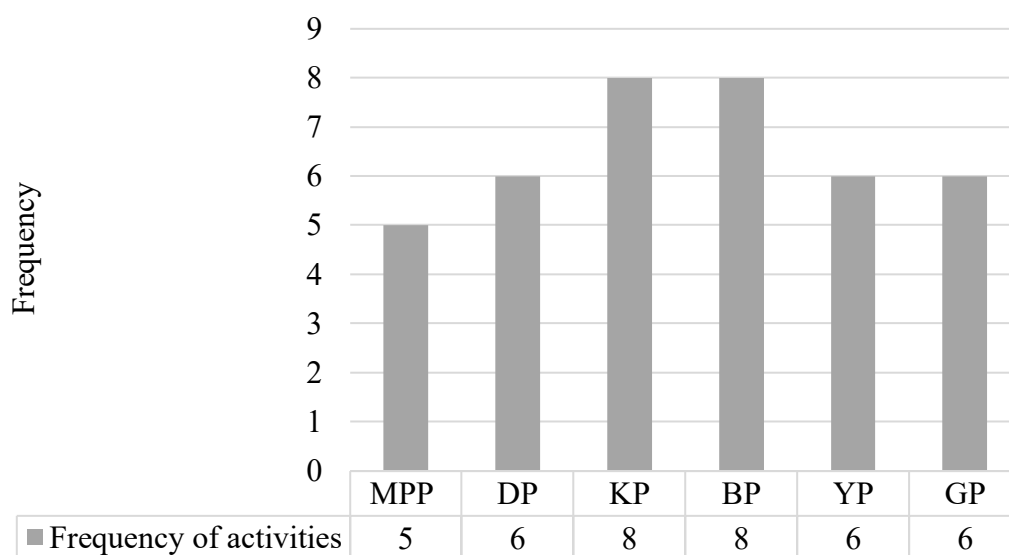
<b>3.2.</b>	<b>Distinctive Characteristics</b>	<b>MPP</b>	<b>DP</b>	<b>KP</b>	<b>BP</b>	<b>YP</b>	<b>GP</b>
3. 2.1	Natural	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.2.2	Socio-cultural	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.2.3	Religious	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y
3. 2.4	Historical	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N

### 3.1.3. Activities

Regular Park activities like sitting, eating, chatting, watching, and walking are noted in all of the parks. Whereas spaces to comfortably lie on are missing in all of them. Special celebrations are held in the parks except in Machhapuchhre Pratibimba and Damside Park. The boating facility to Phewa Lake is provided only in Damside Park, Komagane Park, and Basundhara Park. Here, diverse activities can be found in Komagane Park and Basundhara Park, whereas the least number of activities under the criteria is noted in Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park.

**Table 5:** Activities inside the parks

3.3.	Activities	MPP	DP	KP	BP	YP	GP
3.3.1	Sitting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.3.2	Chatting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.3.3	Eating	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.3.4	Watching	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.3.5	Walking	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.3.6	Lying	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
3.3.7	Celebrating	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
3.3.8	Boating	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N

**Chart 2:** Range of activities offered in Parks

Two bigger parks; Komagane and Basundhara Park are found to provide a wide range of activities than other parks. Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park is found with the least activities option. The remaining parks are found with equal number of activities.

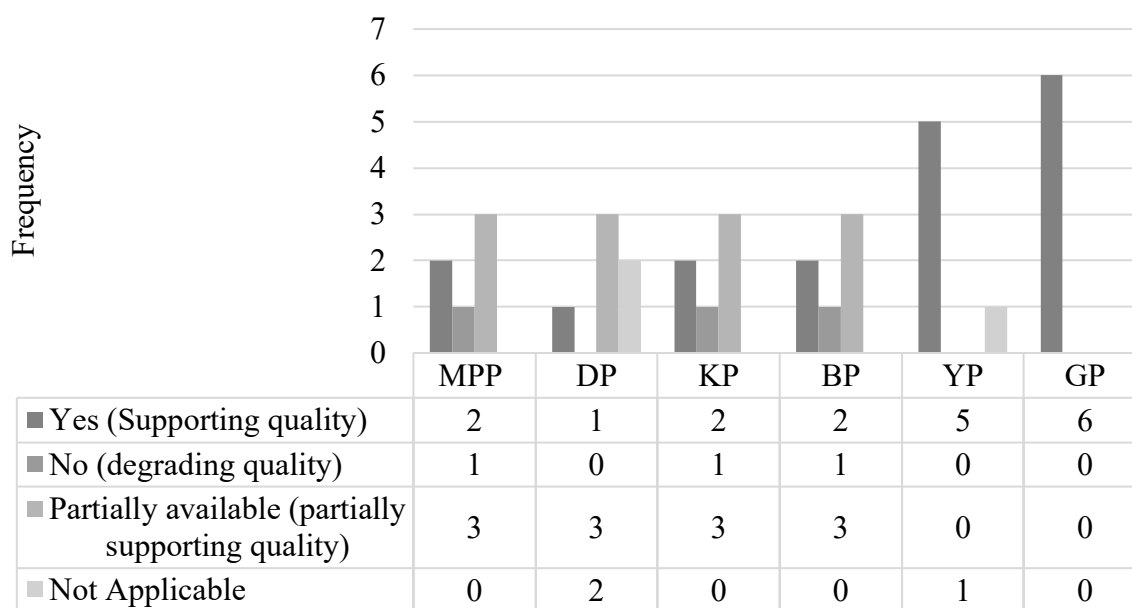
#### 3.1.4. Condition of Landscape Elements

Landscape elements of the parks are assessed in terms of their functional condition. Footpaths are in good condition in the case of Basundhara Park, Yog Park, and Gaurighat Park, but in other parks, the footpaths need maintenance. Except for Yog Park and Gaurighat Park, even though the seating spaces are provided, some of them are not in good serving condition. Sheds in Komagane Park and Gaurighat Park are in good condition but in the case of Basudhara Park, one of them is in dilapidated condition. However, there is no shed structure in other parks.

Except for Damside Park, sculpture structures can be found in parks and are in good condition. The boundary fence is in good condition only in the case of Yog Park and Gaurighat Park, whereas in other parks maintenance is needed. Seating furniture was found insufficient in two big parks; Komagane Park and Basundhara Park.

**Table 6:** Condition of landscape elements

3.4.	Landscape elements in proper condition	MPP	DP	KP	BP	YP	GP
3.4.1	<b>Hardscape</b>						
a.	Footpath	PA	PA	PA	Y	Y	Y
b.	Seating space	PA	PA	PA	PA	Y	Y
c.	Shed	NA	NA	Y	PA	NA	Y
d.	Sculpture	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y
e.	Boundary fence	PA	PA	PA	PA	Y	Y
f.	Sufficiency of seating furniture	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y



**Chart 3:** Summary of the condition of hardscape elements

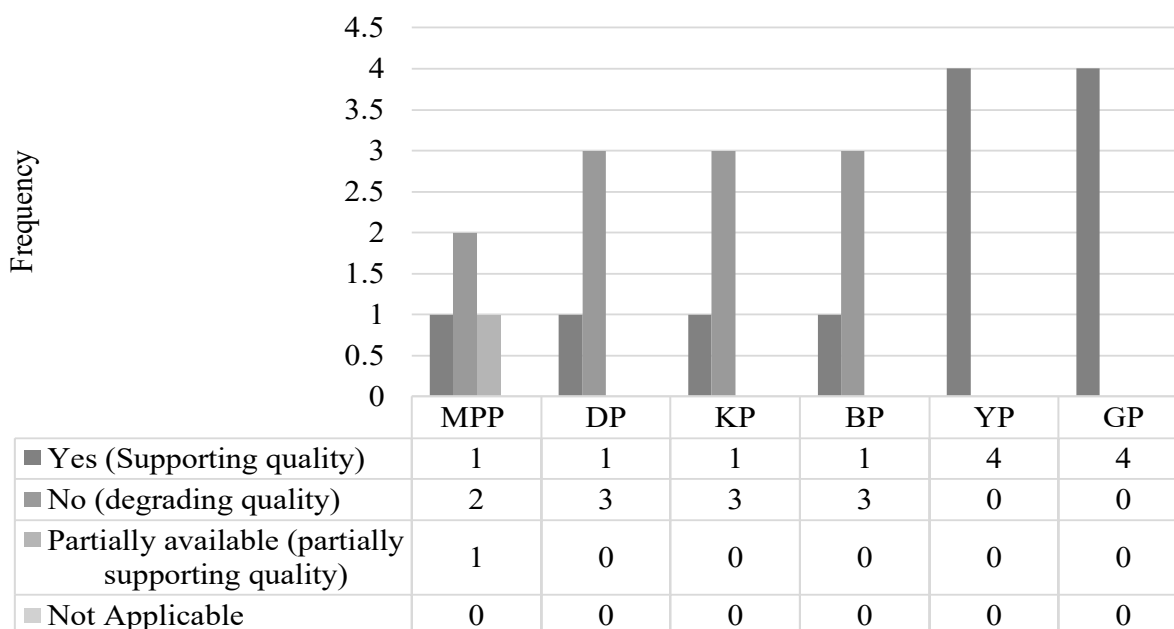
Overall Gaurighat Park is found with the best condition of hardscape elements, followed by Yog Park. But the condition in Damside Park is found weakest among all as the park fulfills only one sub-criteria supporting the hardscape quality.

Regarding soft scape elements of the landscape, trees are in good condition in all the parks. Except for Yog Park and Gaurighat Park, shrubs are not in a well-maintained condition. Similarly, flowers are very few and not properly taken care of except for Gaurighat Park and Yog Park. Ground cover is well maintained in Gaurighat Park and Yog Park partially



maintained in the case of Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park and left wild and with weed growth in other cases. Here, the landscape elements of Yoga Park and Gaurighat Park are found in proper condition. But the condition is found relatively poor in the case of Basundhara Park among all others.

3.4.	Landscape elements in proper condition	MPP	DP	KP	BP	YP	GP
3.4.2	Softscape						
a.	Trees	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
b.	Shrubs	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
c.	Flowers	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
d.	Ground cover	PA	N	N	N	Y	Y



**Chart 4:** Summary of the condition of softscape

Both Yog Park and Gaurighat Park have the highest frequency of data supporting quality in terms of the proper condition of the softscape. The condition is found weakest in Damside Park, Komagane Park, and Basundhara Park as the parks meet one supporting quality and one sub-criteria only partially.

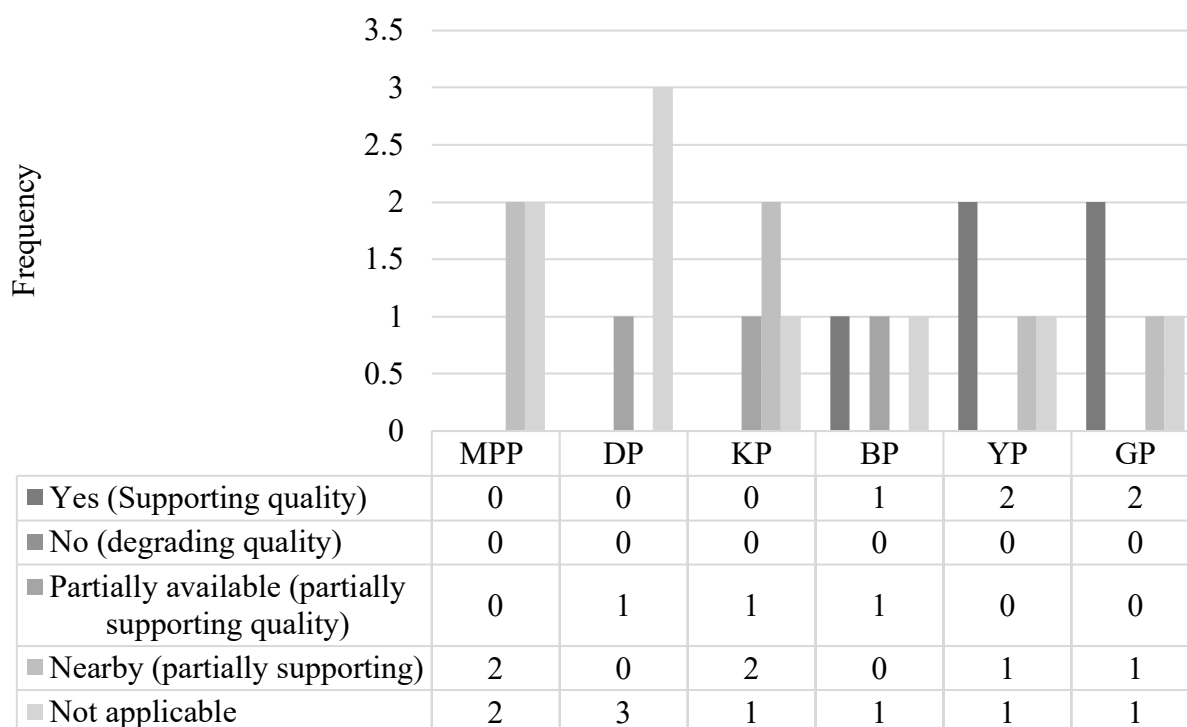
### 3.1.5. Condition of utilities and services

Only Yog Park and Gaurighat Park are provided with lighting facilities, whereas there is no lighting service in Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park and partial provision in other parks. In all cases, the drainage system is not properly planned, rather follows the natural gradient and

finally flows to the lake. The washroom facility is not available in Damside Park but in the case of Basudhara Park, it is available within the park premise. However, in other cases, visitors can access nearby washroom services (Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park- Ministry, Komagane Park- Kedareshwor Mahadevmani Temple, Yoga Park, and Gaurighat Park – Gaurighat). In the case of Yoga and Gaurighat Park, there is a drinking water facility, but it is not available in Damside Park, though, the facility is available in Yog Park and Gaurighat Park. However, in the case of Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park and Damside Park, visitors can use nearby drinking water facilities (Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park-Ministry, Komagane Park- Kedareshwor Mahadevmani Temple, Basundhara Park-facility on its northern boundary). In terms of the provision of proper utilities and services, Yog Park and Gaurighat Park are in better condition than others. Damside Park is found to have comparatively the least facilitated.

**Table 7:** The proper condition of utilities and services in the parks

3.5.	The proper condition of utilities and services	MPP	DP	KP	BP	YP	GP
3.5.1	Lighting	NA	PA	PA	PA	Y	Y
3.5.2	Drainage system	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3.5.3	Washroom	NE	NA	NE	Y	NE	NE
3.5.4	Drinking water	NE	NA	NE	NE	Y	Y



**Chart 5:** Summary of the condition of utilities and services

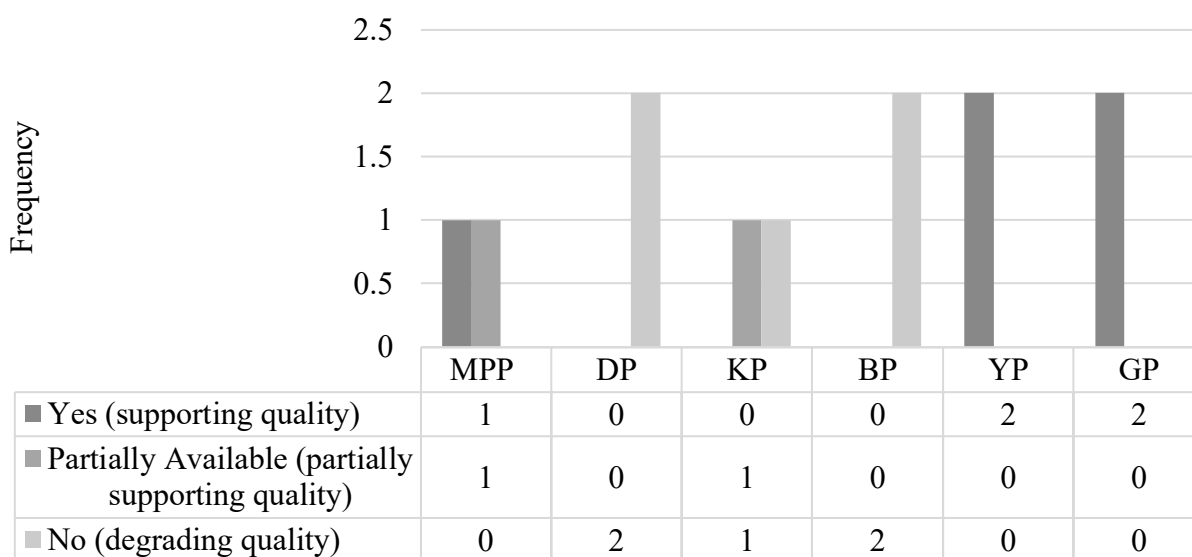
The frequency of data that supports the quality of utilities and services is found more in the case of Yog and Gaurighat Park. Whereas in the case of Damside Park, only one data is supporting the quality only partially. So the condition of Damside Park is poor among all other parks under study.

### 3.1.6. Cleanliness

Only Yog Park and Gaurighat Park are found in better cleanliness. In the case of Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, cleanliness is focused only on the lake part whereas, in Komagane Park, it is only focused on the accessway used by the temple, where regular cleaning is done by the temple. Damside Park and Basundhara Park are in poor condition regarding cleanliness. Bins are in sufficient numbers only in the cases of Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, Damside Park, Yog Park, and Gauritghat Park. Overall, Yog Park and Gaurighat Park is with better cleanliness than others, whereas Damside Park and Basundhara Park are on the relatively poorer side.

**Table 8:** Cleanliness condition of the parks

3.6.	Cleanliness	MPP	DP	KP	BP	YP	GP
3.6.1	Cleanliness	PA	N	PA	N	Y	Y
3.6.2	Sufficiency of Bins	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y



**Chart 6:** Summary of cleanliness

The chart above illustrates that Yog Park and Gaurighat Park are better in terms of cleanliness as the frequency of data supporting quality is more than in other cases. Whereas the highest frequency of data that degrades the cleanliness shows the poor condition of cleanliness in Damside Park and Basundhara Park.

### 3.2. Overall comparison of the quality of parks

The table below shows the strong and weak aspects of parks in overall comparison. All parks have a distinctive identity as their strong aspects. Gaurighat Park is found to have better quality among all other parks, as the park is strong in six different criteria under study. Gaurighat Park is followed by Yog Park with strong aspects in five criteria. Yog Park is followed by Komagane Park and Basundhara Park, the parks are found in similar quality states as the difference between strong aspects and weak aspects equals quantitatively. The parks are followed by Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, where the strong aspect of the park is outnumbered by weak aspects. Finally, Damside Park is found in the lowest quality state as the weak aspects are more than any other cases.

So, the ranking of parks in terms of quality in descending order is Gaurighat Park, Yog Park, Basundhara and Komagane Park, Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park, and Damside Park.

**Table 9:** Strong and weak aspects of parks in overall comparison

Name of park	Strong aspects	Weak aspects
Machhapuchhre Pratibimba Park	1. Distinctive characteristics	1. Accessibility
		2. Few options for activities
Damside Park	1. Distinctive characteristics	1. Poor condition of hardscape
		2. Poor condition of softscape
		3. Poor cleanliness
Komagane Park	1. Distinctive characteristics	1. Poor condition of softscape
	2. Activities	
Basundhara Park	1. Accessibility	1. Poor condition of softscape
	2. Distinctive characteristics	2. Poor cleanliness
	3. Activities	
Yog Park	1. Distinctive characteristics	
	2. Activities	
	3. Well-maintained softscape	
	4. Well-maintained utilities and services	

	5. Better cleanliness	
Gaurighat Park	1. Accessibility	
	2. Distinctive characteristics	
	3. Well-maintained hardscape	
	4. Well-maintained softscape	
	5. Well-maintained utilities and services	
	6. Better cleanliness	

#### 4. Conclusions

The importance of quality parks is immeasurable in the context of rapid urbanization. In this research, we have investigated the quality of the existing park along Phewa Lake by deriving quality assessment criteria from the literature review. In the study area, all the parks are rich in the natural views they offer visitors. However, analyzing the parks in terms of the selected quality parameters reveals that their condition is satisfactory in some but not in all criteria. The assessment shows that Gaurighat Park is in a better quality state than other parks under study, followed by Yog Park, Basundhara and Komagane Park, Machhapuchhre Park, and Damside Park respectively. The park with the highest quality (Gaurighat Park) is found with good accessibility, properly maintained landscape elements, properly functioning utilities and services, and better cleanliness. Whereas the park with the lowest quality (Damside Park) is having major problems regarding proper maintenance of the landscape and overall cleanliness. The park is also in need of improvement in other criteria of assessment. As a result, these findings contribute to determining park quality from a variety of perspectives. Results of the quality assessment provide the basis for the prioritization, planning, and implementation of resource allocation, and improvement initiatives more effectively and efficiently. Finally, this will help to improve overall park quality, and thus the quality of life and environment. Although there are many factors to consider when evaluating a park's quality, the study uses only six of them because of time and resource constraints. Besides these assessment criteria, there are other parameters to consider within the physical and sociocultural aspects. In addition to this, consideration of other aspects is also crucial for the complete picture. Thus, it is recommended to carry out a detailed study focusing on a criterion for a particular park or all the parks along the lake. Similarly, research is suggested with additional criteria to assess the quality of park/s from diverse perspectives.

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