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## **Publicness of Newly Redeveloped Public Spaces of Dhaka South City Corporation Area**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Public space is usually pursued as open-air living room and reflection of dignity of the community. It is the platform upon which the drama of convivial life discloses. This research has explored the competency of redeveloped Public Spaces in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC). A project, entitled 'Jol Sabuje Dhaka' has been recently inaugurated where several parks and playgrounds have been redeveloped. So, this research has focused on the changes in condition of those redeveloped public spaces. The study has concerned to assess the affects in visiting pattern and accessibility of redeveloped public spaces by the people of the community of DSCC after redevelopment. It's highly surprising that the result showed that public involvement has been increased, but not ensured the engagement of all social categories. Also, the main territorial playfields have been restricted for certain period of time within a day that restricts the accessibility. The study indicates that the enhancement of the public engagement in the parks and playgrounds of DSCC would increase through the provision of facilities and the access of public to these facilities. In fact, the functionality of public spaces mostly depends on the accessibility and community involvements.*

**Keywords:-***Development, Public Space, Publicness, Visiting Pattern, Accessibility*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Urban public space is the place that remains among buildings in urban area which should be accessible and open to all the public and where the urban inhabitants assemble and talk with others and human being appearance to relish the natural environment [31].

These public spaces were also the places of commercial transactions, social exchange and entertainment [9]. People need a circumstance which is not simply well constructed, but metric and allusive also and it should be the expression of the individuals and their tangled society, of their aspirations and their cultural tradition, of the natural arrangement and of the intricate performances and movements of the city world [12]. It is

important to emphasize on urban public space as a meeting place for better functionality of social interaction and democratic community [8]. To know the meaning of public spaces it wants to trace the connections between the urban structures and the practice of usage of the spaces where the three main issues, 'Physical Features', 'Distribution and Attitude of Users' and 'Flows of Human Activity' are important [10].

True public space is perceived as accessible to all the people by providing freedom of activity, interim possession and ownership [2]. However, in coeval society, it is becoming hard to distinguish between public and private space [30]. Public spaces are very essential both in public life and in the betterment of society and it's

the place where people establish their social relationships [13]. The physical arrangement of public space can allure its meaning for social interaction and impel a sense of community [19]. Public spaces, such as parks and piazzas, are those elements of the built environment that may foster sense of community by facilitating chance meets between neighbors [26]. The definition of public space refers to the gathering places that exist outside the home and workplace that are generally accessible by members of the public, and which foster resident interaction [18].

Recently Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) takes initiatives to improve the condition of parks and playgrounds of the city under the project named 'Jol Sobuje Dhaka'. The development plan includes eviction of illegal tenants, adequate drainage system in parks and playgrounds, the plantations of plenty of trees, installation of improved public toilets and drinking water facility and so on [27]. For gradual vanishing of parks and playgrounds in Dhaka, it has left a negative impact on physical, mental and social growth of the people [1].

In recent times, many of the public places of Dhaka city are losing their inclusive characters. Hence, from urban planning perspective regeneration of these places as an inevitable element of the city has become imperative to ensure an inclusive urban environment [21]. In Dhaka City, the urban residents popularly avail both the streets and open spaces for various activities as public spaces.

However, this present research only focuses on parks and playgrounds as public spaces of DSCC. The aim of this research is to analyze the conditions of redeveloped public spaces of DSCC. There is a research question set for the study and that is- 'What are the impacts of

redevelopment on urban public spaces in DSCC?' The general objectives of the study are-

- To analyze change pattern of visitors in public spaces,
- To explore the accessibility of public spaces after redevelopment and
- To give effective measures to improve the public spaces.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

According to Nabi [14], basically public open spaces can be categorized into two broad groups according to their attributes of usages- Active Recreation like play lot, play field, playground, sports ground, stadium etc. and Passive Recreation like gardens, parks, parkways, greenbelts etc. Nilufar [15] mentioned and defined all the public spaces within Dhaka City under the following four classes- urban parks, urban recreational areas, urban development open spaces and functional open spaces.

According to UN-Habitat [28], development of public spaces is a vital element of making fruitful cities. The process of making a place accessible occurs either naturally or through systematical planning process [23]. In terms of personal welfare, public spaces in urban settings have helped to reduce and mitigate stress, depression and disquiet and provided peace of mind [3]. Additionally, in this case, people with a greater cohesion to natural environments have been found to be much happier [17].

Access to parks and playgrounds provides a significant way to assume physical activity through active recreation [11]. But nowadays, particularly in cities of fast urbanizing countries, open spaces are shriveling at an alarming rate and are becoming less accessible and less fostered [20]. To create accessible public spaces, sociability, uses & activities, comfort &

image and access & linkages are the key features that can provide a sustainable and better place [24]. Sustainable community with safe and sound environment can be achieved by well-planned public and green space [5]. Varna & Tiesdell [29]

recognized five Meta dimensions of publicness: ownership, control, civility, physical configuration and animation. Each dimension extents from ‘more public’ to ‘less public’.

**Table 1:-Descriptors of ‘More Public’ and ‘Less Public’ for each Meta Dimension**

<b>More public</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Less public</b>
Many social groups regard the place as a public space	<b>MEANING</b>	Few social groups regard the place as a public space
Publicly-owned space with public function and public use	<b>OWNERSHIP</b>	Privately owned space with private function and private use
Free use	<b>CONTROL</b>	Overt and oppressive control presence-human and electronic surveillance
Cared-for; well-kempt; managed in the public interest	<b>CIVILITY</b>	Over- or under-managed
Well-connected; strong visual connection; without obvious entrances and thresholds	<b>PHYSICAL CONFIGURATION</b>	Poorly connected; poor visual connection; with explicit entrances and thresholds
Wide range of potential uses and activities	<b>ANIMATION</b>	Limited range of potential uses and activities

Source: Varna & Tiesdell, 2010

In the context of urban neighborhoods, studies express a strong institution between the quality of public space and sense of community [7].

The public spaces become successful and reactive when they are characterized by the subsistence of people in an often-self amplifying process [25].

In Dhaka city, within the junk of concrete and polluted environment the green open spaces are very essential inside the city for its environmental and ecological balance. Indeed, recreational facilities and public

spaces, which are accessible to the common people, provide a complete and necessary part of urban living, particularly in areas of high density [15].

Only 0.30% of the area is used for recreational facilities in RAJUK area. In 2035, the population will be 8.83 million here and it will be required 25.3% of area (Around 135.67 sq.km) to be kept as open space regarding DAP standards [16]. According to Dhaka Structure Plan (2016-35) [22], in case of Dhaka city, the planning standard is given below-

*Table 2:-Open Space Standard for DMDP Area for Each 1000 People*

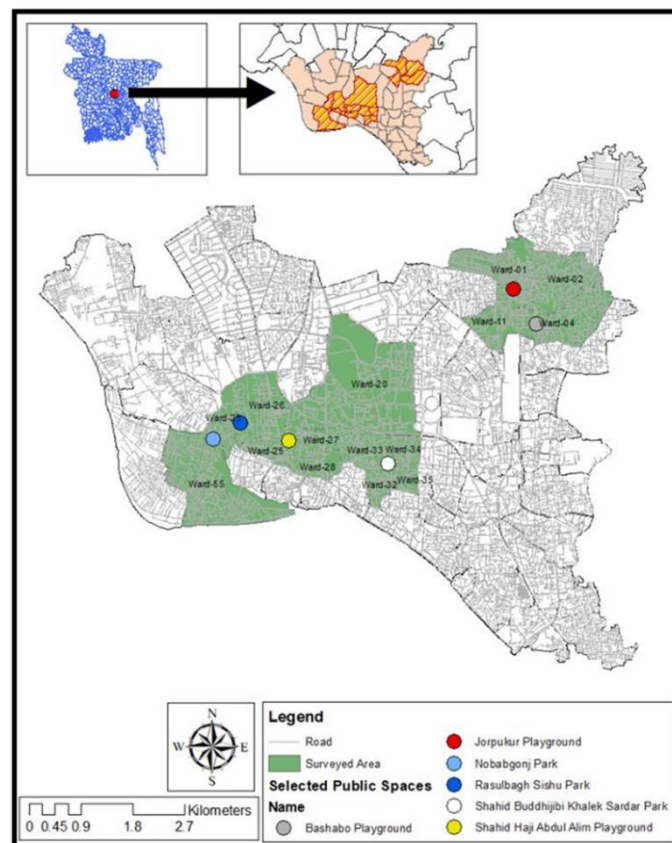
Name of the Facility (Open Space)	Standard (Acres / Population)	Size of unit facility (Acres)
Park/children’s park (local park/ mini park within neighborhood)	1.5 acre/ 12,500 i.e., 0.12 acres/1,000	Under 2 acres & average 0.25 acre
Play field (local play area)	3 acre/ 12,500 i.e.,0.24 acre/1,000	3-10 acres
District Park (within city, intermediate scale)	25 acre /100,000 i.e., 0.25 acres /1,000	50-75 acres
Metro Park (urban forests/ natural parks out city or on edge, large scale)	25 acre /100,000 i.e., 0. 25 acres /1,000	150 + acres
<b>Total</b>	0. 86 acres /1,000	

Source: Dhaka Structure Plan, 2016-35

**METHODOLOGY**

The research method includes conceptualization, literature review, method of data collection and analysis including sample design etc. Dhaka South

City Corporation has been selected as study area. The selection criteria are- government occupied, newly redeveloped, well planned and located in specific community.



*Fig.1:-Map of Dhaka South City Corporation*

Source: Prepared by Author, 2022

**Table 3:-Information about Selected Public Spaces in DSCC**

Name of the Public Space	Total Area (Acre)	Types of Public Space	Land Use of Surrounding Area	Nearest Bus Stoppage	Condition Before Development
Jorpukur Playground	0.80	Mini Playground	Residential	Khilgaon (700 meter)	Open Field
Bashabo Playground	2.50	Mini Playground	Mixed use	Bashabo (500 meter)	Open Field
Shahid Haji Abdul Alim Playground	0.90	Mini Playground	Mixed use	Dhakeshwari (240 meter)	Truck Parking
Nobabgonj Park	0.5	Mini Park	Residential	Odhyay (140 meter)	Vacant land
Rasulbagh Sishu Park	0.45	Mini Park	Residential	Azimpur (1000 meter)	Abandoned land
Shahid Buddhijibi Khalek Sardar Park	0.34	Mini Park	Residential	Naya-Bazar (650 meter)	Vacant land

Source: BBS, 2013, DSCC, 2020 and Field Survey, 2022

Research approach that has been maintained to conduct this study is qualitative approach. Observation and household survey technique have been pursued with checklist and questionnaire as data collection tool. Six public spaces have been surveyed and inhabitants of surrounding fifteen wards have been interviewed. From every ward, 15 respondents have been interviewed. The selected wards number- 01, 02, 04, 11, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 55 of DSCC. Random sample technique has been adopted in this survey. Total sample size was 225, where confidence level was 95%, confidence interval was 6.5 and population was 131030. Public spaces related information, demography, visiting pattern & accessibility of the respondents

in the post development time of public spaces and satisfaction level associating with some selected variables of the public spaces etc. have been evaluated. All the data have been analyzed with the SPSS software and also ARCGIS 10.5 software has been used for map preparation. The dependency of satisfaction level ( $1 \leq x \leq 5$ ) with public space after development on demography and accessibility of respondents has been assessed with regression model analysis. The quality of six public spaces has been assessed using the selected variables which include- Accessibility, Service and Facilities, Environment and Safety, Structures and Management and Maintenance System. In this quality assessment following formulas have been used-

- Each Variables' Score ( $x$ ) =  $f \times \text{score}$  (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5)
- Total Mean Per Variable =  $[(f \times \text{score 1}) + (f \times \text{score 2}) + (f \times \text{score 3}) + (f \times \text{score 4}) + (f \times \text{score 5})]$
- Each Variable Mean,  $\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$
- Mean Value of Public Space =  $\frac{\sum \bar{X}}{\text{Total no. of variables}}$



**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Information of Visitors and Their Change Pattern**

There is total 225 respondents. 148 respondents have visited after development and 80 respondents have visited before development. 87 respondents have visited only after redevelopment and 19 respondents have visited only before redevelopment. There are 61 respondents who have visited both after and before development. There also 58 respondents who have not visited the public space before and after the redevelopment.

In this following table, changes in number of visitors in the time of pre and post

development period of the public spaces in terms of demographic data like gender, age, occupation, education, income and duration of residency of the visitors.

Visitors have been increased after redevelopments of these public spaces. On the other hand, chi-square analysis has been done between demographic data and visitors after development. From the Chi-square analysis, after redevelopment it is found that comparatively elderly people, less-educated people, high income group people, new inhabitants of that area visited most.

*Table-4:-Changes in the Frequency of Visitors in terms of Demography*

Group	Before Development		After Development		Major Increment
	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	
<b>Gender</b>	Female (32%)	Male (38%)	Male (65%)	Female (67%)	Female (109%)
<b>Age</b>	31-40 (28%)	11-20 and above 50 (43%)	21-30 (54%)	41-50 (85%)	31-40 (136%)
<b>Occupation</b>	Service and Retired (33%)	Unemployed (50%)	Student (58%)	Unemployed (100%)	Housewife (112%)
<b>Education</b>	Below SSC (30%)	SSC (56%)	Undergraduate (62%)	SSC (88%)	Below SSC (167%)
<b>Income</b>	10001-20000 (25%)	60001-80000 (48%)	20001-40000 (59%)	Above 80000 (100%)	10001-20000 (200%)
<b>Duration of Residency</b>	8 to 12 years (33%)	Less than 1 year (43%)	More than 12 years (55%)	Less than 1 year (100%)	1 to 4 years (148%)

Source: Prepared by Author, 2022

**INFRASTRUCTURAL CHANGE ASSESSMENT**

Here the post condition of the public spaces has been assessed. All the public spaces are under the ownership of DSCC authority now and before also. Generally, playfield, boundary, seating place, footpath, drain and lighting have been provided in the public spaces after redevelopment. The public spaces have also been provided coffee shop, dustbin, toilet and CC TV camera etc. One of the fascinating equipment added to the public spaces are water filter for reusing rainwater, rainwater drainage and reuse

system. After redevelopment, the major activities happened in these public spaces are playing, walking and gossiping etc. The playfield is open only in the morning and afternoon and the playfield area is encircled with boundaries in most of the public spaces.

**FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF ACCESSIBILITY**

In this part accessibility related variables have been assessed with frequency analysis. Highest percentages of respondents per variables have been shown in below in tabular form-

**Table 5:-Highest Percentages of Accessibilities**

Characteristics	Variables	Major Percentages of respondents
Accessibilities	Distance of Public Space	Within walking distance (63.51%)
	Time to Reach the Public Space	Less than 5 minutes (49.32%)
	Transport Mode	On foot (81.76%)
	Footpath Connectivity	Hasn't had footpath connectivity (75%)
	Cost to Visit the Public Space	Haven't needed any cost (85.81%)
	Getting Chance to Play	Have got chance to do activity (79.05%)
	Reason for Not Getting Chance to Play (or Activities)	Crowded area or many people visited in the public spaces (48.39%)
	Access in All Place	Have had the access (64.19%)
	Safety	Have felt safety (74.32%)

Source: Prepared by Author, 2022

**COMPARATIVE QUALITY ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC SPACES**

Quality analysis has been done from satisfaction level assessment of the respondents on five variables. Here the mean value has been counted for the evaluation. Only 'Rasulbagh Sishu Park' hasn't had a good quality in terms of satisfaction level of the respondents yet after redevelopment. Accessibility of

'Rasulbagh Sishu Park' hasn't been improved after redevelopment. Environment and Safety of 'Jorpukur Playground', 'Nobabgonj Park' and 'Rasulbagh Sishu Park' haven't been in good quality after redevelopment though. Management and Maintenance System haven't been up to the mark of all parks and playgrounds except 'Bashabo Playground' even after redevelopment.

**Table 6:-Comparative Quality Assessment of Public Spaces**

Indicators (Public Spaces)	After and Before Development	Mean Value of Variables					Average Mean Value of Public Spaces
		Accessibility	Service and Facilities	Environment and Safety	Structural Design	Management and Maintenance System	
Jorpukur Playground	After	3.11	3.00	2.58	3.58	2.74	3.00
	Before	2.00	1.93	2.00	2.57	1.79	2.06
Bashabo Playground	After	3.43	3.21	3.79	3.71	3.00	3.43
	Before	1.93	1.86	1.36	1.79	1.50	1.69
Nobabgonj Park	After	3.23	3.08	2.77	3.54	2.62	3.05
	Before	1.78	1.44	1.56	2.00	1.33	1.62
Rasulbagh Sishu Park	After	2.62	3.00	2.38	3.54	2.69	2.85
	Before	1.67	1.83	1.50	2.33	1.50	1.77
Shahid Haji Abdul Alim Playground	After	3.39	3.02	3.05	3.48	2.59	3.11
	Before	2.31	1.87	1.56	2.13	1.81	1.94
Shahid Buddhijibi	After	3.13	3.09	3.09	3.58	2.78	3.13

<b>Khalek Sardar Park</b>	Before	2.08	2.04	1.62	1.96	1.75	1.89
<b>Average Mean Value of Variables</b>	After	3.15	3.07	2.94	3.57	2.74	
	Before	1.96	1.83	1.60	2.13	1.61	

Source: Prepared by Author, 2022

[\*Mean Value < 3.00: Below Standard]

**MULTIPLE REGRESSION MODEL**

From table, it is showed that ‘gender’, ‘income’, ‘duration of residency’, ‘distance of public space from home’, ‘time required to reach’, ‘access in all the place’ and ‘feel safe in public space’ have

the relation with satisfaction level with public space after development. When the value of P is less than 0.05 it indicates a correlation between two variables; whereas  $\beta$  indicates the positive or negative relation between them.

*Table 7:-Coefficients Table for Multiple Regression Models*

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig. (p)
		$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.018 ( $\alpha$ )	.255		11.847	.000
Demography	Gender	.168	.080	.191	2.104	.037
	Age	-.015	.033	-.041	-.463	.644
	Education	-.029	.021	-.100	-1.365	.174
	Income	-.095	.036	-.216	-2.595	.011
	Duration of Residency	.103	.030	.300	3.442	.001
Accessibility	Distance of Public Space from Home	-.282	.086	-.325	-3.286	.001
	Time Required to Reach	-.171	.054	-.303	-3.159	.002
	Better Footpath Connectivity	-.049	.076	-.051	-.651	.516
	Costs to Visit	.066	.063	.082	1.047	.297
	Getting Chance to Play or Do Activities	-.006	.091	-.005	-.062	.951
	Access in All the Place	.143	.057	.164	2.494	.014
	Feel Safe in Public Space	.166	.067	.174	2.495	.014

Dependent Variable: Satisfaction Level with Public Space after Development

\* $p \leq .05$  (Significant) [two-tailed tests]

Source: Prepared by Author, 2022

Major findings from this regression analysis are- men are more satisfied than women, inhabitants who have higher duration of residency, visitors who have access in entire places of the public spaces and visitors who feel safe and secure in the public spaces have more satisfaction with

the public spaces. On the other hand, High income groups’ people, inhabitants who resided far from the public spaces and inhabitants who need more time to reach the public spaces from home are less satisfied with the public spaces.



**PUBLICNESS AND EFFICIENCY  
EVALUATION OF PUBLIC SPACES**

According to the model of Varna & Tiesdell [20], there are some dimensions to identify the publicness of public spaces

which are discussed in literature review. In accordance with that, publicness of the selected public spaces has been assessed here.

*Table 8:-Publicness Evaluation of Public Spaces*

Dimensions	Public Spaces					
	Jorpukur Playground	Bashabo Playground	Shahid Haji Abdul Alim Playground	Nobabgonj Park	Rasulbagh Sishu Park	Shahid Buddhijibi Khalek Sardar Park
<b>Meaning (Public Involvement)</b>	Don't engage all: L. P.	Don't engage all: L. P.	Don't engage all: L. P.	Don't engage all: L. P.	Don't engage all: L. P.	Don't engage all: L. P.
<b>Ownership</b>	DNCC: M. P.	DNCC: M. P.	DNCC: M. P.	DNCC: M. P.	DNCC: M. P.	DNCC: M. P.
<b>Control (Access of Use)</b>	No restriction: M. P.	Has restriction: L. P.	Has restriction: L. P.	Has restriction: L. P.	Has restriction: L. P.	Has restriction: L. P.
<b>Civility (Management)</b>	Bad: L. P.	Good: M. P.	Bad: L. P.	Bad: L. P.	Bad: L. P.	Bad: L. P.
<b>Physical Configuration (Connectivity)</b>	Has nearest bus stand: M. P.	Has nearest bus stand: M. P.	Has nearest bus stand: M. P.	Has nearest bus stand: M. P.	Has far bus stand: L. P.	Has far bus stand: L. P.
<b>Animation (Range of Activity)</b>	Newly equipped: M. P.	Newly equipped: M. P.	Newly equipped: M. P.	Newly equipped: M. P.	Newly equipped: M. P.	Newly equipped: M. P.
<b>Overall Publicness</b>	More Public	More Public	Moderate	Moderate	Less Public	Less Public

Source: Prepared by Author, 2022

[\*M. P. = More Public; L. P. = Less Public]

From chi-square analysis it is found that some of the social groups have visited mostly than other social groups. So, these public spaces can't be engaged all the social groups which make these public spaces less public. In terms of ownership, it is found that all the selected public spaces are under the ownership of DSCC, a government authority.

So, it makes these public spaces more public. In terms of control or access of use, all these public spaces are less public except Jorpukur Playground. Because, all the playlots of these public spaces are remained closed in a certain period of time every day. Management: From the quality

analysis, all the public spaces have mean score less than 3 except Bashabo Playground in management and security. So, it indicates less publicness of these public spaces.

In terms of physical configuration, except Rasulbagh Sishu Park and Shahid Buddhijibi Khalek Sardar Park, rest of these public spaces have more publicness because of having close bus stand or well footpath connectivity. All these parks and playgrounds are recently redeveloped. So, these public spaces provide a wide range of opportunity of usages and activities. That indicates more publicness of these public spaces.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

To enhance the better public spaces, here it needs to take some positive measures. The playfields have cave-looked boundary and are open only in the particular time in a day. It controls the access of people to these public spaces. The opening time and duration of the playfield should be increased. And also, the boundary should be redesigned.

Not only children's equipment but also adult people's equipment for their activities should be provided in the parks. Women, children, older people, physically challenged people etc. have to have accessibility in the public spaces. Enhancing more activities in the public spaces is necessary and that would ensure more engagement of peoples. It is necessary to enhance the security and maintenance of the public spaces to increase their use. To maintain resilience of the public spaces, proper maintenance and security are needed.

A simple and adaptable design that will allow for future enhancement of the space should be maintained. Most successful public spaces have some natural landscaping and shading. Scheduling programs of activities, like a weekly football/cricket tournament or circus/game of monkeys/snakes or a concert- can allure people towards public spaces. Public spaces are important for communities and individuals. They play an essential role in community life. When these places become more accessible and the public engagement will be risen, these places will become more public. To ensuring publicness of the public spaces, it needs to be considered a key part of urban development. A better public place is that where community people can relate themselves with the place and culture. Even today, under enormous pressure of

urbanization, public places can be an integral part of the built urban environment that can enhance the quality of life and contribute to the sustainability and formulation of civic identity. Therefore, for the livability of Dhaka City it has become imperative to develop adequate amount of quality public places especially at the time when public realm is under challenge.

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