

REVIEW ON THE USERS' COMMENTS ON THE PATTERN USE OF AN IRANIAN GARDEN IN PARKS CASE STUDY: SEMNAN CITY PARKS

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is emphasizing on the necessity of attention to choose (select) an appropriate model in making parks and use of identical styles with climatic and social conditions of city in order to impact on improvement of the environment, increasing the efficiency of parks, and creating playgrounds comply with citizen's taste. In this study the researcher first, processed information about theoretical studies of the research question and also collection of data. The data collection was done in three ways. (A) Gathering library information and use of archives, (B) Data collection and statistics that have been conducted with referring to agencies and related organizations and (C) Data collection was done by using questionnaires, interview with the relevant authorities and executive agencies, and using of tables and graphs. According to the results of the poll, the majority of users were in favor of the creating parks with Iranian garden criteria, in Semnan city, and interesting to note that the highest degree of consensus about water elements and vegetation was based on this pattern. In evaluation of parks according to the other criteria such as structure, suitable prospect, and architecture of the park showed very little correspondence with this pattern. It can be concluded that the dominant pattern in Semnan city parks had very little correspondence with the interests and views of users as well as the consistent patterns with natural conditions and climate.

Keywords: Iranian Garden Model, Parks, patterns of users

INTRODUCTION

With the formation and development of human societies, human's gradual moving away from the nature and occurrence of human life adversity (the outcome of the conflict is human nature) need to contact with nature was identified as a missing link in human living environment. It was at this time that humans intended to create natural spaces in the urban environment as a supplier of (repair) man's relationship with nature. The result of these efforts, were the formation of gardens and ancient history of gardening in the world.

In mythic beliefs of ancient Iranian, water, plants, sun and moon were symbols of Anahyta (Venus) and Mehr (Love). Mehr was the epitome of light and the light of sun. She was worshiped alongside the water. And also the invocation of Anahyta, the goddess of water, was there. Fecundity and fertility were associated with water and plants. (Javadi, 1386).

After the arrival of Islam in Iran under the Islamic worldview, human's relationship with nature formed on the basis of balance between components of being world and governing laws on it with essential and harmonious relationship between nature and man.

Based on these worldviews, though Islamic era cities mostly were in areas with difficult climatic condition, but in order to create harmony and balance between built environment and nature and human needs their systematization and formation have been successful model. (Shokuyy, 1365)

Garden means an enclosed area for plant cultivation and it is a clear indication of human relationship with environment plants. In Iranian (Iranian) gardens, greenery of trees, plants, long-term variations of colored flowers, subtleties of pleasant air, fragrance of space, and eye-catching of view are included with all aspects.

Iranian Garden makers avoided the futility and they had logical use of flowers, plants and trees and not planted any time without reason.

In Iranian garden the layout of garden, composition, and order of planting trees and plants are empirical, scientific, depending on certain criteria, overseer of effectiveness and dynamism, confronting with environmental conflicts, favorable for farming, and beautiful scenery in different seasons. (Toufan, 1384)

Iranian garden as a complete structure, indicating a close relationship between culture and nature and it is a secret sign of consistency and aligned to the needs of human and nature.

In the past, there were occurrence of environmental potential power and understanding of its complexity. Garden creator on the basis of its own empirical knowledge creates space, which could cause the incidence of survival, and dynamics of the natural substrate. (Heydari and Behbehani, 1387, p 3)

Accordingly, Islamic architecture in cities and urban areas has moved to use human environment and citizen spaces as a supplier of human connection with nature. So, the creation of urban gardens has always considered as a major supplier of the relationship between man and nature.

Historically, Iranian gardens were under the influence of environmental, economic and political issues and in each period made a certain style of them that the bulk of them have already gone and the only remaining documents cover Timurid period to contemporary history.

Uncontrolled growth of cities in the Third World and Iran is under the influence of European cities in the industrial revolution Era. With an overview on the urban transformation and development, we are clearly know that with the arrival of the alien thoughts and patterns, imitation, being repetitive of their assessment, programs and projects for the development of cities, the relationship between man and nature in the opposite direction in the past and inconsistent with the principals and cultural values and without relying on the theoretical principles derived from the resulting beliefs were flown.

A glance at the development programs and consequent urban plans indicate the fact that there has never exerted utmost care to the theoretical necessity, invention, and suggestion of national and Islamic – Iranian patterns for the construction of living environment (nature, built environment, and their relationship).

An overview on the development programs Shows that despite a chapter entitled "Urban Chapter" there have not indicated to the theoretical principles, influence of culture and social beliefs on city, city planning , architecture, and issues related to the biological complexes. (Consulting engineers, Architects and Planners Part, 1385, p 17)

Industry growth and the increase of population in cities caused the development of utilitarian constructions. These constructions have not paid attention to the health issues and provision of minimal light and materials in dense urban areas. On the other hand, necessity of making new

urban users in order to provide the increasing needs and gradually settlement of population caused the decrease in green spaces, urban gardens, and environmental pollution. (Behbehani, Journal of green space, number 6, 5, second year)

“On the importance of urban green space can be said that nowadays urban climate under the influence of the density processes and the concentration of activities in cities have changed so that in regional studies, cities are discussed separate from regional climate. The effect of urban green space reduction on urban ecology, particularly climate, air, soil, groundwater, wild life is so severe that it changes its component parts in urban environments "(Rahnamaye, 1371, p 255).

Undoubtedly, the most important issue in planning and green space architecture is determining of proper pattern for a city. In other words, the object of planning and developing of green space is integrative aims of embellishment (beatification), the improvement in the environmental conditions, and the repair of urban appearance (Bahram Soltani, Abadi Journal, No. 17, Summer 1374).

Unfortunately, in Iran based on the usual method in urban plans, the title of green space in the earth user map has given to the piece of land that remains useless during the process of land functional planning. This attitude about green space is lack of any kind of scientific support (credit) and planning logic. (Bahram Soltani, Center for Architecture and Urban Studies, 1370, pp. 2-5, 6)

In addition, one of the most important natural areas in cities is became the sacrifice of development, increasing constructions, and profiteering are inside cities gardens which in spite of laws are always exposed to damage and extinction (destruction).

A prominent example of this trend is the destruction of most of the orchards in desert outskirts cities and northern cities. This is as a result of commercial thoughts, building process, and maximum economic utilization of the land and due to the inattention to human's need to contact with nature, and development of natural environments in cities, first, orchards (gardens) of inside cities and then marginal gardens were destroyed and by land distribution turn into building. (Part Consulting Engineers, 1385, pp. 34 and 39)

Review on politics and policies, which have been proposed in order to achieve country development programs, as before they focused on the quantitative and materialistic aspect of life and urban living. They not only indicate on the quality spiritual dimension of human life but also try to identify these needs, resources, and ways of replying them. (Ibid., p 18)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

A) The emphasis on the necessity of attention to choose (select) an appropriate model in making parks and use of identic styles with climatic and social conditions of city in order to impact on improvement of the environment, increasing the efficiency of parks, and creating playgrounds comply with citizens taste.

B) Studying the patterns and designs used in urban and suburban parks and their evaluation.

C) The emphasis on the necessity of protecting and preserving green space and parks, natural spaces of cities, and prevention of their destruction.

Therefore, with refer to the mentioned topics the research hypothesis is as follow: ‘It seems that there is a significant relationship between Iranian gardens pattern and users’ preferred pattern in creating parks.

METHODOLOGY

In this study the researcher first, processed information about theoretical studies of the research question and also collection of data. The data collection was done in three ways.

(A) Gathering library information and use of archives

(B) Data collection and statistics that have been conducted with referring to agencies and related organizations

(C) Data collection was done by using questionnaires, interview with the relevant authorities and executive agencies, and using of tables and graphs.

Therefore, by considering subject of the study the research stages were expressed as follows:

(A). Selection of a topic and research methodology.

(B). Data collection by using field and documentary method.

(C).The study of sources related to the research subject.

(D). Analysis and assessment of information and data.

(E).The test of research hypothesis, conclusions, and suggestions.

EVALUATION CRITERIA OF PARKS

In order to evaluate parks based on Iranian garden pattern and to give scientific and rational idea, after studying various sources and obtaining experts' views, five features of the Iranian Garden (structure, vegetation cover, water, perspective, and architecture) which have complied by Seyyed Mansour Amiri, and Haider Natage, and is the sum of Iranian garden pattern, have selected as criterion. Also, in order to assessing parks with more accuracy, analysis, and description of data with reference to above-mentioned about 10 references have been considered for each criterion.

1- Evaluation of Semnan Public Opinion about Iranian Garden Model in the Parks

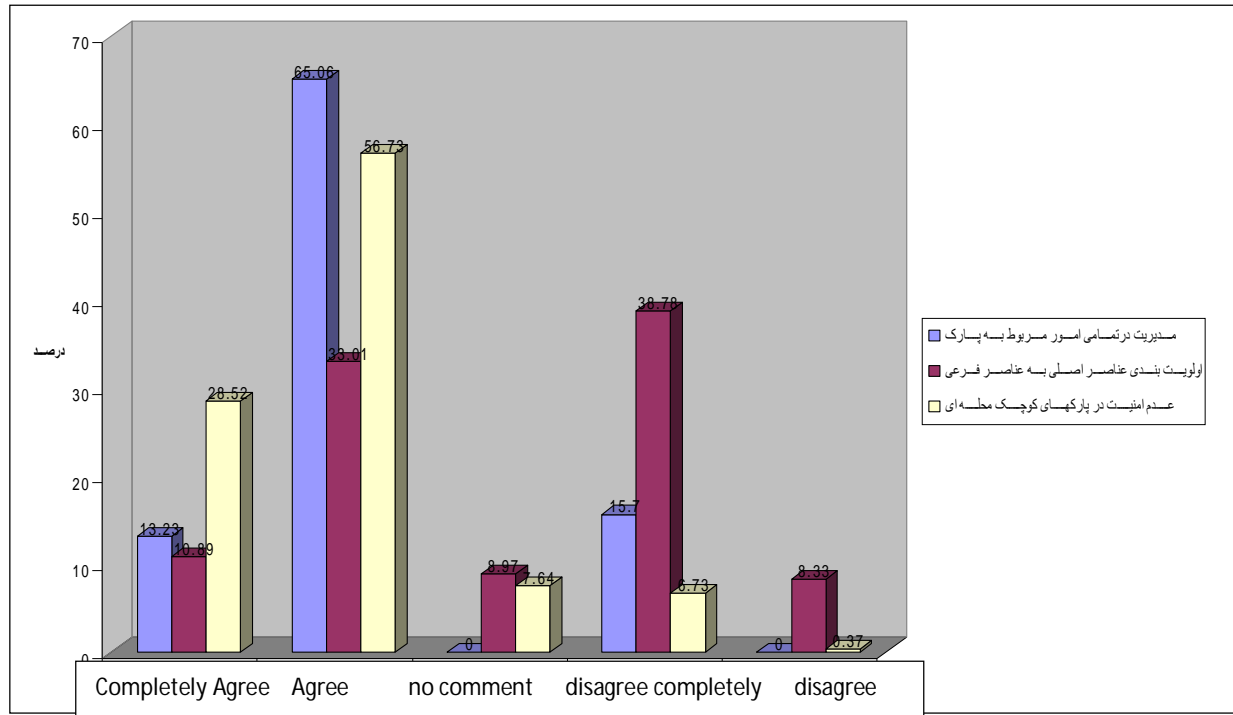
The research was done in the form of self- administered questionnaire survey technique. The questions of the questionnaire set based on five criteria of Iranian garden. Based on psychological principles, the questionnaire had little questions. Then collected data were analyzed by using SPSS software. The validity of the questionnaire was calculated by using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 83.7$). Therefore the validity of the questionnaire was acceptable.

2- Comments in relation to the Structure criterion

Summary of received comments on small neighborhood parks confirmed that these kinds of parks are not suitable and they are places for gathering of bad people. On the other hand, due to the multiple scattering of these parks in neighborhoods context, it was not feasible to provide a park ranger for these parks by green space management. So they are a gathering place for the wrong people. The other hand, one of the characteristics of Iranian garden is its area (size), and also because of being surrounded the possibility of traffic of vehicles such as motorcycles are not allowed and it has security force. Therefore, the more relative security is established. So it seems that, one of the reasons to choose parks with larger extent instead of small neighborhood parks by respondents is the possibility of establishing cases like security and etc. and it is considered part of Park manager tasks.

The main point in conducted survey was the preference of welfare and service facilities to Vegetation and water. Since the service and welfare affairs are secondary elements of the Iranian Garden and water and vegetation are important elements. But on this poll taking, the priority was given to the secondary elements. Therefore, designing of parks in Iranian garden style must give special attention to this sub-elements.

Graph (1) people's views about the questions related to the structure criterion

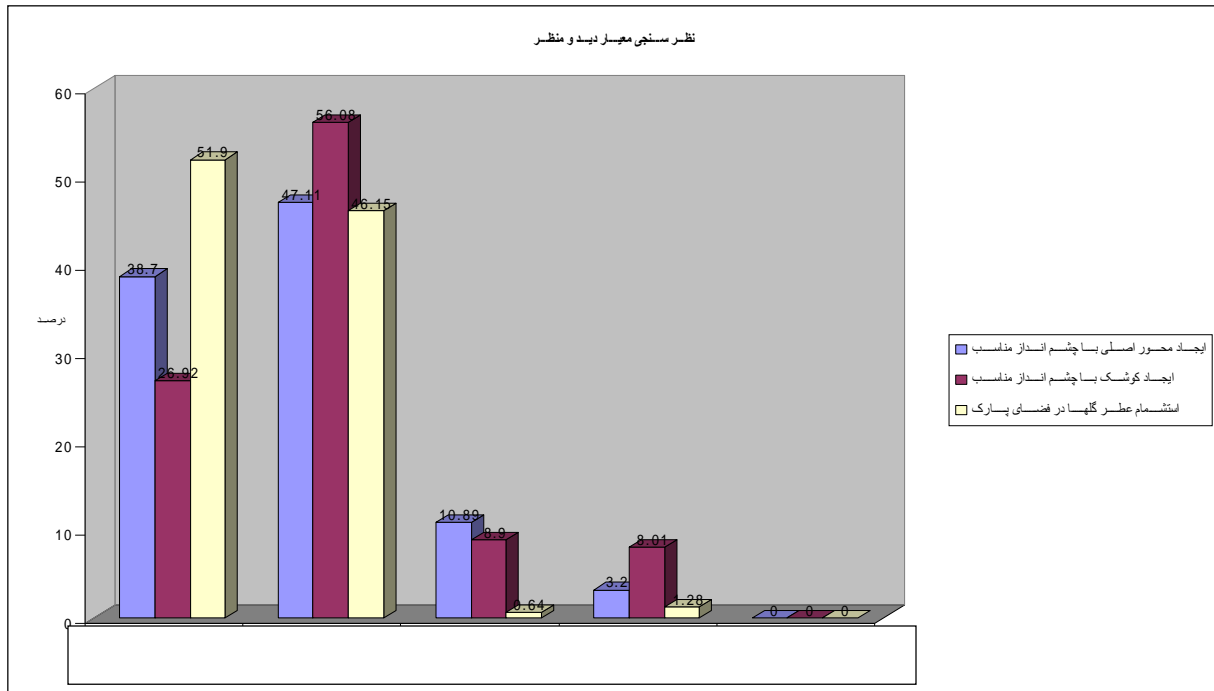


3- Analysis of comments in relation to vision perspective criterion

Since Semnan city parks in compliance with these standards and they have obtained very low scores (Graph 2), in other words, in terms of landscape and creating a proper perspective based on this pattern, lack coordination. The vast majority of the answers were in agreement with creating of perfect scenery, smelling the fragrance of flowers, and creating the main building in the park with a proper landscape for service or cultural affairs.

As mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis, several theories were presented the influence of natural scenery such as water, plants and other natural elements on the health and the decrease of stress and mental stresses. So the natural tendency of man is to see these sights. Therefore, based on this pattern in designing parks, it is necessary to consider park architecture with special approach to Iranian garden landscape.

Graph (2): Comments on questions related to the standard view and perspective



4- Analysis of Comments in relation to the criterion of vegetation

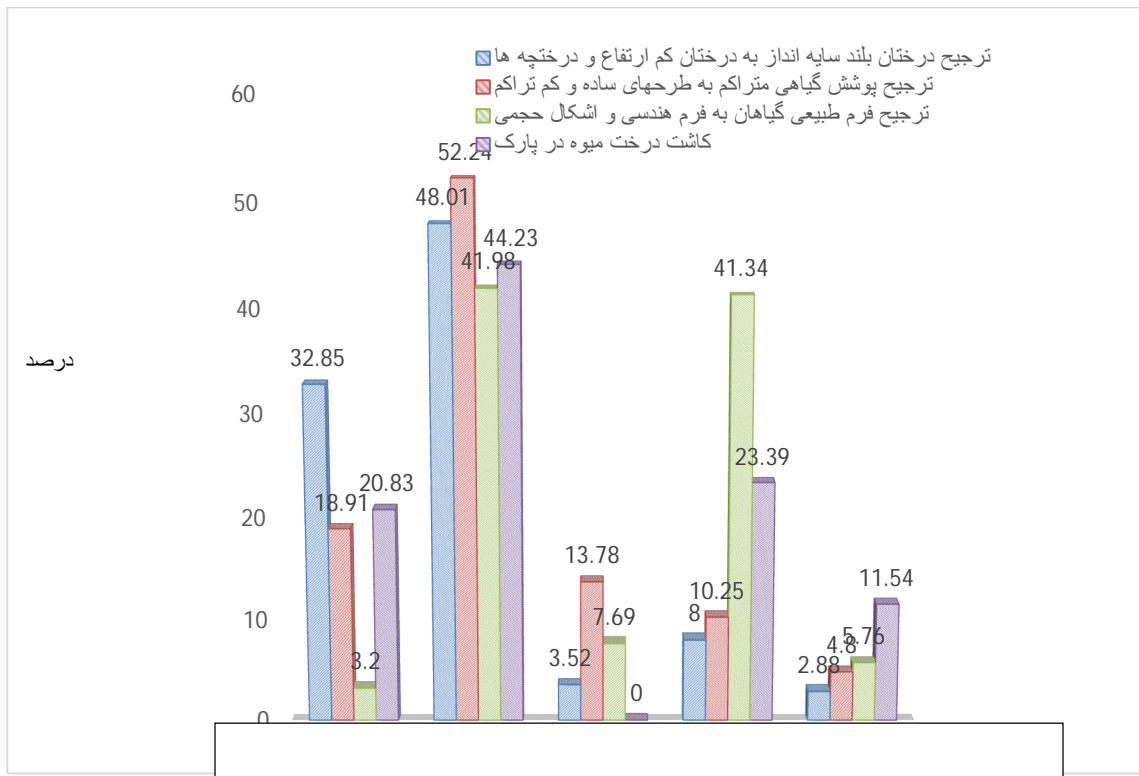
As mentioned in the Section of vegetation criterion, Iranian gardens, especially in hot and dry areas used shady tall trees along the main axes with the composition of deciduous and evergreen trees and planting of fruit trees in plots which has been effective in moderating of extreme environmental conditions.

In this questionnaire, planting of shady tall trees in Parks were the majority opinion. It seems that one major reason for this choice is the impact of this climate conditions on people, especially in open spaces. Using of shady tall trees have recognized suitable in relative regulating (modification) of these conditions.

There was also consensus on the planting density in which these factors also caused the increase of environment relative humidity, reducing of noise pollution, air pollution absorption, and making a proper perspective.

But the preservation of natural form of plants which is the criterion of Iranian garden design, with slight differences, the majority preferred decorative and massive forms. In author's view, it was due to the overcome of young population questioning and a sense of variety. Planting fruit trees as well as was in agreement of the majority people.

Graph (3): Comments on questions related to the vegetation criterion

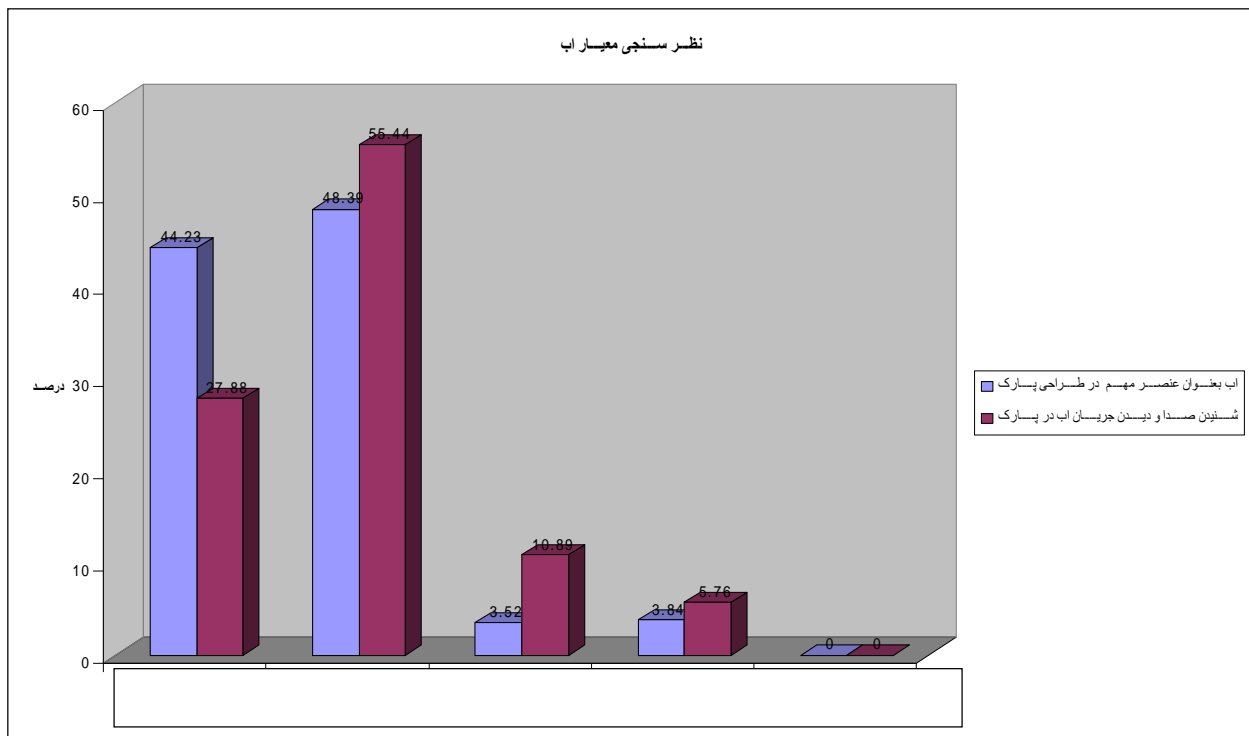


5- Analysis of opinions in relation to water criterion

Water is the most important and influential element in the Iranian Garden. Especially in central area of Iran, the presence of this element and its effect is more dramatic. The research showed that the vast majority of people were in agreement with the presence of water and its various displays (manifestations) in the Park. It seems that, this interest is due to aesthetic aspects, psychological, and its ecological functions especially effect on the moderating harsh climate conditions, in hot and dry areas.

Also, according to Figure 4, we observed the highest compliance and coordination of this element in assessment of Parks in Semnan city. Also in this survey, the greatest consensus was about water in the park.

Figure 4: Comments on questions related to water standards



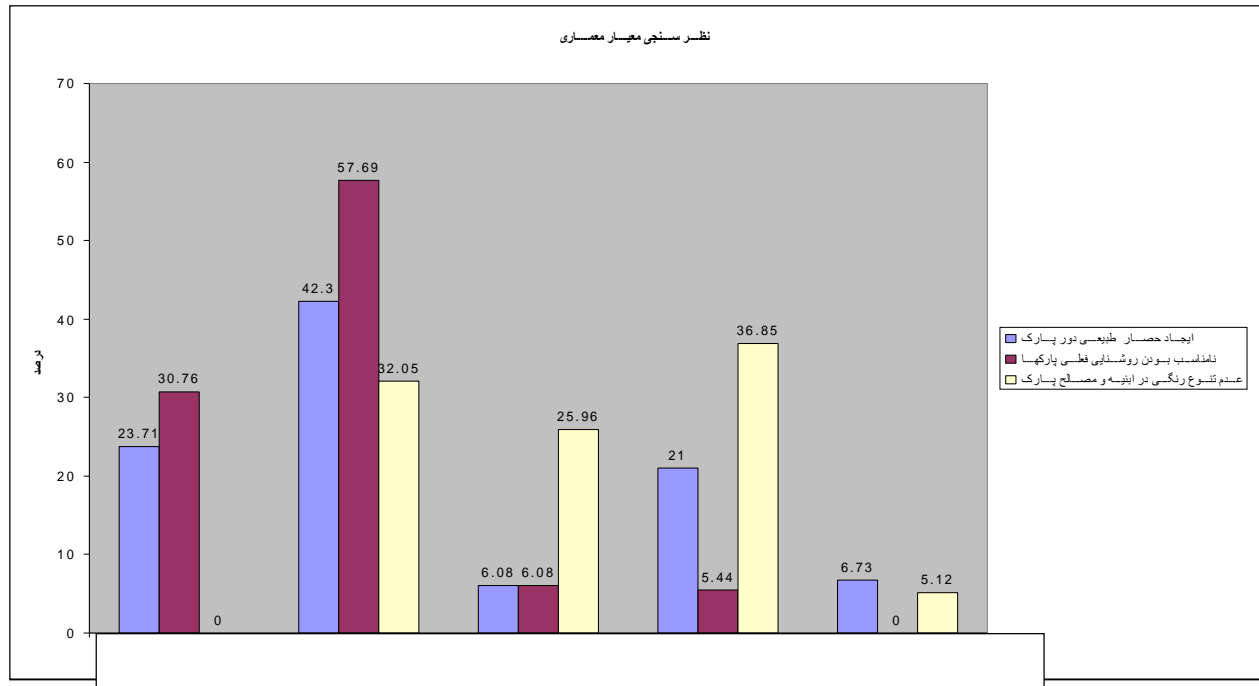
6- Analysis of opinions in relation to architecture criterion

The survey showed that a majority of people were agreed to create a barrier in the form of herbs or wooden fence which are covered with plants.

In author’s view, perhaps one of the reasons for agreement on this option is making surrounded feeling and a sense of privacy, prevention of visual disturbances outside the park, and creating further relative safety in the park. The vast majority did not fit the current lighting situation by using light tower in the park.

In about the lack of color variation and considering bicolor in the construction of Park, respondents, with slight difference, did not approve the color variation. In author’s view (as mentioned in the analysis of vegetation criterion), perhaps it is due to the predominance of young people questioning and their congenial diversity.

Chart (5) Comments about architecture criterion



HYPOTHESIS TEST

"It seems that there is a significant relationship between the use of Iranian Garden pattern, and the patterns of users in the park."

The study was conducted in the form of research questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was set based on five criteria of Iranian Garden. Then the collected field data were analyzed by using SPSS software. The validity of the questionnaire was done by using Cronbach's Alpha ($83.7 = \alpha$). Therefore the validated questionnaire located at an acceptable level.

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	2250.00	100.0
	Excluded ^a	.00	.0
	Total	2250.00	100.0

Weighted by the variable w

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.837	15

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Asymp. Sig. (1-tailed)
idea	Group 1	<= 45	300	.13	.55	.000 ^{a,b}
	Group 2	> 45	1950	.87		
Total			2250	1.00		

a. Alternative hypothesis states that the proportion of cases in the first group < .55.
 b. Based on Z Approximation.

Binomial test was conducted to test the research hypothesis. Scoring range was 5 points so the probability was considered 55%. The desired level of preference was assumed greater than 45. Hypothesis H0: "there is no significant relationship between the use of Iranian gardens pattern and creating desired patterns in the parks. Hypothesis H1: there is a significant relationship between the use of the Iranian Garden pattern and desired patterns of people in the parks." According to the research null hypothesis (H0) and hypothesis (H1), the value obtained for the hypothesis H0 was equal to 13% and compared with 55% was very little. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1- Conclusions

According to the results of the poll, the majority of users were in favor the creating parks with Iranian garden criteria, in Semnan city, and interesting to note that the highest degree of consensus about water elements and vegetation was based on this pattern. In evaluation of parks according to the other criteria such as structure, Suitable prospect, and architecture of the park showed very little correspondence with this pattern. Whereas on the basis of conducted poll the majority of survey respondents were agreed in creating of parks based on these criteria. It can be concluded that the dominant pattern in Semnan city parks had very little correspondence with the interests and views of users as well as the consistent patterns with natural conditions and climate.

2- Suggestions

- 1 - In order to create, green spaces development, and their maintenance urban management costs more credits each year and all of these costs are also a burden on citizens. On the other hand, since the main audiences of parks are citizens, therefore, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the urban area, selection of a pattern appropriate with their demands and tastes is essential.
2. Creating small green spaces in densely neighborhoods and planting of grass and vegetation in these parks not only have effect on the weather improvement but also become contaminated with dust from their surroundings. It becomes place of delinquency (crime) so, it may not be effective.
3. Given that in our country there are different climates therefore, it does not seem logical to use the same pattern in creating of green space in all areas.
4. Unfortunately, most of the parks have been made in contemporary era in Iran were as a result of imported modernism thinking and imitative design of European styles. These parks lacked

effective connection with the spatial organization of city and do not have a significant impact on improving the quality of urban life.

Therefore, in these cases, it seems necessary to select an appropriate model for each climate to enjoy relative stability and effective connection with urban spatial organization.

5. Iranian garden has its own special characteristics which it has shaped its own space. The principles and features of Iranian garden during its formation and evolution in different places enjoyed the relative stability which by studying them can reach common attributes. These gardens are enjoying such a coordinated scheme that have justified its principles and criteria in all areas with different climates and have achieved the best results. Therefore, the development of urban public green spaces that are in a good size by using this pattern can be useful in providing of the needs and tastes of many users.

It is important to note that in applying this model must consider requirements and new tastes of users' demands. But in all of these cases can be found the fact that Iranian Garden has capability of answering mental and physical needs of contemporary citizens.

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