

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE; A CASE STUDY OF LAHORE IN PAKISTAN

1. Introduction

Cultural heritage of any country reflect the living styles of people in that particular area and it show the identity of one nation. People inherit this style from the history and their ancestors. The major types of cultural heritage are tangible and intangible. Tangible heritage comprised of historical buildings, monuments, landscapes, sites, etc. whereas the intangible heritage is meant for traditions, languages, traditional music, dance, festivals, theaters, etc. Tangible heritage mainly meant for physical items whereas the other focus on the social issues. In practice, it is observed that in most of the cases people consider that cultural heritage focused on the physical things rather than the rest. But when different factors are considered and combined then the cultural heritage may be defined as “Cultural properties are often shared, learned, symbolic, transmitted across generations, adaptive and integrated. On the other hand, heritage refers to an inheritance or a legacy; things of value of which have been passed from one generation to the next (Richard, 1993)”. The definition explains that anything if transferred from one generation to the next whether in form of tangible or intangible is cultural heritage. Culture is mainly oriented towards intangible and heritage is inclined to tangible. Pakistan is rich in cultural heritage. “Culture in Pakistan is enriched with influences and resources of ancient civilizations that flourished in the region over centuries. The historical and archaeological treasures inherited by Pakistan are now being increasingly recognized and appreciated outside the country (UNESCO, 2006)”. It dates back to 14 million years back when an indication in form of fossil jaws of apes was found. So the cultural heritage of Pakistan starts from pre-historic times and cover the Indus & Gandhara Civilizations followed by Islamic, Sikh and British periods. The ruins of these civilizations periods are scattered all over the country in form of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. After 1947, Pakistan appeared as an Islamic state with rich traditions of Islam. Pakistan assigned the tasks to protect cultural heritage to different departments working at national, provincial and district levels. Now question arises whether these departments got succeeded to protect the same. If not then what were the reasons for this.

Lahore the case study area is the second biggest city of Pakistan with a population of more than 06 million and rich in cultural heritage values. It is called the heart of Pakistan as well as the city of gardens, colleges and historical buildings. Famous Shalamar Garden, Badashahi Mosque, Shahi Fort, etc. (map-1) are few examples of tangible cultural heritage present in this city of Lahore. The presence of these buildings has made this city attractive for the tourists both from the national as well as international levels. There are many visitors coming daily to see these historical buildings. For the maintenance of these historical monuments, archaeology department is established at the national and provincial levels.

2. Materials and Methods

The main issues while studying Cultural heritage of any country are:

i. Urbanization

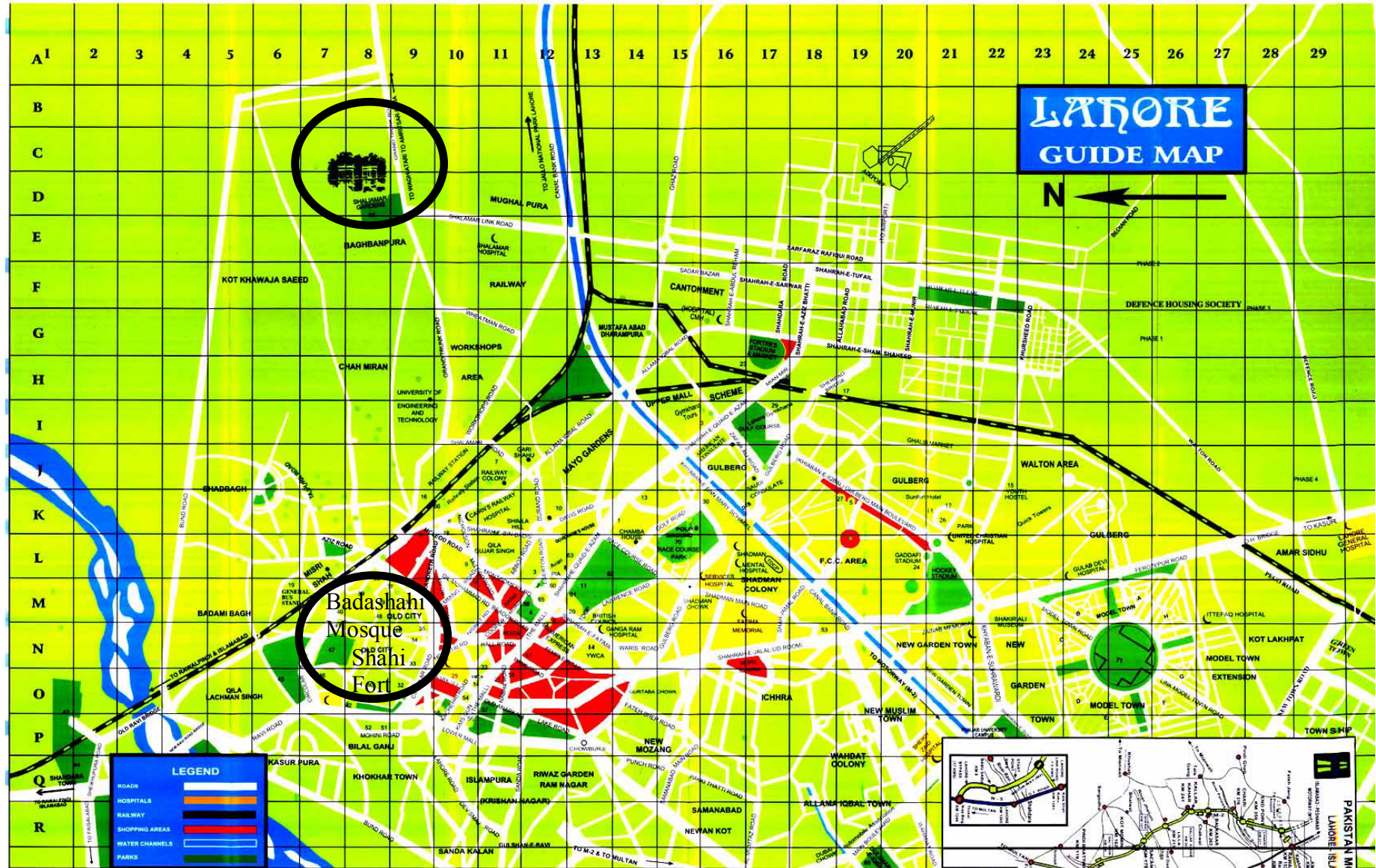
The rapid increase of population in an area is a severe threat to the cultural heritage. Lahore's population is increasing at a faster rate and crossed a figure of 06 million. Its population which was about 03 million during the year 1981 has now crossed the limit of 06 million. It means the city size is doubled (nearly) within 17 years. Likewise, population of other major cities of Pakistan is also increasing. A comparative picture of population growth of different cities of Pakistan can be seen in the table-1:

Table-1: Population of major cities of Pakistan

Sr. No.	Name of City	Population		Average Annual Growth Rate
		1981	1998	
1.	KARACHI	5,208,132	9,339,023	3.49
2.	LAHORE	2,952,689	5,143,495	3.32
3.	FAISALABAD	1,104,209	2,008,861	3.58
4.	RAWALPINDI	794,834	1,409,768	3.43
5.	MULTAN	732,070	1,197,384	2.93
6.	HYDERABAD	751,529	1,166,894	2.62
7.	GUJRANWALA	600,993	1,132,509	3.79
8.	PESHAWAR	566,248	982,816	3.29
9.	QUETTA	285,719	565,137	4.09
10.	ISLAMABAD	204,364	529,180	5.76

Source: GOP, 1998

Cultural heritage both tangible and intangible in all the above mentioned cities is different. Tangible heritage in form of monuments, sites, landscapes are present in and near the cities. Due to this rapid population growth the cities limits are expanding and density of already built up areas is increasing at a faster rate. The result is that if a historical monument was away from the city limits now is surrounded by new development. Likewise, in older areas, due to increase in population density, the historical buildings are under threat of being encroached. Lahore is no exception and areas of most of the historical buildings are partially or wholly encroached by the city dwellers. This phenomenon is still going on causing huge risk to the heritage.



Map – 1: Location of Historical Buildings in City District Lahore

ii. Management System

Different agencies in form of government departments are established at national, provincial and local levels for the preservation of cultural heritage. The major in this regard are Archaeology Departments those are working at the national as well as provincial levels and local government departments. The inner management system of a monument rests upon the former whereas the later is assigned to take care of the outer boundary of the building. Both the archaeology departments working at national and province levels are assigned the responsibilities to take necessary steps needed for the conservation of historical monuments. The Archaeology department both the national and provincial levels not only responsible for the repair and maintenance of the monument but also performing duties to make these attractive for the tourist from national and international levels. A comparative picture of tourists at historical buildings in different cities can be seen in the table – 2 below:

Table – 2: Number of Tourists arriving in Pakistan

Sr. No.	Year	Tourists Arrivals by Mode				Annual rate of increases in %
		Air	Sea	Land	Total	
1.	2000	475000	2600	79200	556800	26.8
2.	2001	406800	-	92900	499700	-10.3
3.	2002	407800	-	90300	498100	-0.3
4.	2003	385300	-	115600	500900	0.4
5.	2004	536100	-	111900	648000	29.6
6.	2005	681760	-	116500	798260	23.2
7.	2006	763430	-	134159	898389	12.5
8.	2007	731580	-	107920	839500	-6.6
9.	2008	718043	-	104785	822828	-2.0
10.	2009	678790	36651	139464	854905	3.9

Source: Tourism Division, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad, Pakistan

The table results show that the numbers of tourist are changing by year. Somewhere it is too high and in certain years to low. There is no constant figure and somewhere the difference is quite big. Moreover, when the data is collected with respect to site or monument, then other interesting factors are unveiled those can be seen in table – 3 below:

Table – 3: Visitors at Heritage Sites in Pakistan

Site	2005 (No. of Visitor)		2006 (No. of Visitor)		2007 (No. of Visitor)		2008 (No. of Visitor)		2009 (No. of Visitor)	
	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National
PUNJAB PROVINCE										
Jahangir Tomb, District Lahore	406	63832	1691	70671	5802	58479	2155	139936	6328	159050
Shalamar Garden, District Lahore	5957	626272	2374	384906	4648	553980	1711	610567	327	469336
Royal Fort (Shahi Qila, District, Lahore)	7688	1272369	21178	1298322	15661	126950	5312	1201752	1136	1025984
Hiran Minar, District Sheikhupura	131	40485	365	44266	628	30967	282	85187	160	137660
Harrappa, District	316	27248	292	55804	400	52397	190	49727	288	55689

Sahiwal										
Taxila, District Rawalpindi	8702	154154	9606	177267	4186	146746	1134	63326	1408	139149
SINDH PROVINCE										
Bhambre, District Thatta	86	15995	52	13582	32	21478	125	16682	12	15811
Makli Hill, District Thatta	487	107470	163	52577	198	74091	83	44536	356	39524
Moenjodaro, District Larkana	846	159543	588	70863	446	80709	196	46058	285	55862
Umarkot Fort, District Tharparkar	8	15662	47	12205	6	18877	8	19405	17	22685
KHYBER PAKHTOON KHWA PROVINCE										
Remains of Takht-e- Bhai, District Mardan	919	2275	983	2216	501	3899	137	4047	32	4133
Bukara Site Museum, District Saïdo Sharif	388	1106	505	1165	386	588	1	163	-	8
BALUCHISTAN PROVINCE										
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Department of Archaeology and Museum, Islamabad as coated in Federal Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad, Pakistan

The five year tourist data to historical sites in all provinces of Pakistan show great fluctuation in numbers. It is also observed that rate of change in data of foreign tourist is more prominent than the local ones.

iii. Funding Mechanism

Protection of cultural heritage both tangible and non tangible is a national service. For this purpose funds are allocated in the government annual budgets both at the federal and provincial levels. This money is mainly meant to meet the recurring expenses and released through Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs. Apart from operational expenses there are grants for development projects those are specifically used for specific purposes. Moreover, international donor agencies like UNESCO, Cultural Heritage are also contributing their roles for the protection of such monuments. The grants from these agencies are mainly for tangible cultural heritage. A large number of projects on its way for historical buildings present in city of Lahore. The major in this regard is the renovation work of damaged Shish Mehal in Lahore Fort.

iv. Legislative Framework

The 1973 act of Pakistan has recognized the importance of archaeological heritage and has put the same on priority list. Under the act, provinces are made responsible to maintain the sites. For this purpose, it was considered to enhance the capacity of provinces in terms of human resources. Moreover, Pakistan has introduced Antiquities Act to protect the cultural heritage especially the tangible heritage during the year 1975. Under clause 10(1) of the antiquity act, the Federal Government may declare any antiquity to be a protected antiquity. Similarly, the section 22 of the antiquity act clearly state that “no development plan or scheme or new construction, on or within a distance of two hundred feet of a protected immovable antiquity shall be undertaken, or executed except with the approval of the Director General”. In this regard, it is found out that historical buildings present in Lahore are encroached illegally without permission of concerned authority. The major in this regard are the Shalamar garden, Jehangir’s Tomb, Shahi Fort, Badashahi Moasque and alike. Almost all such buildings are adjacent to the built up areas. No rule of 200 feet beyond the development could be ensured. In this regard, when officials of Archaeology are contacted, they were of the view, that local government authority is mainly responsible for controlling the encroachment and ensuring the building control regulations. Many times, they were asked to take actions against the illegal settlers but fruitful results could not be obtained. The act has given wide powers to the local authorities to control encroachments around the historical sites and monuments. Moreover, it restricts the illegal digging near the sites. It was expected that the respective governments, viz-a-viz; national, provincial, and district will make necessary arrangements for the protection of historical buildings and monuments.

v. Coordination Mechanism among the Departments

At the national level, there exist one department namely Archaeology Department working under the Ministry of Culture and Youth affairs. The department is mainly responsible for the protection of tangible heritage in the country. In order to manage the tasks at the country level, the entire area have been divided into two major parts called circles; i.e. Northern and Southern Circles. The northern circle mainly covers the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtoon Kaha provinces whereas the Southern comprise of Sind and Balochistan provinces. The circles are headed by Directors and other supporting staff.

Similarly, an Archaeology department is working at the province level. Its main role is similar to that working at the national level. Some places in the entire area are under the control of federal whereas remaining is taken care of the provincial archaeology department.

Apart from this, there is present local government system that is mainly responsible for the building and development control of city areas. Right now, in Lahore town municipal administration and Lahore Development Authority are assigned the task of implementation of building and development control regulations. These are independent government machinery working at the district level.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Urbanization, especially in developing countries is a common phenomenon. This is posing a severe challenge for the city authorities those are mainly responsible for managing the urban growth. The historical monuments are also affected by this as the rapid urban sprawl has surrounded these monuments. Shalamar garden, Shahi Fort, Badashahi Mosque, Jehangir's tomb all are examples of such kind where the clear violation of Antiquity Act 1975 were made. The act say that built up areas should start at least 200 feet away from the monument but in contrary it is situated adjacent to the walls of the monuments. Although Antiquities act 1975 gave powers to the authorities for strict action against those who try to damage the historical buildings. But when interviewed with local government officials then it is disclosed that most of the people did not know about the Antiquities Act 1975. Moreover, when they are asked about the actions taken against the people who get involved in damaging the monuments, they were quite ignorant about it. The results show severe negligence of line department those were made responsible to safeguard the monument.

Likewise, it is observed that the departments mainly responsible for the conservation of historical buildings are deficient in qualified relevant staff. Archeology is a vast field and experts those have knowledge of this are very less in numbers. Moreover, the staff which is available is also overloaded and thus efficiency of the department is affected. In most of the cases, the repair work at these monuments was carried out with the help of local labor force and by using the non qualified personnel. This type of attitude show severe negligence and a severe threat to the monument.

Similarly, local government staff in the respective monument area does not know the importance and significance of monument. "However, our understanding and appreciation of the buildings and the garden itself has been lost. Today negative impacts from environmental degradation, neglect, ill-advised interventions and the passage of time are increasing without appropriate response (Rogers, 2010)". This shows government agencies poor performance and affecting the increase/decrease of tourist coming to these historical sites.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Based on above discussion, following conclusions are drawn:

- i. The concerned government departments failed to preserve the historical monuments. The main reason is that line departments are ignorant of their responsibilities.
- ii. Preservation of cultural heritage proved to be not a priority of government. It is placed to work under one ministry, i.e. Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs
- iii. The role of local government is very disappointing as the department staff is not serious to protect the monument from the encroachers.

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