

Bridging the gap. Walled cities: Peshawar and Lahore

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Abstract

Walled cities of Peshawar and Lahore shares both architectural characters and decaying patterns. This research is based on the historical background of both cities, their architectural and spatial evolution through various ruling regimes and the nature of conservation efforts. The aim of this research is to understand the similarities and relatable developments over the period of time as both share a dramatic similarity in many disciplines. While British rulers built their own cantonment outside of the cities, Post-independence times saw massive commercialization of walled city and destruction of historical buildings. In year 2006, Lahore launched a conservation effort to restore the Royal Trail in assistance with the World Bank. The success of this project led to the enactment of Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA). In Peshawar the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has launched a successful Heritage Trail in Walled city as a pilot project. This paper will compare the strategies and institutional frameworks present in both the cities along with the future direction for the conservation of Peshawar walled city.

Keywords: Walled city, Peshawar, Lahore, architecture features, institutional framework

1. Introduction

There are several cities in Pakistan which have walled fortifications around their ancient boundaries to protect their inhabitants from invading forces. Although while these walls have lost their military importance, they still provide ample tourist attractions and have been conserved for various benefits. Lahore, Multan, Hyderabad and Peshawar cities have inner walled cities. Both walled cities of Lahore and Peshawar with rich histories and

cultural heritage and have various commonalities in their history, architecture and governance structures (Table 1). Both have similar progression through multiple eras and their spatial and architectural features.

2. History and Architecture of Peshawar Walled City

The city of Peshawar is located in the valley of Peshawar about 40 km east of Pakistan's eastern border with Afghanistan. Throughout history, Peshawar has remained a strategic town for invaders entering South-Asia through the Khyber Pass. The city has seen various changes in its control from Mughal era to post-independence Pakistan. While Peshawar has consistently remained a battleground for large armies and empires, its position in relation to the Khyber Pass has also enabled it to cement its place as a hub of major trade routes in and out of South Asia.(UNESCO Office Islamabad, 2004).

Definitely, the economic and strategic importance of Peshawar's location has brought several advantages to its inhabitants but many times conditions have not been favorable for them. From Sasanians, Huns, Turk Shahis, Hindu Shahis, Mughals and the British, often local population came in the direct path of any group intending a larger conquest into South Asia and the control of Peshawar city. In past three decades, there has been an influx of Afghan refugees in the city, especially during the Afghan War of 1980s. It led to a broadened cultural base. Thus Peshawar's history tells us that locals have constantly realigned themselves in order to gain maximum benefits from the city's strategic location. This history can be seen in the architecture, monuments, art, religious and cultural spaces of present-day city. Peshawar walled city houses the oldest sections of the city and is still rich in Buddhist and Gandhara cultural/religious monuments which occupied it centuries ago.

Oldest accounts of Peshawar city were found in the memoirs of Chinese pilgrims. Hiuen Tsang Xuanzang visited it in the 7th century CE. He mentions the *stupa* of Emperor Kanishka, which is described as the tallest structure of whole India, according to some estimates equal to modern day 13-storey building. The *stupa* is not preserved. It was excavated in 1908-1909 by the American archaeologist D. B. Spooner in what is now Akhunabad, outside the Gunj Gate(The

News, 2017). Chinese travelers also mentioned the presence of a fort and a royal residence. Mughal Emperor Babur mentioned Qila Bala Hisar in his memoir and Emperor Humayun rebuilt the fort after defeating Sher Shah Suri. Later, when Sikhs invaded Peshawar under the command of Hari Singh Nala, the walled city had to suffer considerable losses. Numerous Mughal-era gardens like the Shalimar Garden, Shahi Bagh and Bagh Ali Marden were mowed down by the Khalsa regiments (Adil Zareef, 2013).

Paolo Avitabile, an Italian soldier working for the Sikh army remained the governor of Peshawar from 1838-1842 and ruled the city mercilessly. Got Khatri was converted into his residence and general headquarters. During Sikh reign, a monk by the name of Goraknath came to the walled city and built a Sikh temple here, which is still existent. Afterwards, British Army defeated Sikhs and established an extensive cantonment next to the walled city (Faheem Sikandar, 2016).

They also built their own schools, parks, clubs, churches and markets which were highly segregated from the densely populated walled city of Peshawar. However, British army also made use of Got Khatree buildings for their official works and added some army barracks as well. These barracks were later turned into a fire station.

Spatial layout and architectural features

The walled city of Peshawar has an area of more than 2 sqkm and has trapezoidal form. It provides an organic urban form which enables the formation of close-knit community. Narrow alleyways designed for privacy open into public bazaar streets leading to a cohesive character. There used to be 16 gateways to the walled city which provided its connectivity with the outer world. Names of these gates are Lahori Gate, Yakkatut Gate, Kabuli Gate, Hashtnagri Gate, SarAsiya Gate, Sard Chah Gate, Saraki Gate, Bajauri Gate, Dabgari Gate, Ganj Gate, Reti Gate, Kachehri Gate (Tangsali), Asamai Gate, Ramdas Gate, Rampura Gate and Kohati Gate. Very few of these gates survive in their original shape now. If closely examined, Walled city of Peshawar houses several historical properties with deep historical values. These properties include several bazaars, mosques, temples, shrines, residential buildings, tombs, schools, churches, bridges, gardens and inns (sarai). Multi-ethnic nature of this place is

commendable. Majority of the population is of Pakhtun origin and speaks Pashto language, but Indian and Persian languages are also widely spoken in the walled city. Resident families mostly hail from Central Asia, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan (Bukhara), Tajikistan, Bukhara and South Asia. Overall, the multiplicity of creeds, beliefs, culture, lifestyles and traditions is evident from the architecture and shape of various buildings. Some of the most historic monuments include Masjid Mahabat Khan, Got Khatree, QisaKhwani Bazar, Mughal era Caravan Serai and last but not least the Sethi Havelis.

Spatial features of Peshawar walled city share several commonalities with other historical cities of South Asian region. Narrow streets and alleyways are often in the shape of cul-de-sacs and have a single large aperture designed to protect the privacy of residents. Multiple street openings are scarce but designed in a manner to improve walkability (UNESCO Office Islamabad, 2004). However, there are some unique features of this walled city like the elevated walkways hanging two story above the street level. These walkways connect the houses on the opposite side of the streets, which often times belong to a single family. Mostly women use these walkways as a private passage (UNESCO Office Islamabad, 2004). Houses situated within the walled city have an introverted character. Courtyards and basements have multiple benefits. They provide privacy, passive cooling and natural lighting for the whole house. Seven Sethi Havelis situated near Got Kutree are the best example of these architectural features (Khan, 2010). These houses have beautiful display units on their walls made by engraving arches known as the Chini-Khanas. These units are used to place porcelain decoration pieces (Khan & Imdad, 2011).

Some of the problems identified in the walled city Peshawar that needs to be checked and catered at the first stance are the lack of basic survey and documentation of the historic area. This should be the first priority in taking any steps in the up gradation of the walled city Peshawar if so then the other problems like the loss of the cultural significance of bazaars, the loss of historical properties in the pursuit of modernity and commercialization and the lack of training for crafts and tourism will be addressed eventually that will be beneficial to the already done degradation of the walled city that has reached to this unacceptable level.

3. History and Architecture of Lahore Walled City

Walled city of Lahore has an area of nearly 2.5 sqkm and is home to a population of nearly 160,000 residents. It lies in the north-western side of the Lahore city. Administratively, it is part of the Ravi Town, Lahore. Existing walled city of Lahore largely maintains its form from the Mughal-era and during Mughal reign this city saw massive developments in the forms of mosques, public and private buildings, gardens and bazaars(Ezdi, 2009). The city has organic street pattern, with a total of twelve gates. A Mori was made in British era which was later declared as the Mori Gate. Now only five of these thirteen gates survive. River Ravi always had a special connection with the city due to its proximity. Several neighborhoods are named after boatmen of the Mughal era like ThattiMalahan inside Taxali Gate and MohallahNaugaran inside the Yakki Gate(Rabia Nadir, 2013). Population outside the walls of the city had a close and symbiotic relationship with the city's population as they provided all the edible commodities while city markets acted as the hub of commercial exchange. City witnessed massive destruction during the Sikh invasion in late 18th century. During the Sikh rule, many Sikh palaces and religious structures became part of the walled city.

These structures had many western architectural features due to presence of European military advisors in Sikh Khalsa. When British colonial order came to the walled city, things remained calm as colonial administrators focused more on developing their cantonments and offices outside its premises. However, modern era utilities like water tanks, water pipes, fire hydrants and electrification did reach the walled city. Due to growth in railway infrastructure and whole- sale commodity markets, the city experienced steep growth in its population density (Ezdi 2009).

After the partition of 1947, walled city of Lahore underwent major transformation. Lahore Improvement Trust took down nearly 2000 houses inside Shahalami alone and a new spatial design was conceived which reflected most of the developments taking place in 1950s(Janosik 2005). Azam Cloth Market and Pakistan Cloth Market were developed along a wide vehicular road designed to bear five story buildings on each side. Many properties belonging to Sikh Gurdawara and Hindu temples were taken over by the newly-established Evacuee

Trust Properties Board and were allotted to migrants coming in from the Indian side of Punjab. Walled City's population grew by nearly 300 percent from 1947 till 1979 (Qadeer 1983). But during seventies commercial development picked up at staggering rates due to growth in textile industry and remittances sent from Middle-Eastern countries. Properties facing circular road were more prone to such land-use changings. Neo-liberal policies and globalization also found its way to the walled city of Lahore with markets expanding and vehicular traffic increasing. Such transformations brought severe detrimental effects to historical buildings and most of them were either demolished for redevelopment or left in precarious conditions.

Architectural features and historical monuments

Architecture of Lahore wall city is predominantly inspired from Mughal era, with strong impressions of Sikh and Hindu culture as well. Buildings built during the colonial rule and afterwards till present time have a western outlook. Streets or *Guzars* have narrow organic form which developed without any planned government interventions. Another important part of the urban architecture are the *koochas* or squares. These open squares are designed to enhance the outlook of attached buildings while acting as public ceremonial spaces. They enhance the sense of place by connecting the residents all together through socialization (Daniyal Ahmed 2014). Many such *Koochas* are present inside the Lahore walled city like the Koocha Haveli NauNehal Singh, Koocha Mehar Ghous, etc. Most of the historical buildings are in a bad shape due to lack of maintenance work. However, buildings located near the peripheral areas, especially along the circular road have a clear post-independence modern outlook (Menesez, Braz, 1983). Commercialization is rampant across the walled city, with all major arteries having markets along them. Business hour population counts are much higher than other times in a day due to intensity of commercial activities.

There were total thirteen gates of walled city but only five have survived till now. Names of these gates are *Bhati Gate*, *Delhi Gate*, *Roshnai Gate*, *Kashmiri Gate*, *Shairan wala Gate* and *Lohari Gate*. British demolished rest of the gates in an effort to de-fortify the city to avoid possible siege situations. Names of other gates are Akbari,

Masti, Mochi, Mori, Shah-Alami, Yakki and Taxali. Lahore Fort (a UNESCO world heritage site) and Badshahi mosque are located on the northern edge of walled city. There are several historical monuments inside the city, which include Masjid Wazir Khan and Shahi Hamam restored with the assistance of Norway and US governments. Shahi Hamam is a Turkish-bath built during the Mughal era. Moreover, Sunehri Masjid and numerous *havelis* of historical significance are also located in the city. In the year 2012, an adaptive re-use project near the Taxali Gate established a food street. This project gained massive popularity as a decaying part of the walled city was transformed into a scenic and walkable street of restaurants. Building facades have been painted in colorful textures and rooftop eateries offer spectacular views of Badshahi mosque and Lahore fort (Faheem Sikandar, 2016). WCLA has also launched a rickshaw ride service for the tourists looking to explore the Royal Trail.

4. Comparison of heritage conservation efforts

There have been successful efforts at the local and international levels to restore the fading glory of the walled city Lahore, while many such plans were made by the provincial Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but they haven't materialized yet. Both the cities are provincial capitals and their walled cities face similar problems but conservation efforts have remained more successful in Lahore. The success in Lahore while failure in Peshawar demands us to make a thorough analysis of policy frameworks and relevant administrative authorities in both provinces.

In 2006, Government of Punjab in collaboration with the World Bank launched a pilot project by the name of Sustainable Development of Walled City Lahore (SDWCL) in order to rehabilitate the cultural and historical heritage of the city. Initially, SDWCL acted as a sub-unit of provincial Planning & Development (P&D) department. Project's area of focus was the ShahiGuzargah (Royal Trail) from Delhi Gate till Akbari Gate. Plan included adaptive re-use techniques, façade redevelopment, utility provisioning and resettlement of affected population (Vincent Roquet, Luciano Bornholdt, 2015). However this project took place under a larger project funded by the World Bank for the improvement of municipal services,

Punjab Municipal Services Improvement Project (PMSIP), aimed at improving the capacities of Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs)(Bank, 2014). A robust resettlement plan was prepared for this purpose in the year 2010. Data was collected from various government departments like the Revenue Department, Auqaf Department and the Local Government institutions like Lahore Metropolitan Corporation(Malik Aslam, 2010). Then community mobilization teams interacted with the local population and educated them regarding the benefits of this project. Active negotiation was performed regarding resettlement and entitlement amounts which were timely disbursed and any grievances were addressed through high-powered proper joint action committees. Agha Khan Cultural Services Pakistan (AKCSP) actively assisted SDWCL during the whole process. A total of 879 properties were affected in the entire 1.6 km length of the project, out of which 147 shops were resettled(Malik Aslam, 2010). Most of the shops belonged to Auqaf Department and LMC. Apart from the property owners, encroachers and those occupying without any rights were also compensated. Success of this project led to the enactment of The Walled City of Lahore Act 2012, through which conflicts various laws were removed and an autonomous body 'Walled city of Lahore Authority' (WCLA) was formed. According to the Act, WCLA is responsible for all the master planning, record-keeping, and development work inside the walled city of Lahore. Before the formation of WCLA situation was complicated due to multiplicity of institutional mandates at various levels of the government and the legislative frameworks governing conservation, restoration and maintenance of historic assets in Punjab. But project implementation through a semi-autonomous public sector company (with public/private board) streamlined execution and reduced undue political interference(Malik Aslam, 2010).

Recently, there has been an urge to restore the architectural and cultural heritage of Peshawar walled city. The Directorate of Archaeology KPK has shown interest in the rehabilitation of a 600-meter-long (SHAHID SHALMANI, n.d.) 'Heritage Trail' from Got Khatree till Clock Tower based on the assistance from experienced consultants. It is a pilot project bearing similarities with the Royal Trail Project in Lahore walled city(ftikhar Firdous, 2015). Secretary Archaeology has also shown his intent to form an autonomous Peshawar Walled City

Authority. Urban Planning Unit, a sub-unit of provincial P&D department has also formulated a plan to document the prevailing conditions of buildings in the walled city, to make strategies for their restoration and to analyze the legal complexities of the process(Iftikhar Firdous, n.d.). Majority of these efforts have remained unsuccessful in producing substantial results. Security situation is a major factor in the present scenario. In 2010, UNESCO assessed that around 255 monuments had been destroyed in Peshawar only (Campbell 2011).

Government and international community's focus still remains on terror prevention and security upgradation instead of urban planning and heritage protection(Irina Mosel and Ashley Jackson, 2013). Multiplicity of legal/institutional frameworks and lack of institutional capacities facing Peshawar walled city is quite similar to the one faced by Lahore before an independent walled city authority was established there, *i.e* WCLA. Similarly, land-mafias also oppose any systematic efforts for preservation of heritage buildings as it is against their commercial interests. Sustained political will is necessary for pursuing heritage restoration projects and capacity building of local governance institutions like the TMAs or Metropolitan corporations.

The above-mentioned chart is the outline of the national policy of heritage and culture policy for development of cultural tourism. With the help of this a diversified action plan for the walled city Peshawar can be established. With improving security situation, KPK government can surely allocate more funds to urban rehabilitation projects. This paper may lead to develop a through plan further. Furthermore, this may be used to obtain a standard data of the used material in accordance to the up gradation of walled city Peshawar in the near future.

5 . Conclusions

Lahore and Peshawar have both valuable cultural assets in the form of their walled cities. Both cities require continuous political will for the conservation of these assets. Lahore with its comparably successful attempts in conservation pilot projects is now able to set an example for Peshawar to follow. Establishment of WCLA is a flagship step in the right direction but it took nearly six years to happen even in a city like

Lahore with the formidable backing of provincial government and generous support of World Bank. A highly dedicated approach from the KPK bureaucracy towards inner city renewal is required to achieve any substantial success because security situation and lack of political willingness is a major hurdle in Peshawar. A proposal for master planning of Walled city Peshawar is the first step using GIS technique. International community's help must be welcomed as they can provide the necessary funding and expertise for the resettlement of affected population. Still, local authorities will always have the largest chunk of responsibilities to perform and their capacity building should be the highest priority of any government. Benefits of successful conservation projects are enormous which range from tourism to better revenue generation and citizen satisfaction.

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| <i>S. No</i> | <i>Characters / Features</i> | <i>Peshawar Walled City</i> | <i>Lahore Walled City</i> | <i>Remarks/ Observation</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 01 | Area | 500 Acre Trapezoidal form | 632 acre | Very dense and undefined form in Lahore |
| 02 | Urban Form | Organic, | Organic | Clustered form |
| 03 | Streets | Narrow/ Cul-de-sacs | Very narrow clustered | winding, narrow |
| 04 | Building Heights (No. of Stories) | Multistoried (Mostly 2 stories) | Introverted | City within itself |
| 05 | Planning Characteristics | Introverted | Present | Concept of central courtyards |
| 06 | Courtyards & Basements | Present | Passive cooling | Maximum cooling achieved through courtyard affects and jharokas |
| 07 | Ventilation/ Lighting | Passive cooling/ Natural | Passive cooling | Maximum cooling achieved through courtyard affects and jharokas |
| 08 | Materials | Brick / wood/ brick tiles | same | Availability of the material of the time. |
| 09 | Decorative elements | Engraved Arches (chini khana) | Jharokas, blind arches | Resemblance between the two walled cities |
| 10 | No. of Gateways | 16 | 13 | Same pattern |
| 11 | Building Typologies patterns | Mixed use Pattern (Bazar/ Masjid/ Temple/ Shrine/ Houses/ Tomb/ Schools/ Churches/ Gardens/ Inns/ Army Barracks) | Mixed use Pattern Gurdawara/ Bazars, Masjids, Houses, havelis, food street/gardens. | Language is different otherwise there is quite a similarity when you walk down the streets. |
| 12 | Elevated Walkways | Present for connection to streets | Not present | Present in some parts of Peshawar. |

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| | | | |
|----|--------------------------|--|---|
| 13 | Heritage sites | Peshawar fort, Sethi House Complex, GoRkatree, Abasin | Lahore fort, Badshahi Mosque, Masjid wazir khan, Begam shahi |
| 14 | Regeneration Projects | Food Street the new urban trail. | Food Street, adaptive reuse of many restaurants |

Table 1 - Shared Characters of Walled city Peshawar and Walled City Lahore.

| <i>S. No</i> | <i>Area in Walled City Peshawar</i> | <i>Building original Function</i> | <i>Present Function</i> |
|--------------|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 01 | Mochi Bazar | Shops | Shops |
| 02 | Mohalla Agha Husain Sharef, Bazar e Kalan | Houses | Shops/ Commercial |
| 03 | Bazar e Kalan | Shops | Shops/ Commercial/ Rent |
| 04 | Kareem Pura | Houses | Commercial / Shops |
| 05 | Mohallah Mughliyan Bazar e kalan | House | Houses |
| 06 | Pipal Mandi | Shops | Shops/ Commercial |
| 07 | Qissa Khwani Bazar | Shops | Shops / Commercial |
| 08 | Sethi House | House | Tourist / Visitor space |
| 09 | Heritage Trail | House | Commercial cum Residential |

Table 2 - Present-day use of the buildings.

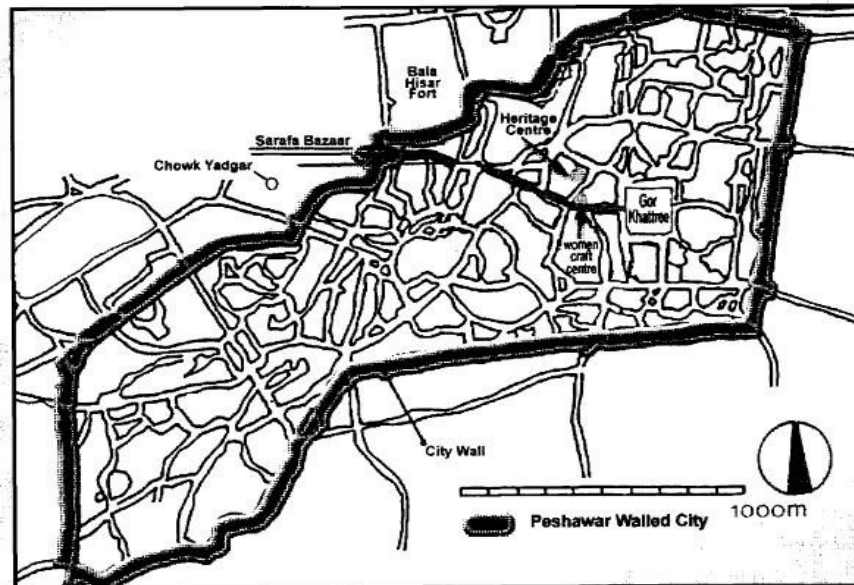


Fig. 1 - Map of Walled city Peshawar- (source UNESCO, Cultural Tourism in Lahore and Peshawar. (Islamabad: UNESCO, UNDP & Government of Pakistan, 2004)

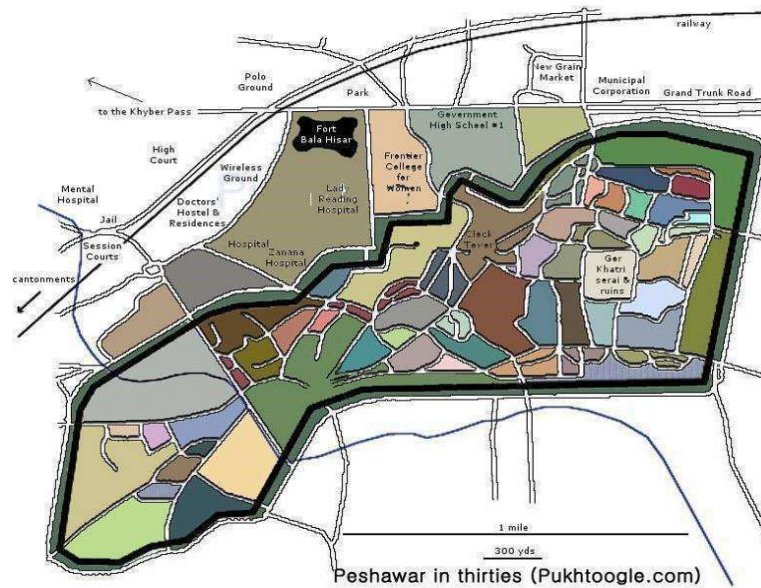


Fig. 2 - Map of Walled city Peshawar- in 1930's.

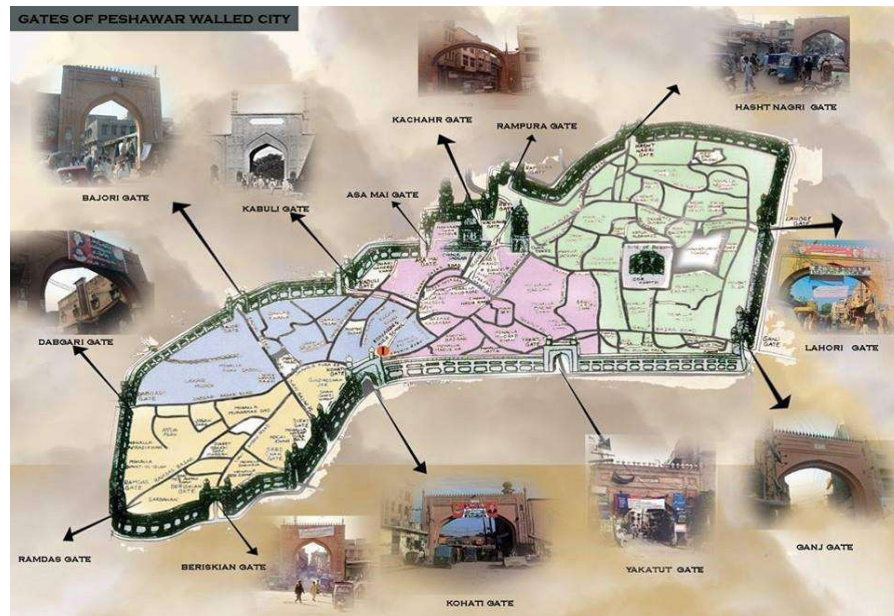


Fig. 3 - Old Map of Walled city Peshawar showing the gates with Pictures.



Fig. 4 - Entrance to Gor Khutree Peshawar.



Fig. 5 - Kabuli Gate old city Peshawar.



Fig. 6 - Mohalla Sethian.

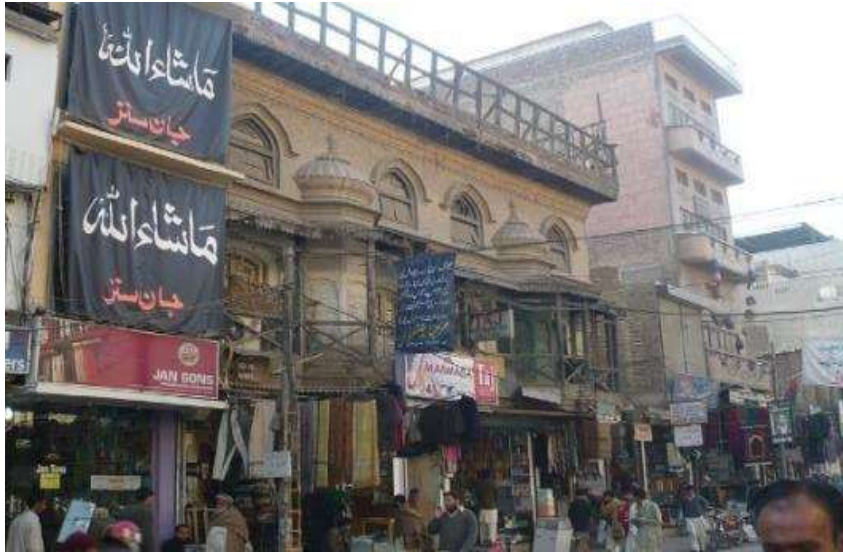


Fig.7 - Qisa Khawani Baazar.



Fig. 8 - Gor Kathree complex facing the new trail walled city Peshawar
(Photo by Author).

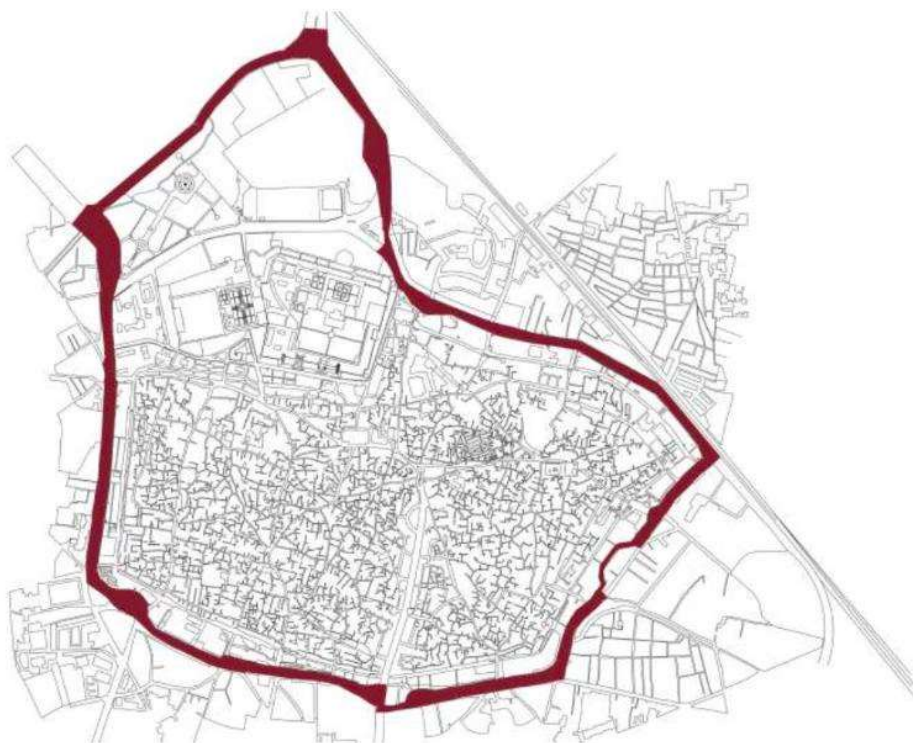


Fig. 9 - Walled city Lahore map-source.

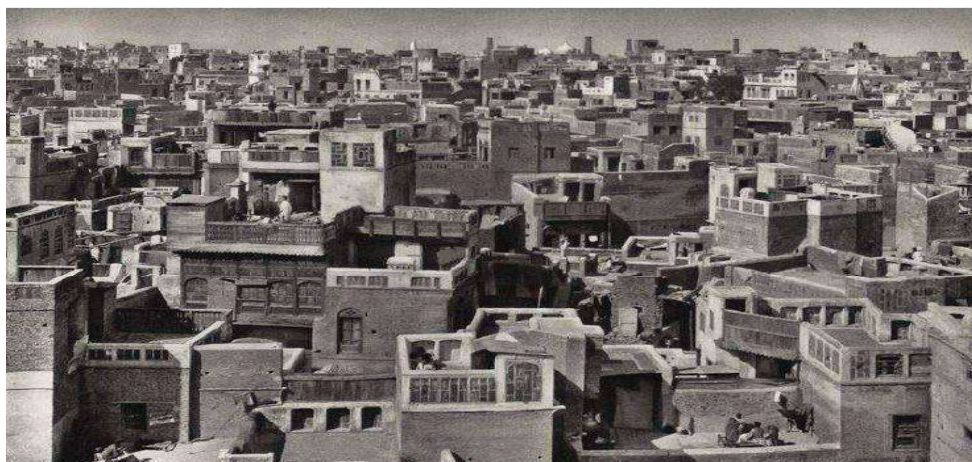


Fig. 10 - View of Walled City Lahore source.

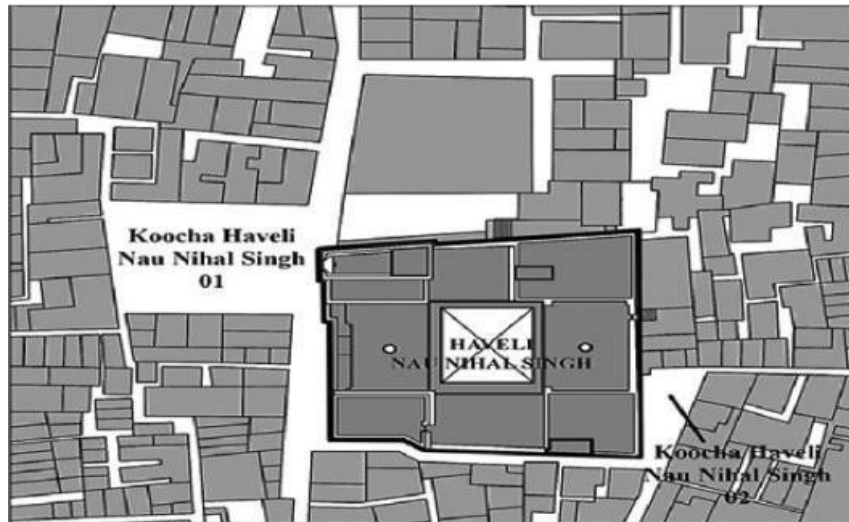


Fig. 11 – Plan of Koocha Nau-Nihal Simgh, Lahore.

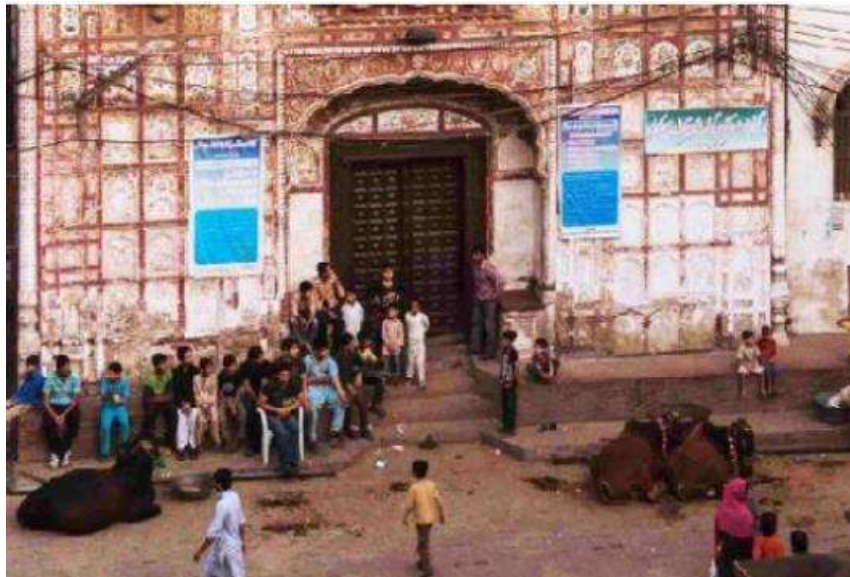


Fig. 12 - Koocha Nau Nehal Singh.

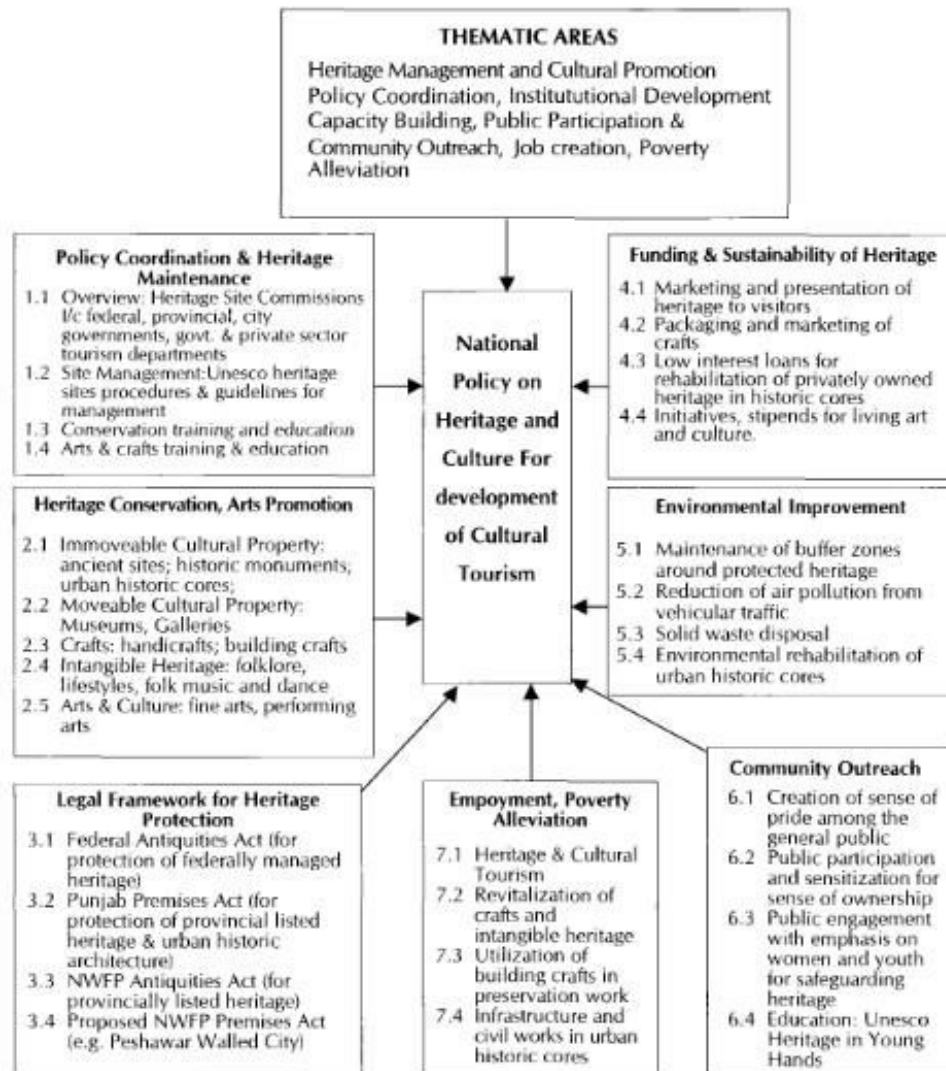


Fig. 13 - Thematic Framework of Research (source: UNESCO, Cultural Tourism in Lahore and Peshawar. (Islamabad: UNESCO, UNDP & Government of Pakistan, 2004)

