

## **ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN THE PRESERVATION OF TANGIBLE HERITAGE; A CASE STUDY OF LAHORE IN PAKISTAN**

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**ABSTRACT:** Cultural heritage of any country reflect the living styles of people and it show the identity of one nation. People inherit this style from the history and their ancestors. In order to preserve the cultural heritage in Pakistan, different departments are working at the national as well as provincial and local levels. These departments are trying to preserve the cultural heritage by keeping themselves involved in their defined domains. Unfortunately, till now, apart from presence of all the relevant departments the desired results could not be achieved. The reasons for this are many and the most important proved to be the lack of coordination among the line departments whether working at the central or local levels. The results thus are appearing in form of deterioration of country's cultural heritage. This paper mainly explores the reasons of deterioration of cultural heritage.

**Key words:** Tangible Heritage, Preservation Issues, Government Departments

### **INTRODUCTION**

Richard (1993) has defined the cultural heritage as inheritance or a legacy; things of value of which have been passed from one generation to the next. The definition explains that anything if transferred from one generation to the next in form of tangible or intangible is cultural heritage. UNDP (2004) elaborated the term cultural heritage as the Tangible Cultural Heritage (archeological sites, museums, monuments, palaces, works of art, natural parks), Intangible Cultural Heritage (oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, folklore, savoir faire, traditional knowledge), Material Cultural Heritage (functional tools and objects that form the human habitat, the secondary environment built by the humankind). Summarizing, culture is mainly oriented towards intangible and heritage is inclined to tangible. The same term was refined by Vecco (2013) as heritage is used for a place, such as, monument and cultural property. Then ICOMOS (2002) combined both culture and heritage and defined cultural heritage as an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. Based on the discussion, every country of the world have either tangible or intangible heritage. Pakistan like many other countries of the world has no exception and is rich both in tangible and intangible heritage. On the situation, UNESCO (2006) explained that 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. 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. Pakistan assigned the tasks to protect cultural heritage to different departments working at national, provincial and district levels.

Lahore the case study area; is the second biggest city of Pakistan with a population of more than 06 million and is rich in cultural heritage. It is called the heart of Pakistan as well as the city of gardens, colleges and historical buildings. Famous Shalamar Garden, Badashahi Masjid, Shahi (royal) Fort, etc. are few examples of tangible cultural heritage present in this city of Lahore. Likewise, intangible heritage in form of languages, dresses, traditions, festivals, etc. are also the identity of this city. The presence of these buildings and traditions has made Lahore attractive for the tourists both from the national as well as international levels. Many visitors are coming daily to see these historical buildings. It can be judged by the following table-1:

The results show that tourists number coming to Pakistan are changing by year. Somewhere it is too high and uncertain cases to low. There is no constant figure and somewhere the difference is quite big. Whenever the data is compared with respect to tourist visits at monuments in Lahore (the case study), more interesting factors are unveiled those can be seen in table – 2 below:

**Table – 1: Number of Tourists arriving in Pakistan**

Sr. No.	Year	Tourists Arrival by Mode				Annual of Increase / Decrease in %age
		Air	Sea	Land	Total	
1.	2000	475000	2600	79200	556800	-
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:** TourismDepartment, Federal Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad, Pakistan, 2011

**Table – 2: Visitors at Heritage Sites in Lahore**

Site Name	2005 (No. of Visitors)		2006 (No. of Visitors)		2007 (No. of Visitors)		2008 (No. of Visitors)		2009 (No. of Visitors)	
	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National	Foreigner	National
Jahangir’s Tomb	406	63832	1691	70671	5802	58479	2155	139936	6328	159050
Shalamar Garden	5957	626272	2374	384906	4648	553980	1711	610567	327	469336
Royal Fort (ShahiQilla)	7688	1272369	21178	1298322	15661	126950	5312	1201752	1136	1025984

**Source:** Department of Archaeology and Museums, Islamabad as quoted in Federal Bureau of Statistics, Islamabad, Pakistan, 2011

The five year data for both foreigner and national tourist at selected monuments in Lahore is showing significant variations. In case of developed countries, the line departments are making their tourist sites attractive for the tourist and resultantly their numbers are increasing in the coming years. On the other hand, in the Lahore situation, large variation of tourist is posing many questions like:

1. Are the line departments providing up to date facilities at monuments needed to attract the tourists?
2. Are the line departments coordinating with one another to promote the touristsites in Lahore (the case study)?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to explore the facts from the face of uncertainty, primary survey is conducted to collect the first hand information at three monuments, i.e. Jehangir’s Tomb, Shalamar Garden, Shahi (Royal) Fort. Accidental sampling technique was used to interview the tourist on these three sites. For the purpose, at each site ten local and five foreign tourists were interviewed. Thus a total of 30 national and 15 foreign tourists were interviewed. A questionnaire is framed to ask the questions from the

tourists at the selected sites. The sample questions related to research and included in the questionnaire were:

1. How did you come to know about the site?
2. How many times have you visited this site?
3. Are you satisfied with the facilities provided at the site?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The survey results are compiled on the basis of question and then the answers. The results of the survey are explained below:

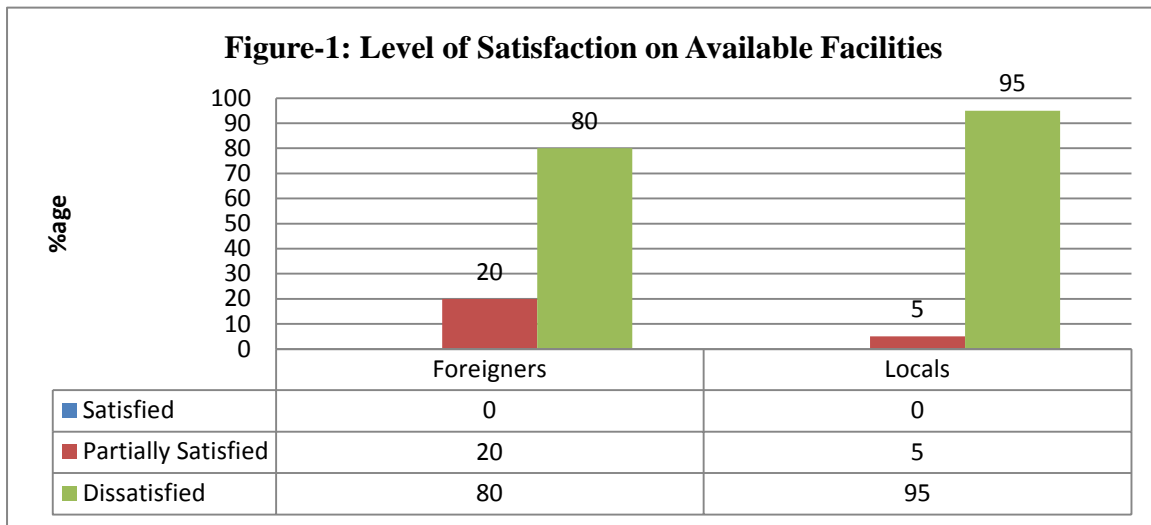
**How did you come to know about the site?:** On the question, interesting answers were received. Majority of the foreigners told that the information about the monuments is gathered from the internet (web) sources. But they complained that information seem to be not updated. As whatever that has been on the internet is not true. The situation of the local people proved to be different as more than half were of the view that the information about the site was received from relatives and friends. When the officials from the concerned departments were contacted and asked about the same question. They told that the informations about the monuments are disseminated with the direction from the central ministry and in most of the cases the delays are

occurring. Likewise, due to lack of information technology experts in the department, the web sites could not be updated regularly. Moreover, sometimes, the provincials sections of the departments are not updating the data about the monuments. Resultantly, the foreign tourists are complaining about the web sites updation.

**How many times have you visited this site?:** On the question, more than 50 percent foreigners said that they are visiting the site first time. Whereas, when the same question was asked from the locals, the recorded answers show that majority is visiting the site more than one time. The data results show that locals are taking interest whereas the foreigners never came back after visiting the monument.

**Are you satisfied with the facilities provided at the site?:** No respondent showed their complete level of satisfaction on the facilities provided at the monument. 20 percent foreigners were partially satisfied whereas remaining 80 percent were totally dissatisfied with the

type of facilities provided at the monument. No foreigner showed his complete satisfaction on the facilities provided at the monument. The same patterns of answers were observed from the locals. Only 5 percent local were partially satisfied and remaining 95 percent showed their total dissatisfaction on the facilities provided at the monument/s. The respondents complained about the insufficient and in-proper location of toilets, parking problems, security issues, absence of water taps, lack of sign boards, vandalism, etc. On the issue, the officials told that efforts are made to provide all facilities. They also admitted that due to shortage of funds, all the facilities could not be provided. They also confessed that security issues are arising due to shortage of security staff. Moreover, they told that more than one department are working and performing the same functions. As a result, the functions sometimes overlapped and efficiency of the department/s is affected.



Rahman (2011) portrayed this situation as the main reasons for poor performance of the department as lack of research on construction and binding materials, inadequate training of professional staff and workers, unattractive environment and working conditions and inadequate government support for conservation of heritage. Although Department of Archaeology established a Pakistan Institute of Archaeological Training and Research in Lahore practically it is dead organization. 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 covers the

Punjab and Khyber Pakhtoonkaw 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. And in certain situations, both national and federal levels departments are working and thus hampering the pace of work.

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 for implementation of building and development control

regulations. These are independent government machinery working at the district/sub-district; tehsil (town) levels. Due to urbanization, the local authorities are facing severe challenge to preserve the historical monuments from the encroachers. The antiquity act 1975 gave powers to these authorities for strict action against the encroachers but practically these agencies seem failed in implementation of conservation of laws. When local agencies were contacted on the issue, they complained about the coordination mechanism and lack of staff. Most of the local authorities' officials were unaware of the antiquity act 1975 as well as archaeological departments. Resultantly, Shalamar Garden, Shahi Fort, and Jehangir's Tomb are heavily encroached and everywhere is clear violation of Antiquity Act 1975. The act says that built up areas should start at least 200 feet away from the monument but in contrary, in most of cases, these are situated adjacent to the walls of the monuments. One another important aspect appeared on the screen when officials say that cases are registered against the violators and sent to courts for decision but unfortunately no one could get any sort of punishment. This situation is also supported by Rahman (2004) as Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered the government agencies to remove encroachments around historic monuments including Shalamar garden and Jahangir's tomb. In the meantime senior judges of the Supreme Court declined to take oath under the PCO and they were sacked. New judges appointed in the court did not take any interest in this matter, although money for the compensation was set aside to pay the affectees of this decision. This was the first time in the history of Pakistan that such action was taken. It was hoped that once such action is taken in Lahore, it will become precedent for the other cities to follow. At the same time the former Government, backed by the President, deliberately delayed the demolition process to gain political gain but even then they could not win the election.

The results also show that local government staff in the respective monument area does not know the importance and significance of monument. Thus, in many cases close his eyes till they get directives from the respective heads for strict action against the encroachers. Rogers (2010) said that 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. This shows government agencies poor performance and affecting the increase/decrease of tourist coming to these historical sites.

**Conclusions:** Based on above discussion, following conclusions are drawn:

1. The government departments, viz-a-viz; federal, provincial, local seem failed to preserve the

historical monuments. The main reason for this is the ignorance of responsibilities of respective departments.

2. Preservation of tangible heritage proved to be not a priority of government as it is placed to work under one ministry, i.e. Ministry of Culture and Youth Affairs, which is already over loaded with multiple functions.
3. 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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