

# Recurring Issues of Mir's Tombs Hyderabad in the Light of Sindh Cultural Heritage Act

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**Abstract - Rapid and unplanned urbanization results into spread of urban sprawls and illegal encroachment issues. Illegal construction is problematic, as it creates issues of traffic congestion, sewerage, price hikes and etc. In case of Hyderabad city the encroachment has severely damaged the cultural heritage of the city, as the city has large number of historic heritage. Talpur's tombs are no exception. Therefore, this research is aimed identify the recurring issues Mir's Tomb of Hyderabad and find the flaws in the implementation of the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act, 1994. To achieve this aim, study has used thematic content analysis is being done, 16 interviews were conducted from the field experts, stake holders, academicians and office holders. The collected data was analyzed in the NVIVO software, results showed six themes of recurring issues, namely administrative, environmental, man-created, policy and legislation, physical and social constraints.**

**Keywords:** Conservation, Cultural Heritage, Monuments, Recurring Issues.

## I. Introduction

The population density of Hyderabad is increasing rapidly, city stands in the leading list of urban population density per km<sup>2</sup> with 40,000 people per km<sup>2</sup> (Peerzado et al., 2019). Economic development is one of the fruit of urbanization, yet rapid and unplanned urbanization results into spread of urban sprawls and illegal encroachment issues (El Menchawy et al., 2011). illegal construction is problematic, as it creates issues of traffic congestion, sewerage, price hikes and etc. in case of Hyderabad the encroachment has severely damaged the cultural heritage of the city, as the city has large number of historic heritage. Talpur's tombs are no exception. Therefore, this research is aimed identify the recurring issues Mir's Tomb of Hyderabad and find the flaws in the implementation of the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act, 1994 (GoS, 1994). To achieve this aim, study has used thematic content analysis is being done, 16 interviews were conducted from the field experts, stake holders, academicians and office holders. The collected data was analyzed in the NVIVO software, results showed six themes of recurring issues, namely administrative,

environmental, man-created, policy and legislation, physical and social constraints.

## II. Background

Sindh, the south-east province of Pakistan, is a house of nearly 3000 historical sites (Panhwar, 2018) and monuments which includes enormous monuments, classical and historical buildings, tombs of Sufi saints, forts, mosques and imperial palaces with impressive architectural exquisiteness and attractiveness. Erected during the reign of numerous dynasties. Among many other illustrious rulers, Talpur rule (1783-1843) (Talpur, 2007) witnessed an extraordinary occurrence of rich art and architecture in Sindh. Many of their monuments and towns razed from the ground due to vandalism and calamity.

Hyderabad is the second largest city of province (Bux Peerzado et al., 2018), was once the historic capital of Sindh. It's a home of culture, and art. Pacca Qilla, the tombs of the Kalhora and Talpur rulers, Badshai Bungalow, Mukhi House, libraries, madrassas and palaces (Jatt, 2016) are few of their significant architectural heritage that one can witness while walking through the streets of town. Furthermore, Hyderabad being the second largest provincial economic hub, urbanization has accelerated to multifold in the recent decades. Due to high pace of urbanization, city's vibrant cultural and magnificent heritage is severely under threat (Biagi, 2018), due to official neglect and vandalism in the form of encroachments. Resultantly, the cultural heritage and monument at the city had fallen into decay and are under high risk of dilapidation.

Pakistan is the signatory to UNESCO's World Heritage Convention since 1972 (Labadi, 2014) and Government of Pakistan then promulgated the Antiquities Act 1975, and amended in 1992 (Hamid Akbar et al., 2020), which ensures the protection of monuments, historic sites and buildings. Under law the building or site ages 75 or more years old will be declared as cultural Heritage. It is also prerequisite that archaeological investigation and excavation should be under the license of Department of Archaeology. In 2010, after the 18th Amendment, history, art and archeology also became the provincial subject. However, the provinces have inadequate

resources and limited capacities to conserve and protect heritage. People are also ignorant to the historic significance, glory and archeological uniqueness of ancient sites.

Therefore, Under the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act, 1994, it is legal obligation of the Sindh government's culture and tourism department to promote the culture and tourism through protection and preservation of the ancient places and objects of historical, archaeological, architectural, anthropological, ethnological, artistic and national values but the department has not taken concrete and constructive measures to preserve our centuries old civilization.

### **III. Architectural and Historic Importance of Mir's Tomb**

At Hyderabad, the Talpur tombs are square in plan and crowned by a hemispherical dome having three-tiered glazed tile finial emerging from an inverted lotus type base (Shaikh, 2000). On top of each corner, there is a solid kiosk, surmounted by a domlet with a miniature finial. Each side of the kiosk contains an arched paneling. The facade of the mausoleum has been constructed in such a way as to give an impression that the building has got more than one story (Talpur, 2007). This has been done in dividing each side of the facade in three ornamentals stories. Each side of the facade on its right and left contains single blind arches one upon the other. This innovation has got its roots in Taq-i-Kisra (Iran) from where it was adopted in the 'Alai Darwaza, Delhi (Of, 2019). All these tombs are known for their superb tile decoration in multiple colors such as white, blue, green, yellow and brown. One of the peculiarities of the ladies' mausolea is that they look like vaulted wagon structures. One of the vaulted wagons mausoleum is rectangular in plan surmounted by two domes and flanked by kicks on each of its four corners. The facade containing the entrance door is divided into three arched panels on each side. On the top of each arched panel, there is a rectangular panel covered with tiles in floral patterns. The other sides of the mausoleum contain more or less the same arched paneling and similar decorative color scheme (Shaikh, 2000).

### **IV. Problem Statement**

The Mir's Tomb like most of other ancient buildings of Hyderabad city is also rapidly deteriorating due to the official negligence, harsh weathering conditions and inadequate public ownership. Accelerated urbanization has enhanced the damaging intensity of human factor to manifold. Resultantly not only the main building is decaying but, the fortification walls and boundaries are damaging wildly. People have made their houses inside or near to the fortification wall through

illegal construction. Sewerage Drain and supply lines of different utilities are running into or through the tomb. Vendors and visitors are damaging the outer structure and exterior of the tombs and there is no vigilance and monitoring mechanism to control this human factor damage. Secondly, it is evident from the prevailing conditions that instead of having rules, regulation and policies to monitor and ensure the protection of the historic monuments the heritage buildings of Hyderabad are under high risk.

Therefore, this research is aimed to identify the recurring issues Mir's Tomb of Hyderabad and find the flaws in the implementation of the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act, 1994.

### **V. Methodology**

This research is exploratory in nature. Mixed methodology has been adopted. Desk research would be employed for reviewing existing literature, official documents, reports, articles, maps and etc. The study also uses photographic, descriptive and ethnographic documentations to identify the existing problems of the Tomb (Walton, 2003). For deeper understanding of the highlighted problems emerging from literature. Interviews with key stakeholders and field surveys were conducted (Azizi et al., 2016). Snowball sampling technique was employed while interviewing the office holders, stake holders and experts. After collection the data was analyzed in to NVIVO software using method of content analysis. Thematic analysis is being conducted (Wang, 2012).

As it was mentioned earlier, the study was focused group so a sample of 16 interviews is being conducted from the office holders, stake holders and experts. However, Fern (2001) suggests that between four and six participants are recommended for focus groups. However, Braun & Clarke (2006) used a sample size of 8-10 interviews for its thematic analysis.

The research questionnaire was broadly divided into two parts, first consist of 7 questions which brings about the primary information of the respondents, i.e Name, Occupation, Organization, Designation, Experience and etc. However, the second part consists of 19 questions. The questions we designed in the pragmatic manner, cohesive and interlinked. First few questions ask about the importance of the Cultural Heritage, its importance particularly about the conservation of the Cultural Heritage of Hyderabad city. Its issues, cause of problems, impact of urbanization on the deterioration of cultural heritage, about the challenges faced by mausoleums and about the stakeholders of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the questions were asked about, the Sindh Cultural Heritage (Preservation) Act, 1994, issues related to

the act, the causes of poor implementation, and the causes of outdated act. Why the act remains unamended for 26 years. From the condition of research site (Mir’sTombs) it was evident that a major cause of deterioration was encroachment. Therefore, it was imperative to ask about the rules related to proximity and buffer zones. Five questions were being asked related to proximity, its laws, and implementation of law, illegal construction and the causes of poor implantation of construction by-laws. Finally, the social side of cultural ignorance, desensitization and irresponsible behavior were being discussed. Respondents were asked about the causes of poor civic sense and suggestions were asked regarding policy formulation, preservation of Kalhoro’s and Mir’s tombs and regarding infringement of Historical urban regions.

## VI. Results

This research was exploratory in nature. The research methodology involved uses photographic, descriptive, and ethnographic documentation. After collecting all the data, interviews, voice records and filled questionnaire the collected data analyzed in to NVIVO software by the method of thematic analysis.

The answers were divided into 6 major themes,

- 1) Administrative Issues
- 2) Environmental Issues
- 3) Man-Created Issues
- 4) Policy and legislation issues
- 5) Physical problems
- 6) Social Constraints

**Table 1: Main issues and indicators of conservation of historic sites. Source: Author**

S.No	Themes	Sub-Themes
01	<b>Administrative Issues</b>	i. Advertisement, ii. Budgeting iii. Congestion iv. DC.PC Reactivated v. Environment assessment meeting vi. Red- tapism vii. Expert Team missing
02	<b>Environmental Issues</b>	i. Building Condition ii. Building Location iii. Business Opportunity iv. Economic constrains v. Third Party influence
03	<b>Man-Created Issues</b>	i. Poor Communication ii. Poor Knowledge iii. Strict laws required
04	<b>Policy and legislation issues</b>	i. 1994 Act outdated ii. Buffer zone redlined iii. Guidelines missing iv. Preservation rules outdated v. Proximity legalized vi. Proximity rules vii. Punishment reward system outdated
05	<b>Physical problems</b>	i. Infrastructure ii. Urbanization
06	<b>Social Constraints</b>	i. Community mobilization ii. Community pride ownership iii. Stigmatized stories

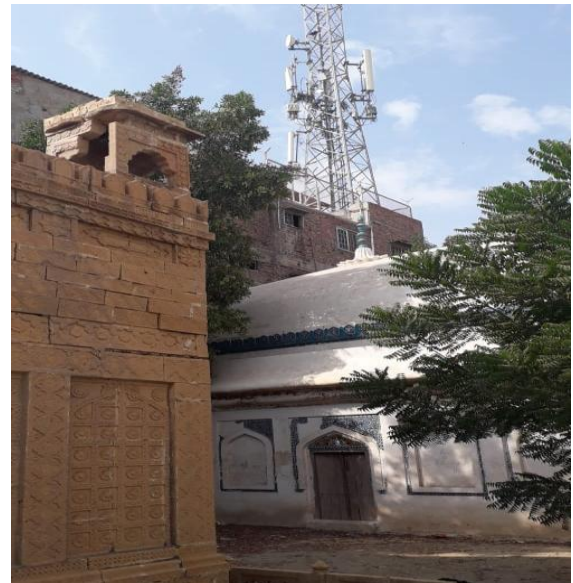
## VII. Discussion

Administrative issues were further divided into seven sub themes. Advertisement, Budgeting, Congestion, District Committee for Protection and Conservation Reactivated, Environment assessment meeting, Red- tapism, Expert Team missing. Most of the respondent emphasized upon low budgeting, absence of expert team, dysfunction of the District Committee for Protection and Conservation and Environment assessment meeting as the major administrative issues or causes of illegal constructions on the historical sites.

Environmental Issues includes, Building Condition, Building Location, Business Opportunity, Economic constrains, Third Party influence. Most of the respondent emphasized upon building location, low business opportunities and rent seeking behavior as the major environmental issue faced while conservation of historic sites of Hyderabad. Man-Created Issues includes Poor Communication regarding the importance of historic monuments and low awareness or Knowledge about the historic and cultural assets. Respondents further emphasized upon reward and punishment system with strict laws required for the conservation of the historic buildings as shown in table 1.

Table 1 reads about the Policy and legislation issues related to the conversation. When respondents were asked about the lacking in 1994 Act, most of them replied that 1994 outdated, it does not provide guidelines on the conservation, Buffer zone is not properly demarcated, redlines are not defined, Guidelines missing, Preservation rules outdated. It was observed and learned that during last 20-30 years many times the Proximities that were encroached by neighboring resident were legalized, this encouraged resident to encroach further. Respondents highlighted the need of Proximity rules revision and emphasized upon the up gradation or revision of Punishment reward system, penalties are too small and quite affordable.

Physical problems encompass Infrastructure and rapid, unplanned urbanization. Statistics also suggests that in last three decades urbanization has increased exponentially. This rapid and unprecedented rural to urban movement caused encroachment, which is evident in not only in case of historic sites but also in other parts of city.



**Figure 1: Internal wall and illegal construction on Mir’s Tomb site, Source: Author**

Lastly, Social Constraints were being highlighted by the respondents. Respondents emphasized upon the role of Community in the conservation of the historic buildings. Local ownership and sense of pride can work as the motivational force for the local community. In this regard community education and awareness is vital along with the community mobilization. Apart from unawareness and illiteracy the major cause of neglection is the Stigmatized stories attached to the old and historic buildings related to the witchcraft and devils or bugaboo which create a sense of fear among neighbors relating to the old and historic buildings.



**Figure 2: Deteriorated condition of Mir’s Tomb site, Source: Author**

The conservational issues of mir’s tombs were also modeled separately. Administrative issues were further divided into seven sub themes. Advertisement, Budgeting, Congestion, District Committee for Protection and Conservation Reactivated, Environment assessment meeting, Red- tapism, Expert Team missing.

Most of the respondent emphasized upon low budgeting, absence of expert team, dysfunction of the District Committee for Protection and Conservation and Environment assessment meeting as the major administrative issues or causes of illegal constructions on the historical sites.



Figure 3: Deteriorated condition of Mir's Tomb site, Source: Author



Figure 4: Google Plan of Mir's Tomb site, Source: Google Earth

During the survey we found piles of garbage around the tombs. Streets around the taom were too narrow to be accessed through visitors couch or other vehical. The tomb is not visible from the road primarily because of the heavy encroachment on the surrounding land. The extent of vandalism and illegal construction is visible in above pictures. The outer fortified

made of mud, covered by baked bricks was broken down to build the houses. This shows the highest degree of negligence and irresponsibile behaviour of inhabitant and authorities. Figure 4 shows the broken boundry and illegal construction with tomb.

Figure 1, 2 and 3 reveals the existing condition of the tomb. Figure 4 is taken from Google map. However, figure 1 2 and 3reveals the existing condition of the tomb where there are piles of garbage, mobile signal tower, illegal construction and damaged building of tomb. We can see in the figure 4 that enchroachment has been extended to the all three walls of the tomb resultantly the boundary wall of the masuleum has been extensively damaged.

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