

**Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Challenges in Historically Significant Marketplaces:  
A Case Study of Lahore**

**Muhammad Mashhood**

[Muhammadmashhoodplanner@gmail.com](mailto:Muhammadmashhoodplanner@gmail.com)

Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore

**Hassan Nisar**

Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore

**Romaiza Amjad**

Department of City and Regional Planning, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore

**Corresponding Author: \* Muhammad Mashhood** [Muhammadmashhoodplanner@gmail.com](mailto:Muhammadmashhoodplanner@gmail.com)

**Received:** 09-07-2025

**Revised:** 20-08-2025

**Accepted:** 15-09-2025

**Published:** 03-10-2025

**ABSTRACT**

*Marketplace (Bazaar) are key places in the existing landscape of old and traditional cities in Pakistan. But currently these bazaars are facing many problems such as encroachment, congestion and more. Baghbanpura bazaar is one of these places, it is a famous and historically significant bazaar in North-East side of the center of Lahore. This bazaar lies in Baghbanpura (living place of gardeners) which is an old place in Lahore developed by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to provide the people assigned as Baghbans (gardeners) of the famous Shalamar Garden for their accommodation in the vicinity of this garden. It is full of history and culture of the people living in this area at that time which is near the rich culture of the whole area around river Ravi. The objective of this research is to identify the problems of Baghbanpura bazaar and propose the solutions taken away from different existing case studies. The crucial problems faced by bazaar is the congestion, pollution and low maintenance of things like buildings, electricity lines, sewerage, drainage system, etc. Which has its own significance as can be seen in the historical writings. The problems being facing in the bazaar are now fading the traditional and historical fabric of this bazaar which once correlate with the rich culture of this region. This research studies these problems and propose solutions for the conservation of this bazaar so that it can be saved from further erosion of its rich culture and history.*

**Keywords** – Bazaar, Cultural fabric, Cultural Heritage, Conservation Strategies, Encroachment, Modern Problems, Marketplaces, Urban Historic Texture.

**Acknowledgment**

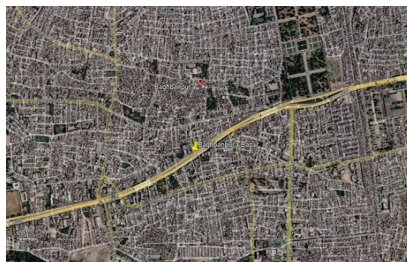
We first and foremost express our gratitude with sincerity and purity to Allah Almighty – The most merciful and beneficent. We would like to express our sincere thanks to our parents who always supported us with our decisions and done every right thing possible to help us with every problem we have ever faced. We extend our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to all those who contributed. This work would not have been possible without the unwavering support, guidance, and collaboration of numerous individuals.

**INTRODUCTION**

“Lahore is an ancient, culturally rich city amidst which are embedded two world heritage sites.” (Arif and Essa, 2017). Due to poor documentation and implementation in the country the heritage sites and cultural significant places are decaying. According to The Aga Khan Cultural Service (AKCSP), “Pakistan is one of the first working in heritage conservation in the country.” AKCSP is now performing an intensive and

extending documentation process which is currently targeting the UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage site of the Mughal era Lahore Fort (Arif and Essa, 2017).

The physical character of any historically significant place consists of numbers of different characteristics like monuments, tombs, traditional buildings, modern architecture and open spaces. Baghbanpura bazaar is situated in Baghbanpura Lahore see Fig. 1. Baghbanpura is a place located on the Grand Trunk (G.T.). Baghbanpura Bazaar is one of its famous places. It was established in around 17th to 18th century.



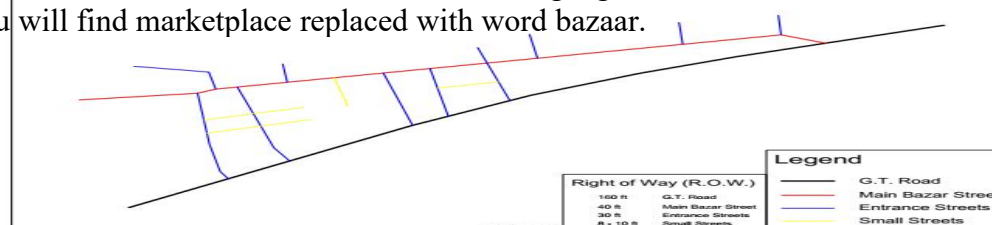
**Figure 1. Baghbanpura Bazaar [Source: Google Earth]**

Baghbanpura became home town of the families who Mughal Emperor given the responsibility of taking care of the Shalimar Garden. Therefore, local people living their established a place of market where they can trade and acquire the things of their need and use. That place afterwards given the name by the locals as the “Baghbanpura Bazaar.”

#### **Road Network**

Baghbanpura Bazaar is situated in Lahore on G.T. Road which has a R.O.W. of 160 ft. Now, the entrance streets as shown in the figure below have R.O.W. of approximately 30 ft and then, the main bazaar street has a R.O.W. of approximately 40ft and the small streets have a R.O.W. of around 8 – 10 ft see Fig.2

\*Marketplaces are referred to as bazaars in common language urdu in Pakistan therefore, in this research you will find marketplace replaced with word bazaar.



**Figure 2. Road Network Baghbanpura Bazaar [Source: AutoCAD]**

#### **Area**

The total area which can be targeted for the conservation is 34.2 acres which include the current area of the whole bazaar extending along Main Grand Trunk Road as you can see in the Fig.3 also the area highlighted in yellow is the area selected for the conservation.

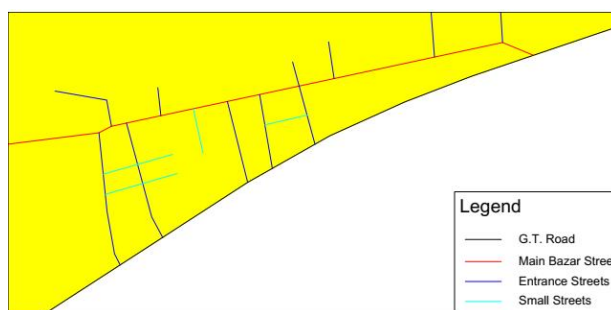


Figure 3. Conservation Area of Baghbanpura bazaar [Source: AutoCAD]

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Introduction – Anarkali Bazaar*

*The reason behind selecting the Anarkali bazaar as the case study for literature is that it is most similar to Baghbanpura bazaar. Before its conservation, it almost has the same type of issues as Baghbanpura bazaar has now, like encroachments, solid waste pollution, etc. Therefore, the case study of Anarkali bazaar was very much informative for the understanding of how to tackle the problems faced in Baghbanpura bazaar.*

### *A Historic Urban Neighbourhood*

It starts from the Lohari gate and extend towards the old walled city Lahore. Anarkali is known, for its sparkling market, “Anarkali Bazaar” with a compact zone for residence, and also has buildings from the period before partition. Partition of British India and the creation of Pakistan in 1947 saw Lahore drop its historic Hindu and Sikh population and gain new Muslim inhabitants seeking to make a new life under independence. Anarkali Bazaar is named after the famous lover of Mughal emperor Jahangir (WMF, 2020).

### *2020 World Monuments Watch*

Anarkali Bazaar was included in the 2020 World Monuments Watch which pursued to support the efforts to recover the area and restore the community’s places of interest. In late 2020, WMF joined local authorities in the project to revitalize Anarkali Bazaar's historic built fabric through cultural mapping and stakeholder engagement (WMF, 2020).

## METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSION

In the methodology of conservation, we must carefully monitor different important factors like the scope, time and cost. Like the scope of the project must be clear, a targeted area should be selected for the conservation. Outcomes of the project must be vibrant to encourage people to support the project.

### *Problems of Baghbanpura Bazaar*

Encroachment by the shop owners is one of the main problems in the bazaar that raise the factor of congestion to next level (see Fig. 4).



**Figure 4: Encroachment in the Bazaar. [Source: Author]**

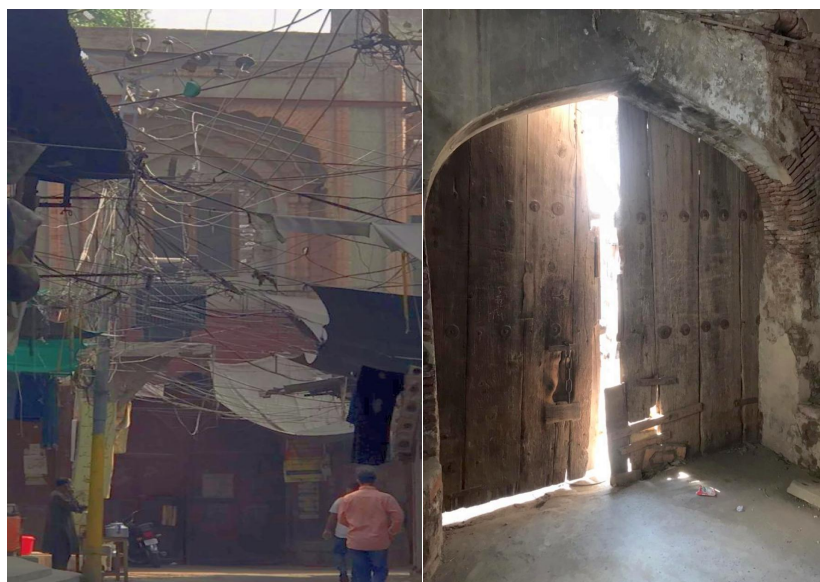
- Electricity lines passing mainly in the inner bazaar are not covered properly and break in any line specially in the rainy season like monsoon can cause a severe danger to the lives of the people (see Fig. 5).



**Figure 5: Hanging electricity wires. [Source: Author]**

- Also, the streets get accumulated with water which stays there for more than a week causing the severe movement problems and health problems as well as we know malaria and dengue is a big problem in Lahore and by these situations it can be escalated.
- It is a place of historic significance and reflects the cultural aspect of the people who lived there.
- There are around 7 havelis in the bazaar which are older than the Pakistan itself. Out of which some were used by the Britain's as a court according to the residents (see Fig. 6 and 7).
- Traffic moving inside the bazaar most of the time choke the streets and cause problems for the people to move (see Fig. 6 and 7).
- The streets of the bazaar should be pedestrianized and alternative routes around the bazaar should be used for the traffic movement.





**Figure 6 and 7: Haveli which was used as a court by Britain's. [Source: Author]**

- Due to increasing congestion the shops are being transferred from the bazaar because the owners says that we cannot freely work here and that's why they are transferring to different places.
- Most of the buildings in the main bazaar street were shop houses and some old havelies are situated with different architectural designs in different places of bazaar. But now they are in utmost damaged condition due to low or no maintenance.
- The congestion in bazaar also contributes in the choking of the main G.T. road which cause severe traffic jams in the peak hours specially.
- There are some schools inside the bazaar which also contributes in congestion during the starting and ending hours of school (see Fig. 9).



**Figure 9: One of the schools in the bazaar. [Source: Author]**

- Many old and historic buildings have already been demolished and converted into modern buildings and many more can be converted if this is not taken seriously (see Fig. 10 and 11).



Figure 10: Balcony of a modern house. [Source: Author]

### *Objectives and goals*

Conservation is significant because it recognizes and preserves that identity and pieces of history for both present and future generations to cherish. These cultural and historically significant places show the richness in a specific area. That how old it is and how important it is to the people living there from a long time and has established their roots in that area.

The objectives of the conservation of Baghbanpura bazaar are to:

1. Character
2. Ease of movement
3. Adaptability
4. Diversity



Figure 11: A modern house in the bazaar. [Source: Author]

### *Scope*

The objective of the projects similar to this project can be very extensive that is why the scope is this project is defined to stay focused on the track without straying anywhere else.

Following is the scope of this project:

- Removal of encroachment.
- Provision of only pedestrianized streets.
- Maintenance of old historic buildings.
- Waste removal and promotion of clean environment in the bazaar.
- Displacement of schools from bazaar by giving them the compensation.

- Improved drainage system.

#### ***Time***

On standard it took around 10 – 15 years to complete a conservation reserve program and the problems and objectives identified in this conservation project according to different approximation it may take minimum of 3 – 5 years to complete. (Agriculture, 2022).

By taking our objectives in mind, so only tackling with the encroachment it may take atleast 6 months and if we go to the infrastructure side the time cycle and completion of the conservation will be increased.

#### ***Cost***

Pakistan has its own history of conservation of many areas especially in Lahore. Lahore is the home to Islamic and Mughal architecture which also has been renewed time to time, especially the walled city. But the cost of the conservation is just skyrocketing.

The purpose of this discussion is that the conservation should be done locally and there's no need to take loans for it because conserving the historical sites doesn't mean that the present city should be neglected. In terms of covered area, the current labor rate in Pakistan is Rs. 250 to 380 per sq. ft. of covered area. (Siddique, 2022, June. 14th.).

Hence, by finding different material prices and cost of transportation in the project approximately. The direct total cost will be around 40 – 50 million rupees.

#### ***Techniques of conservation***

“Conservation methods are consolidation, reproduction, reconstruction, preservation, deterioration perversion, rehabilitation, and restoration.” (Hmood, 2019, July. 3rd.).

#### ***Community Involvement***

Community must be involved by interviewing the local people, developing questionnaires, focus groups, etc. Because the largest stakeholders of this project are the local people who live and work there. Because this project will impact them directly.

- The people living there can also indicate more problems which may be not picked out by anyone else. Therefore, they can help us to implement this project more efficiently and effectively. Keeping the above factors in mind we have created a structured interview see Appendix 1 to gather data about the bazaar from the people living, working and visiting the bazaar.
- Using the structured interview, the residents, shop owners, and other consumers and workers in the bazaar were interviewed to extract different problems and their solutions according to them. The people interviewed were above 31 years. Many of the shop owners were also the residents. Mostly, the residents were living there from more than 30 years. And they have not seen any type of conservation there before.
- Most of the people thinks that the local authorities are responsible for the issues they are facing in the bazaar. The authorities neglect the issues due to political polarization as well as due to corruption. Technically the problems and solutions observed and suggested by the people were identical to those suggested by us.
-

- People were ready to contribute in the conservation process mostly morally by supporting the cause and providing the people which will work their comfortable environment. Some people said they will physically contribute in the project in any way needed.
- 
- Community Involvement is necessary because without the people you will never be able to identify the core problems which the local are facing there and know better than you.

***The major problems highlighted by the people***

- Excessive numbers of street vendors
- Encroachment of stalls in front of shops by vendors which were mostly paying monthly the shop owner in front of which they are standing.
- Choking of traffic because of encroachment
- Lack of interest by responsible authorities like Tehsil Municipal Authority Lahore (T.M.A.), Lahore Waste Management Company (L.W.M.C.), Water and Sanitation Authority Lahore (W.A.S.A.), etc.
- Parking, temporary roofs, etc.
- Lack of decision making in bazaar internal management as there are multiple presidents who have their own opinions and no cooperation of upper body administration
- Corruption by the local authorities.
- Lack of implementation by the authorities,
- Schools in bazaar cause congestion.
- Health issues like dengue fever, water problems, negligence of political elected member of the union council, parking issues like congestion in front of house.

***Solutions suggested by the people***

We asked about the solutions of these problems in his point of view because it was necessary to perceive, according to them what kind of attempts can be carried out to overcome these problems.

- Officer in charge of this area must visit in order to find out the root causes of these problems they said that how can a person sitting in luxury cars and offices could relate to the problems of common man living from hand to mouth.
- The authority responsible must show interest in problems of this area and should do some work to tackle these problems.
- A separate place must be provided to these street vendors.
- Motor bikes should be prohibited from entering bazaar as there are parking points provided outside the bazaar but due to low implementation no one parks their vehicles.
- Only pedestrians should be allowed to enter the bazaar.
- Encourage people to park there by giving those different offers and gift cards that can be used only in this bazaar.
- Monitoring of the performance of political elected members.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Baghbanpura bazaar is facing a lot of issues discussed deeply in this document. These issues can be resolved by the cooperation of local authorities with each other and the people affected by these changes. The historically significant buildings like havelis, etc. should be conserved. Implementation must have to be strong by the local authorities responsible to mitigate encroachment, parking, cleaning, maintenance,



congestion and other similar issues. Local people must be involved effectively, as at the end of the day, they'll be the one who will be directly influenced by our decisions.

The site can be surveyed in coordination with the team of an institute specialized in conservation projects, to brush out more detail from the site like N.C.A. (National College of Arts), etc. The site for parking can be provided near the bazaar on some vacant lands that can be surveyed in more detail. With the help of law enforcement institutes, the havelis of historical significance can be observed in more detail. The site can be surveyed in rainy season to witness the effects of rain on it. A large project team can survey this site more effectively. The team must have equipment to measure things like R.O.W. (Right of way) of roads, etc.

#### REFERENCES

- AGRICULTURE, U. S. D. O. 2022. *Conservation Reserve Program* [Online]. Available: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/conservation-programs/conservation-reserve-program/> [Accessed].
- ARIF, R. & ESSA, K. 2017. Evolving techniques of documentation of a world heritage site in Lahore. *The international archives of the photogrammetry, remote sensing and spatial information sciences*, 42, 33-40.
- HMOOD, K. F. 2019, July. 3rd. *Introductory Chapter: Heritage Conservation - Rehabilitation of Architectural and Urban Heritage* [Online]. Available: <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/67342> [Accessed].
- SIDDIQUE, A. 2022, June. 14th. *Labour Rates for Construction in Pakistan* [Online]. Available: <https://www.graana.com/blog/construction-work-labour-rates/> [Accessed].
- WMF. 2020. *Anarkali Bazaar* [Online]. Available: <https://www.wmf.org/project/anarkali-bazaar> [Accessed].

APPENDIX 1

## Conservation of Baghbanpura Bazaar

This structured interview is developed to identify the problems faced by the people living, working and visiting the Baghbanpura bazaar.

1. What is your age (years)?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Below 18  
☐ 18 to 30  
☐ 31 to 50  
☐ above 51

2. What is your status in Baghbanpura bazaar?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Resident  
☐ Shop Owner  
☐ Consumer  
☐ Other

3. In your opinion, what are the problems in Baghbanpura bazaar?

---

---

---

---

---

4. Have Baghbanpura bazaar is conserved before?

---

---

---

---

---

5. What is the solution of the problems listed above in your opinion

---

---

---

---

---

6. Will you coordinate if solutions other than your own are applied in the bazaar?

---

---

---

---

---

7. Does in your opinion, legal authorities are neglecting the problems in bazaar intentionally?

*Mark only one oval.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. If yes, in the above question then why?

---

---

---

---

---

9. If no, in the above question then why?

---

---

---

---

---

10. Which legal authorities are responsible for the implementation of solutions?

---

---

---

---

---

11. How will you contribute, if the conservation is done by your involvement?

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Physically  
☐ Financially  
☐ Morally

12. If physically then how?

---

---

---

---

---

13. If financially then how?

---

---

---

---

---

14. If morally then how?

---

---

---

---

---