

Islam and Protection of Religious Heritage: A Case Study of Buddhist Relics in Pakistan

Thesis for M. Phil Islamic Studies

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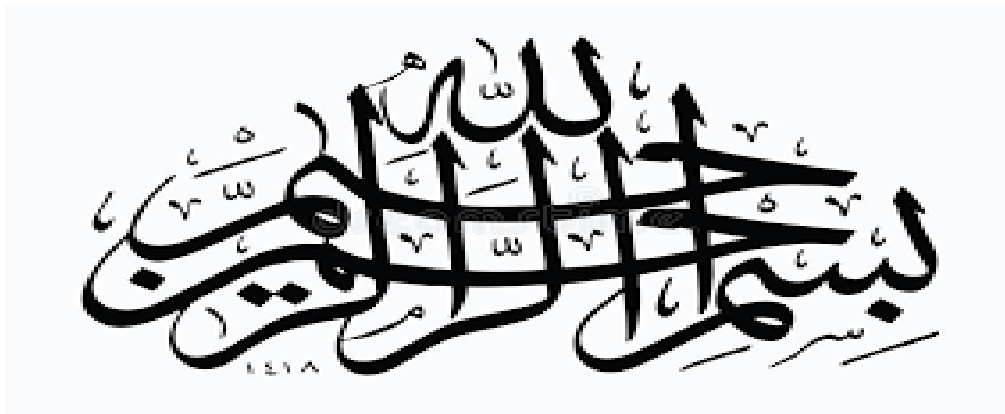


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ABSTRACT

Islam and Protection of Religious Heritage: A Case Study of Buddhist Relics in Pakistan

This research explores the protection of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan within the framework of Islamic principles, emphasizing its significance and addressing the challenges it encounters. Pakistan, characterized by its diverse religious history, including Buddhism, boasts a cultural heritage of immense historical and social value. However, this heritage faces various threats, such as rapid urbanization, illegal excavations, and inadequate preservation measures. The study encompasses: Illuminating Islamic principles pertinent to the preservation of non-Islamic religious heritage. Scrutinizing the challenges and issues that confront Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. Investigating the potential social and economic benefits attainable through the preservation of this heritage. To achieve these aims, a descriptive research approach is employed, drawing primarily from the Quran, Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him), and records of his agreements with non-Muslim communities. In addition to these primary sources, interviews with government officials, archaeological researchers, religious scholars, Buddhist practitioners, and local communities near Buddhist sites provide invaluable insights. Case studies, including the Takht Bahi site, are used to collect data on the challenges facing Buddhist heritage. Secondary data from books, articles, survey reports, and digital sources complement the research. Furthermore, meetings with subject matter experts contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The study adheres to the Chicago Manual of Style with NUML's formatting guidelines for compilation. By examining the interplay between Islamic principles and the preservation of non-Islamic heritage, this research endeavors to offer recommendations and solutions to safeguard and leverage the historical and cultural richness of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage.

Keywords: Buddhist heritage, Islamic principles, cultural preservation, Pakistan, historical significance, heritage protection,

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, whose unwavering love, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the foundation of my journey. Your boundless support, both in times of triumph and challenge, has fueled my determination to reach this milestone. This achievement is a tribute to your unwavering belief in me.

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To all my well-wishers, whose words of encouragement and support have been a source of inspiration, I extend my deepest gratitude. Your belief in my capabilities has been a driving force throughout my academic pursuit.

Transliteration Table

TRANSLITERATION TABLE									
ا	a	ڈ	d	غ	gh	بھ	bh		
ب	b	ذ	dh	ف	f	پھ	ph	ا	ā
پ	p	ر	r	ق	q	تھ	th	آ	ā
ت	t	ڑ	r̄	ک	k	ٹھ	ṭh	ی	i
ٹ	ṭ	ز	z	گ	g	چھ	ḥh	و	ū
ث	th	ژ	z̄	ل	l	چھ	ch	و	(Urdu) o
ج	j	س	s	م	m	دھ	dh	ے	(Urdu) ē
چ	ch	ش	sh	ن	n	ڈھ	ḍh		
ح	h	ص	s̄	ں	n̄	ڑھ	r̄h		
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	ہ	h	کھ	kh		
د	d	ظ	ẓ	ی	y	گھ	gh		

<p>اَ (◌َ), when it appears at the middle or end of a word, is transliterated as elevated comma (◌̣) followed by the letter representing the vowel it carries. However, when اَ appears at the beginning of a word it will be represented only by the letter representing the vowel it carries.</p> <p>ع is transliterated as elevated inverted comma (◌̣).</p> <p>ض as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (ḍ), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter as (z).</p> <p>و as an Arabic letter is transliterated as (w), and as a Persian/Turkish/Urdu letter is transliterated as (v).</p> <p>آ is transliterated as (ah) in pause form and as (at) in construct form.</p> <p>Article اَل is transliterated as (al-) whether followed by a moon or a sun letter, however, in construct form it will be transliterated as (l).</p> <p>و as a Persian/Urdu conjunction is transliterated as (-o) whereas as an Arabic conjunction و is transliterated as (wa).</p> <p>Short vowel (◌̣) in Persian/Urdu possessive or adjectival form is transliterated as (-i).</p>	<p>Long Vowels</p> <p>ا ā</p> <p>آ ā</p> <p>ی i</p> <p>و ū</p> <p>و (Urdu) o</p> <p>ے (Urdu) ē</p> <p>Short Vowels</p> <p>ا a</p> <p>ی i</p> <p>و u</p> <p>Diphthongs</p> <p>و / (Arabic) aw (Persian/Urdu) au (Turkish) ev</p> <p>ی / (Arabic) ay (Persian/Urdu) ai (Turkish) ey</p> <p>Doubled</p> <p>و / (Arabic) uww (Persian) uvv (Urdu) uvv</p> <p>ی / iyy</p>
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Table of Abbreviations

UN	United Nations
UNESCO Organization	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
NGO	Non Government Organisation

1. CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER. 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION:

Islam is called the religion of nature which welcomes the good and rejects the bad. Islam is a knowledge-friendly religion that not only protected the intellectual and cultural heritage of the previous nations but rather took it to new heights of development. After its appearance in the 7th century AD, Islam spread rapidly as the most popular religion in the world. It spread from the Arab peninsula to the distant regions of Asia, Africa, and to the borders of Europe. Islamic civilization left its deep imprint on the world for many centuries. With the expansion of the Islamic state, a multicultural, multi-religious, and diverse civilization came into existence due to which Muslims interacted with other civilizations. The Islamic Empire not only established peaceful relations with these nations but also guaranteed the protection of their rights. The Prophet of Islam himself, peace and blessings be upon him, made agreements with the Jews, Christians, and Magis, not only guaranteeing them religious freedom but also ordered to not demolish their places of worship. The importance of protecting the places of worship of other religions has also been described in the Quran. Allah says:

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ

النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ هَادَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا

أَسْمَ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

And were it not that Allah checks the people, some by means of others, there would have been demolished monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which the name of Allah is much mentioned. And Allah will surely support those who support Him. Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.¹

¹ Al-Quran 22:40

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also concluded an agreement with the Christians of Najran. Due to which no change will be made in their current condition. None of their rights will be encroached upon, nor will the idols be defaced. No priest shall be removed from his priesthood, no bishop from his episcopate, no monk from his monasticism, nor any administrator of the church from his office, and whatever more or less is in their possession shall remain so.² Similar agreements were also made by the Messenger of God (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with other nations.

The Islamic State was fully responsible for the protection of the lives, property, honor and dignity, places of worship, and relics of the nations that entered the circle of Islam. Muslims conquered Egypt, Iraq, and Syria during the Farooqi Caliphate. All the archaeological remains of that time were preserved by the Muslims. Whether they are statues of pharaohs of Egypt, temples or pyramids, Muslims considered them as symbols of the previous nations and kept them safe. Similarly, the remnants of the Mesopotamian civilization of Iraq were protected by the Muslims. At the same time, when Iran was conquered, the Muslims did not demolish the palace of Khosrow, nor did they damage the Zoroastrian temples or the shrines of the Magi. Nor did he destroy the statues and artefacts that were preserved by the natives there. All this was due to the universal and universal teachings of Islam that Allah and the Prophet of Islam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) issued to all mankind.

Pakistan has also been cradle of Buddhist art and culture and the second holy land of Buddhism for well over a thousand years. The religious faith has marked the most significant epoch in the history of the cultural and social evolution in the subcontinent. Indeed, it has been one of the greatest spiritual experiences the world has ever seen and which have left behind one of the finest manifestations in the domain of art and culture. The advent and development of Buddhism owe a great deal to the ancient land of Pakistan. It was here that the religious activities reached their climax through well-organized missionaries and ultimately made it a world religion. The land of Gandhara where the celebrated faith evolved, is more or less a triangle of about 100 kilometers across east to west and 70 kilometers from north to south, on the west of the

² Bilaziri, Ahmad bin Yahya. (1957) *Fatuh al-Buldan*, Cairo:Dar al-Nashr, 364

Indus River. It is surrounded on three sides by mountains. It covers the vast areas of today's Peshawar valley, the hilly tracts of Swat (Udyana), Buner, and the Taxila valley (Rawalpindi). Buddhism left a monumental and rich legacy of art and architecture in Pakistan. Despite the vagaries of centuries, the Gandhara region preserved a lot of the heritage in craft and art. Much of this legacy is visible even today in Pakistan. There are hundreds of sites scattered across Pakistan. Among them most important are the Dharmarajika Stupa in Takht-i-Bahi in Khyber Pukhyoonkhwah, the Votive Stupa, Shinggardar Stupa, the Amluk Dara Supa situated in Taxila (previously known as Takshashila) and an iconic Buddha statue in Swat. Bamala in Khyber Pukhtoonkhwah has also emerged as a major Buddhist heritage site after the remains of a 1700 years old sleeping Buddha statue were discovered there.

Woefully, the valuable heritage from which Pakistan was supposed to gain economic, political, and social benefits in the shape of peacebuilding, diplomatic ties, religious tourism, etc. is facing many kinds of problems. Such as the Rapid expansion of cities without any planning which is causing their destruction. In the developed countries of the world, special measures are taken regarding the reconstruction and expansion of cities with ancient heritage, but there are no measures in this regard in Pakistan. Incidents of attacks from some radicals on Buddhist sculpture has also been reported. In 2020, two attacks were reported on an ancient rock carving of a seated Buddha located near Janabad in north-west Pakistan, a region known for its ancient Buddhist heritage and archaeological sites. According to numerous reports, suspected pro-Taliban militants carried out two attacks on the rock in early and late September, the second attack leaving the 7-metre-high statue, dating from the seventh century AD, partly damaged.³ Similarly, poor management and lack of adequate measures to protect this heritage are also causing its destruction. Illegal excavations are taking place in many places due to which valuable artifacts are stolen. Many gangs have been arrested due to these illegal excavations.⁴ Apart from this, lack of interest by the government and institutes, poor techniques of preservation of ancient heritage, etc are the main issues in the destruction of the Buddhist heritage of Pakistan.

³ Centre, U., 2022. *Terrorist attacks damage Pakistan Buddha*. [online] Whc.unesco.org. Available at: <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/news/383>> Accessed 5 October 2022.

⁴ The Express Tribune. 2022. *Four held for excavating heritage site | The Express Tribune*. [online] Available at: <<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2377045/four-held-for-excavating-heritage-site>> [Accessed 5 October 2022].

To protect Buddhist archeology in Pakistan, it is important that the people of this country understand its importance and play their role. Pakistan is an Islamic state with more than ninety-eight percent Muslim population, it is important to examine the protection of this heritage from the Islamic point of view and bring out the problems faced by this heritage so that the government of Pakistan can take appropriate measures and get the expected benefits. In this research, the principles found in light of Islamic laws regarding the protection of non-Islamic religious heritage will be examined. And the views of all Islamic schools of thought on the protection of religious heritage will be analyzed. Similarly, all the administrative problems facing this heritage will also be brought to the fore. So that in light of Islamic principles, solutions to the problems faced by the religious heritage of Buddhism in Pakistan can be found.

1.1.1. Significance of the Study:

This research is important because of the Islamic tradition of protecting religious heritage. Islam has guaranteed the protection of life, property and places of worship of non-Muslims. In the same way, Muslims adopted the attitude of protecting the places of worship and religious heritage of other nations during their rule. Therefore, this research is necessary to protect the non-Islamic religious heritage in Pakistan.

This research is very important for explaining the Islamic approach to preserving the remains of non-Islamic religions. With the help of this research, these Islamic principles can be brought forward by which the heritage of other nations can be protected. Moreover, by clarifying the Islamic point of view, the harm caused by rare religious extremists can also be reduced.

This research has highlighted the present condition of ancient Buddhist heritage of Pakistan which hopefully be helpful for the concerned authorities to take steps for the management and preservation of the heritage. Moreover, the study of Buddhist heritage is also useful because it will help to understand the problems faced by this precious heritage so that they can be solved-

This research is also very important in terms of presenting the bright side of Islam and Pakistan to the world. By protecting the religious heritage of Buddhism, Pakistanis' broad-mindedness and the universality of Islam will be evident to the world.

Religious harmony and Da'wah benefits can also be obtained from this research. Anti-Islam extremist views in the world can be refuted by the protection of Buddhist places of worship.

Prior to this, the research work on Buddhist heritage was based on its excavations and findings. This research study will be of a new type in which the principle of preservation of this heritage under Islamic teachings will come out. Moreover, this research is also beneficial because it may bring out the social, economic, and political benefits of this heritage to Pakistan.

1.1.2. Literature Review:

Many researchers had studied the Buddhist heritage of Pakistan. These studies have been done to explore the Buddhist sites and zones in Pakistan. We can find general research work on the Gandara civilization not specific to Islamic view on this heritage. The studies on Islamic perspective of preservation of religious heritage are very rare. The researcher has gathered some literature which has been done previously to this study.

Muhammad Mansha Tayyab (2007) in his M.Phil dissertation has reviewed the sharia and historical analysis on non-Muslim's temples in Islamic state. In this study Mr. Mansha Tayyab elaborated the rights of non-muslim minorities in Islamic state. Moreover, he describes the kinds of temples in different creeds.⁵

Ajmal Hussain (2013) revealed the sacred intellectual meanings and commandments of the rituals and rites (Sha'air) of the world religions in his Ph.D. Dissertation. In this study, he discussed the rituals of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Moreover, he discussed the holy places and their symbolism in this study.⁶

Dr. Abdul Hamid Al-Ansari analyzed Islamic view on preservation of human heritage. He provided deep evidences from Islamic history that how Muslim persevered

⁵ Muhammad Mansha, Tayyab (2013) *Islāmi riyāsat me gh̄yr mslmw ke ma'ābid: tarykhi wa shr'i hythyt*, Unpublished M.Phil Thesis, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Punjab, Lahore.

⁶ Ajmal Hussain (2013) *Mdḥāib 'ālam ke sha'āyiri maqdsah: fkr̄y wa m'nwyi aḥkām*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Punjab, Lahore.

ancient heritage at their time.⁷ In their article, Rico and Trinidad argued that the study of cultural heritage preservation practices in the context of Muslim societies has been constructed and obstructed through specific historical trajectories and challenges. These originate within the field of cultural heritage preservation, through its own history and principles which have complicated the interplay between heritage and religious values and uses.⁸

Dr. Anis Ahmad (2005) presented his paper in Doha conference Qatar. In which he emphasized the importance of cultural heritage in Islam. He analyzed both opinions on cultural heritage which are in its favor and in its opposition.⁹

O. M Ashtankhar (2016) has written an article on Islamic perspective on environmental protection. In this article, the researcher has probed the Islamic view on environmental protection. He brought out the importance of environmental protection in Islam.¹⁰

Finbarr Barry Flood (2002) wrote on the relationship of cult, culture and Islam. Moreover, in this article he wrote about Bamiyan sculptures of Buddha. He wrote a complete guide and importance of these rocks and sculptures. Moreover, he wrote the causes of the destruction of these statues.¹¹

Khalfan Amar (2014) wrote an article on the importance of the Waqaf for the preservation of cultural heritage. He presented the waqf as a model for protecting cultural heritage.

Brian M. Fagan in his book *Archaeology: A brief Introduction* gives a general understanding of the preservation, conservation and management of the archaeological sites. It briefly discusses the history and methodology of archaeology. In this book the writer briefly discussed about archaeological theory and scientific techniques through

⁷ Al-Ansari, Abdul Hamid. "Islam and the Preservation of the Human Heritage." In *Proceedings of the Doha Conference of Ulama on Islam and Cultural Heritage*. 2005.

⁸ Rico, Trinidad. "Islam, heritage, and preservation: an untidy tradition." *Material religion* 15, no. 2 (2019): 148-163.

⁹ Ahmed, Anis. 2005. "Islam and Cultural Heritage." In *Proceedings of the Doha Conference of Ulama on Islam and Cultural Heritage*, Doc. CL/CH/THS/2001/CD/H/1, 30–31 December. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001408/140834m.pdf> (accessed 7 November 2022).

¹⁰ Ashtankar, O. M. 2016. "Islamic Perspective on Environmental Protection." *International Journal of Applied Research* 2, no. 1: 438–41

¹¹ Flood, Finbarr Barry. 2002. "Between Cult and Culture, Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum." *Art Bulletin* 8, no. 4: 641–59.

those theories and techniques the archaeologist could conduct nondestructive excavations and surveys. The writer comprehensively describes the basic rule of excavations and fieldworks. heritage.¹²

Silva and Neel Kamal in their article sorted out some of the heritage management problems. In their opinion, include the traditional cultural remains/materials that are believed to be reflection of past legacy. This article gives a good understanding of what are the cultural resources and how we can manage and preserve our cultural heritage of the past. Moreover, the author also highlights the basic preservation principle.¹³

Muhammad Rafique Mughal in his article discussed about the heritage management and conservation problems of Pakistan. The author also briefly explained how we could involve the local people for the protection of the cultural heritage of Pakistan. According to the author the approaches of community archaeology and cultural resource management, both are result-oriented at many ways.¹⁴

Iqbal and Kanwar in their article highlighted some very important issues such as the destruction of the cultural heritage of the past because of the clashes of ideology and religious differences. They historically describes the previous attack on the cultural heritage in Pakistan, such as the attack on historical monuments, religious places, museums and other cultural assemblage in Pakistan. Furthermore, he said that the glorious heritage of Pakistan also not safe in museum, because lack of management, such as the climate, temperature, and lighting problems.¹⁵

After a thorough study of the literature review, a lot of work has been done on the Buddhist heritage of Pakistan. The major studies in this field are to explore the

¹² Fagan, Brian M., and Nadia Durrani. *Archaeology: A brief introduction*. Routledge, 2021.

¹³ Silva, Kapila D., and Neel Kamal Chapagain, eds. *Asian heritage management: Contexts, concerns, and prospects*. Routledge, 2013.

¹⁴ Mughal, Mohammad Rafique. "Heritage management and conservation in Pakistan: The British legacy and current perspective." *Pakistan Heritage* 3 (2011): 119-134.

¹⁵ Iqbal, Kanwar Muhammad Javed, Wajih ur Rehman, and Muhammad Irfan Khan. "UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE: POLICY SAFEGUARDS FOR SHIPWRECK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN." *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology* 17, no. 11 (2020): 457-472.

ancient sites belonging to Buddhism. In the researcher's view, the preservation of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan from an Islamic perspective is still a gap.

1.1.3. Statement of Problem:

Despite the rich cultural and religious heritage of Pakistan, particularly concerning its Buddhist relics, there exists a notable gap in scholarly inquiry regarding the intersection of Islam and the protection of religious heritage. While the preservation of Buddhist relics is of significant historical and cultural importance, the influence of Islamic perspectives, principles, and practices on this preservation effort remains understudied and poorly understood.

1.1.4. Objectives of the Study

2. To analyze the Islamic principles for the protection of religious heritage.
3. To discuss the issues and challenges faced by the Buddhist heritage in Pakistan.
4. To figure out the possible benefits which Pakistan can earn from this precious heritage.

1.1.5. Research Questions:

2. How do Islamic principles guide the preservation of non-Islamic religious heritage?
3. What kind of challenges and issues does Buddhist heritage facing in Pakistan?
4. How can Pakistan leverage its Buddhist heritage to gain social impact and benefits?

1.1.6. Delimitations of the Study:

Pakistan has an ancient heritage of various religions including Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Christianity. In this research, only issues and challenges to the heritage of Buddhism will be discussed. Moreover, this study will be done under the Islamic principles of preservation.

1.1.7. Research Methodology:

This study investigates the intersection of Islam and the protection of religious heritage, focusing specifically on Buddhist relics in Pakistan. The methodology employed involves a combination of research techniques designed to gather comprehensive insights into the topic.

1. Case Study Approach:

A case study methodology was chosen to allow for an in-depth examination of the specific context of Pakistan's Buddhist relics within the broader framework of Islamic principles and heritage preservation. This approach enabled a detailed exploration of the complexities and dynamics inherent in the topic.

2. Data Collection Methods:

a. Document Analysis: - Religious texts (Quranic verses, Ahadiths, Athaar of Sahabah and Tabieen), historical documents, government policies, academic literature, and relevant texts to Islamic principles, heritage preservation, and the history of Buddhist relics in Pakistan were collected and analyzed. This provided a foundational understanding of the topic and informed subsequent data collection efforts.

b. Interviews: - Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders including religious scholars, heritage preservationists, government officials, and local community members. These interviews sought to capture a diverse range of perspectives and insights regarding the role of Islamic principles in the preservation of Buddhist relics.

c. Site Visit and Observation: - Visit to Buddhist heritage site Takht i Bahi in Mardan, Pakistan were undertaken to observe firsthand the condition of relics, preservation efforts, and the influence of Islamic principles on their management. These site visits provided valuable contextual information and enriched the data collected through other methods.

3. Sampling Strategy:

- Purposive sampling was utilized to select participants for interviews based on their expertise and involvement in relevant fields such as heritage preservation, Islamic studies, and community engagement. Convenience sampling was

employed for site visits, selecting accessible Buddhist heritage sites within Pakistan for observation and data collection.

4. Data Analysis:

- Thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data obtained from interviews, document analysis, and site visits. This involved identifying recurring themes, patterns, and perspectives related to the intersection of Islam and the protection of Buddhist relics. Content analysis was also utilized to examine historical and policy documents for key themes and trends.

5. Ethical Considerations:

- Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to conducting interviews, and ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process. Respect for cultural sensitivities and religious beliefs was paramount, and measures were taken to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants.

6. Limitations:

- The study's findings may be limited by factors such as the availability and reliability of historical documents and the willingness of stakeholders to participate in interviews. Additionally, the research focused specifically on the context of Pakistan and may not be generalizable to other regions with different cultural and religious dynamics.

2. CHAPTER NO. 2:

**ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON PRESERVATION OF RELIGIOUS
HERITAGE**

CHAPTER NO. 2

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE ON PRESERVATION OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Religious artifacts, customs, doctrines, and values that are passed down through a religious community from one generation to the next are referred to as religious heritage. It includes a wide variety of both material and immaterial cultural expressions, such as sacred writings, objects, practices, rituals, and traditions. The potential of religious legacy to serve as a source of cultural identity, historical relevance, spiritual connection, knowledge preservation, and educational value is what gives it its significance.

First and foremost, a community's cultural identity is significantly influenced by its religious past. It gives community members a sense of belonging and aids in their understanding of their history, beliefs, and customs, fostering a sense of shared cultural heritage.

Second, religious legacy is a great source of historical data that sheds light on earlier actions, beliefs, and traditions. We can learn more about the principles and practices of a specific religious group by studying how it has changed over time.

Thirdly, religious tradition can help followers develop a stronger spiritual bond. People can engage with a higher power and have a feeling of continuity in their spiritual lives by participating in the traditions and practises of their faith. Fourthly, religious heritage can protect priceless information and wisdom that has been gathered over many years, making sure that the knowledge and lessons of earlier generations are not lost.

Last but not least, religious heritage can contribute to education by giving people the chance to learn about other cultures, traditions, and religions. Religious heritage can encourage tolerance and understanding amongst various groups through interfaith conversation and involvement with varied communities.

The teachings of the Quran and the Hadith, which emphasise the significance of maintaining cultural and religious artefacts for future generations, are at the

foundation of the Islamic perspective on the preservation of religious heritage. Islam's religious heritage, which encompasses a wide range of material and intangible cultural expressions like sacred texts, artifacts, customs, rituals, and traditions, is seen as needing to be preserved. According to the Quran, "He who reveres God's sites of religious ritual shows the piety of his heart."

Islamic tradition is distinguished by a long history of maintained and transmitted intellectual and cultural treasures. Muslim scholars and philosophers have understood the value of conserving Islam's religious history since the early Islamic era. They collected and maintained the Prophet Muhammad's teachings, and the Hadith collections were created to guarantee that the Prophet's words and deeds would be remembered by subsequent generations.

The preservation of Islamic art and architecture, which are regarded as significant components of Islamic cultural legacy, has also been made possible in large part by Islamic academics. A wide variety of artistic and architectural works created by Muslim artists and craftspeople represent the richness of Islamic culture and its extensive historical roots.

Islamic law also stresses the value of protecting sacred heritage. For instance, Islamic law upholds the protection of mosques and other religious structures, and the destruction or desecration of such structures is regarded as a serious offence. Islamic law also acknowledges the right of religious minorities to retain their unique cultural and religious traditions.

The preservation of religious history continues to be a significant component of Islamic culture and tradition in modern Muslim societies. Islamic cultural heritage is being documented and preserved through a variety of initiatives, such as the creation of museums, research facilities, and conservation initiatives.

In conclusion, the Islamic stance on protecting religious legacy is grounded in the Quranic and Hadithic teachings and draws on a rich history of intellectual and cultural heritage. Islamic law recognizes the value of maintaining religious tradition, and Muslim academics and artists have played a significant role in the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage. In modern Muslim cultures, the preservation of religious legacy is a crucial component of Islamic culture and tradition.

2.2. Definition of Religious Heritage

"Religious Heritage" is made up of the terms "Religious" and "Heritage." Religious refers to something that is connected to or concerned with religion or spirituality; it describes things that have to do with a certain religion or religious tradition's organizations, practices, and beliefs.

Heritage refers to something that has been passed down from one generation to the next, such as a group or community's legacy or inheritance of customs, traditions, values, beliefs, or tangible belongings.

As a result, "religious heritage" might be interpreted as the assortment of doctrines, rituals, and traditions that have been handed down over the years within a certain religious tradition. It is a legacy that reflects the spiritual and cultural values of a community and serves as a guide for living a life in accordance with the teachings and principles of that faith.

In Islam the term Sha'a'ir (شعائر) is used for religious heritage. It has its roots in the Arabic language, specifically in the word "sha'ar" (شعر), which means "hair" or "poetry." In the context of Islamic religious discourse, "sha'a'ir" refers to religious rituals or symbols that hold great spiritual and cultural significance within Islamic tradition. According to Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha, a Saudi Arabian Islamic scholar, "sha'a'ir" in Islam encompasses "the symbols and acts that have a religious or spiritual significance in Islam and serve as a means of expressing one's devotion and maintaining one's connection to God".¹⁶

The "sha'a'ir" of Islam include a variety of religious rituals and symbols, such as the Hajj pilgrimage, the recitation of the Quran, the adhan (call to prayer), the Eid prayers, and the wearing of certain clothing, among others. These practices and symbols are considered essential components of Islamic religious practice and are viewed as a way of strengthening one's faith and deepening one's spiritual connection with God.

¹⁶ Al-Sheikh, Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab. (2008). The Three Fundamental Principles. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam

2.3. Different Forms of Religious Heritage in Islam

Islam's religious heritage is characterized by a rich tapestry of diverse forms of expression and practices, reflecting the complex history and evolution of the faith. Some of the key elements of this heritage include the Quran, Hadith, Sunnah, Islamic law, Sufism, Islamic art and architecture, and Islamic literature.

The Quran: the Quran considered by Muslims as the central religious text of Islam, is believed to be the direct and literal word of Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of 23 years. It serves as the primary source of guidance for Muslims, providing a comprehensive ethical and moral framework for individual and social life. The Quran covers a range of topics, including theology, ethics, law, and history.¹⁷

Hadith: Hadith is a collection of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, provides Muslims with additional guidance and insight into the Prophet's teachings and life. Hadiths are regarded as a secondary source of guidance after the Quran and are used to interpret and apply Islamic law in daily life. The authenticity of Hadiths is a matter of ongoing debate among Islamic scholars.¹⁸

Sunnah: Sunnah is the way of life of the Prophet Muhammad, is based on his actions, sayings, and teachings. Muslims believe that by following the Sunnah, they can achieve closeness to Allah and attain spiritual enlightenment. Sunnah is considered as a practical embodiment of the Quran's teachings and serves as a model for Muslims to emulate in their daily lives.

Islamic law: Islamic law is also known as Sharia, is a comprehensive legal framework that governs all aspects of Muslim life. Sharia law covers a wide range of areas, including personal hygiene, marriage, business, and politics. The legal system is based on the Quran, Hadith, and Sunnah and is interpreted by Islamic jurists, who provide legal opinions and rulings on various issues.¹⁹

Sufism: Sufism is a mystical branch of Islam, emphasizes the inner, spiritual dimension of the faith. Sufis seek to develop a personal relationship with Allah through meditation,

¹⁷ Elias, Jamal J. 2012. *Aisha's Cushion: Religious Art, Perception, and Practice in Islam*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. p 43.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ ibid

prayer, and other spiritual practices. Sufism focuses on the purification of the soul and achieving a state of closeness to Allah.²⁰

Islamic art and architecture: Islamic art and architecture are notable components of the Islamic heritage, characterized by a distinctive style and aesthetic. Islamic art is known for its intricate geometric patterns, calligraphy, and rich colors, while Islamic architecture is marked by the use of arches, domes, and minarets. These art forms are not just decorative but also imbued with religious significance, representing a physical manifestation of Islamic beliefs and values.²¹

Islamic literature: Finally, Islamic literature encompasses a range of genres, including poetry, history, philosophy, and theology. Islamic literature has a rich tradition, with famous works such as the poetry of Rumi and the writings of Ibn Rushd (also known as Averroes).²²

Overall, Islam's religious heritage is diverse, and multifaceted, and has a significant impact on Muslim life, shaping attitudes and behaviors towards spirituality, social relations, and the arts. The components of this heritage continue to evolve and adapt to contemporary times while maintaining their core religious and cultural identity.

2.4. Importance of Preserving Religious Heritage in Islam

Islam advises to respect the sanctities of other religions. Semitic religion and Islam have similarities in many principles. Islam also protects the holy things of other religions under its unique principles. Islamic history is witness to the fact that Muslims have protected non-Islamic religious heritage from the Prophetic period to the modern era. Islam emphasizes the protection of religious and cultural heritage under the principles of promotion of knowledge, preservation of history, advancement of research, and creation of religious harmony. In this discussion, there will be a detailed discussion on the protection of religious sanctities under the principles of Quran and Sunnah.

2.4.1. The Qur'an and the protection of religious sanctities

²⁰ ibid

²¹ ibid

²² Khaqani. 1996. "Elegy on Mada'in." In *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa: Eulogy's Bounty, Meaning's Abundance*, edited by Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill p 35.

Quran is the main source of law in Islam. It was revealed by Allah to His servant Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) through Gabriel. It is necessary for every Muslim to believe in every part of the Quran. The Qur'an is a book of guidance for Muslims that guides them in various areas of life, beliefs, worship, ethics, law, history, science, and culture, etc. The Qur'an guides the religious differences and interaction with other nations as well as the protection of their religious heritage.

Quranic principles of protection of religious heritage:

Following are some of the Quranic principles for the protection of religious heritage

1. **Respect for other religions:** The Qur'an emphasizes that Allah has created human beings with differences and divided them into different tribes and groups. Allah says in Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ

أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَبِيرٌ

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you.

*Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.*²³

Allah also says:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيْمِنًا عَلَيْهِ ۗ فَآخِذُوا

بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۗ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً

وَمِنْهَا جَا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ ۗ فَاسْتَبِقُوا

الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ

We have revealed to you 'O Prophet' this Book with the truth, as a confirmation of previous Scriptures and a

²³ Al Quran 49:13

*supreme authority on them. So judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires over the truth that has come to you. To each of you We have ordained a code of law and a way of life. If Allah had willed, He would have made you one community, but His Will is to test you with what He has given each of you. So compete with one another in doing good. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you of the truth regarding your differences.*²⁴

Respect the sanctities of religions because it is part of divine wisdom that Allah created people of different colors, races, nations and religions.

Allah Says

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ²⁵

2. **Tolerance of other faiths:** The Quran teaches that there is no room for rigidity and extremism in matters of faith. Everyone is free to adopt his faith. Allah says in Surah Al Baqarah:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ

أَسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood.1 So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the firmest, unfailing hand-hold. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.*²⁶

Allah says in Surah Al Kahaf:

²⁴ Al Quran 5:48

²⁵ Al Quran 6:108

²⁶ Al Quran 2: 256

وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ فَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِن وَمَن شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفُرْ ۗ إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ نَارًا
 أَحَاطَ بِهَا ۗ وَإِن يَسْتَعِثُوا يُعَاثُوا بِمَاءٍ كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِي الْوُجُوهَ ۗ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ
 وَسَاءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا

And say, 'O Prophet,' "This is the truth from your Lord. Whoever wills let them believe, and whoever wills let them disbelieve." Surely We have prepared for the wrongdoers a Fire whose walls will 'completely' surround them. When they cry for aid, they will be aided with water like molten metal, which will burn 'their' faces. What a horrible drink! And what a terrible place to rest!²⁷

Allah has also given the freedom of choice in their faith.

Allah says in Surah Al Kafiron:

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ

You have your way, and I have my Way. ”²⁸

Therefore Muslims should show tolerance and tolerance towards other religions.

3. **Protection of places of worship:** Allah encourages Muslims in the Holy Qur'an to protect and defend the places of worship of other religions from any possible attack and damage, such as churches, temples, synagogues, etc.

Allah says in Surah Al Hajj:

أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقْتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا ۖ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ۗ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِن
 دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَن يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّفُتِنَتْ

²⁷ Al Quran 18: 29

²⁸ Al Quran 109:6

صَوْمِعُ وَيَبِيعُ وَصَلَوْتُ وَمَسَجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۖ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ ۗ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

Permission 'to fight back' is 'hereby' granted to those being fought, for they have been wronged.1 And Allah is truly Most Capable of helping them 'prevail. They are' those who have been expelled from their homes for no reason other than proclaiming: "Our Lord is Allah." Had Allah not repelled 'the aggression of' some people by means of others, destruction would have surely claimed monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques in which Allah's Name is often mentioned. Allah will certainly help those who stand up for Him. Allah is truly All-Powerful, Almighty.²⁹

Therefore, Muslims should protect places of worship of non-Muslims as well.

Examples:

From following treaties and examples we can understand the importance of preservation of minorities religious, cultural identities and heritage.

1. **The Treaty of Medina:**³⁰ The Treaty of Medina is the agreement that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) made with the Jews and other tribes of Medina after the migration to Medina. He assured security, justice, and defense cooperation. This agreement gives the Jews and other tribes open permission to live according to their beliefs, traditions and laws. The Holy Quran also mentions this agreement that the Muslims made an agreement with the Jews in Surah Al Anfal

الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتَ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِي كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ

²⁹ Al Quran 22:39-40

³⁰ After Hijarat-e-Madinah (1.AH), the Holy Prophet made a historic agreement in the history of Arabia with the Jews of Medina, "Treaty of Medina", which is the first agreement of the Prophet of Islam with non-Muslim subjects.

*'namely' those with whom you 'O Prophet' have entered into treaties, but they violate them every time, not fearing the consequences.*³¹

In reference to convenient of Medina, as long as the agreement lasted and they did not spread riots, they were given complete freedom.

2. **The Treaty of Hudaibiyah:**³² The Holy Quran also mentions the Treaty of Hudaibiyah which took place in 6 Hijri. This agreement was made with the polytheists of Makkah to maintain peace and order for ten years. This agreement was actually an effective attempt of the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, to maintain religious and regional peace and order, which some companions were unhappy about. Accepting God's and Prophet's order, they accepted it. Allah Almighty also mentioned this agreement in the Holy Qur'an and declared it as a sign of victory for Muslims.

Allah says in Surah Al Fatah:

إِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِينًا لِيُغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ
عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَزِيمًا هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي
قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيْمَانِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتُ بَحْرِيٍّ مِّن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا وَيُكْفَرُ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ ۗ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُتَّقِينَ
وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ الظَّالِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ ظَنَّ السَّوْءِ ۗ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ ۗ
وَعَضِبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

³¹ Al Quran 8:56

³² The Prophet (ﷺ) and 1400 of his companions travelled to Mecca to perform the minor pilgrimage ('umrah) in 6 A.H./628 C.E. He (ﷺ) sent 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân to let the Meccans know that the Muslims had come in peace, only to visit the Sacred House. When the Meccans delayed 'Uthmân, the Prophet (ﷺ) thought they might have killed his envoy. So he (ﷺ) called upon the faithful to pledge allegiance to him under a tree at Hudaibiyah in the outskirts of Mecca. Shortly after, 'Uthmân returned safely and a peace agreement was signed by the Muslims and Meccan pagans, stating in part that the Muslims would have to return to Medina and come back next year for 'umrah. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah is described as a clear triumph since it established peace, temporarily diffused the tension between the Muslims and the Meccan pagans, and gave the Muslims plenty of time to spread awareness and understanding of their faith. Thousands from different tribes accepted Islam during that truce.

*Indeed, We have granted you a clear triumph 'O Prophet'. so that Allah may forgive you for your past and future shortcomings, I perfect His favour upon you, guide you along the Straight Path, and so that Allah will help you tremendously. He is the One Who sent down serenity upon the hearts of the believers so that they may increase even more in their faith. To Allah 'alone' belong the forces of the heavens and the earth. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. So He may admit believing men and women into Gardens under which rivers flow—to stay there forever—and absolve them of their sins. And that is a supreme achievement in the sight of Allah. Also 'so that' He may punish hypocrite men and women and polytheistic men and women, who harbour evil thoughts of Allah.1 May ill-fate befall them! Allah is displeased with them. He has condemned them and prepared for them Hell. What an evil destination!*³³

After reading this agreement, it is known that the wisdom of God and the consent of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) include that agreements should be made with other religions while maintaining peace and order, so that people of all religions can live peacefully. They can live their lives and perform their religious rituals freely. A historical study of the Treaty of Hudaibiyah also proves that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Muslims strictly followed this agreement. According to the terms of the agreement, many new Muslims were sent back from Madinah and until that time they were bound by this agreement until it was violated by the polytheists of Makkah. So, even in the present era, Muslims should maintain peace and order with other religions and there is no problem in establishing and maintaining that which does not cause mischief.

3. 2. **Conquest of Mecca:** The conquest of Mecca is also mentioned in the Holy Quran. The conquest of Makkah is the great victory after which Allah, the

³³ Al Quran 48:1-6

Exalted, advanced Islam so that people entered Islam in groups. Due to this victory, many prominent enemies accepted Islam. The polytheists of Makkah were the people who tried to harm the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Muslims in every way. Fought three major wars against Islam. Violated the Hdaybiyah Treaty. Attempts were made to kill the Prophet (PBUH). After the conquest of Makkah, it was expected that the Muslims would take full revenge on that day and no enemy would be left alive, but the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, announced a general amnesty and spared the lives of many of his mortal enemies. . This victory is a great example of forgiveness and mercy. This victory is also mentioned in Quran.

Allah says in Surah Al Nasr:

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ

رَبِّكَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا

*When Allah's 'ultimate' help comes and the victory 'over Mecca is achieved', and you 'O Prophet' see the people embracing Allah's Way in crowds then glorify the praises of your Lord and seek His forgiveness, for certainly He is ever Accepting of Repentance.*³⁴

Therefore, Muslims should learn from the conquest of Makkah and show mercy and tolerance and be kind to non-corrupt people and allow them to live according to their principles.

2.4.2. Sunnah and Protection of Religious Heritage

Sunnah is the name of the practical life of the Prophet. In Islam, after the Qur'an, the Sunnah is considered as the second source of Shariah. The Sunnah is derived from the Hadith and Seerah. In the Sunnah of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, there are many traditions on the protection of the religious heritage of other religions.

Principles to Protect Religious Heritage from Sunnah

³⁴ Al Quran 110:1-3

The following are some principles derived from the Sunnah for the protection of religious sanctities.

1. **To Be fair to other religions:** The Prophet's Sunnah teaches Muslims to be fair to other religions and their followers.

“Safwan reported from a number of Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the authority of their fathers who were relatives of each other. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Beware, if anyone wrongs a contracting man, or diminishes his right, or forces him to work beyond his capacity, or takes from him anything without his consent, I shall plead for him on the Day of Judgment.”³⁵

2. **Interfaith cooperation:** The principle of interfaith cooperation also comes from the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) engaged in dialogue with other religions. The conversation of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) with the delegation of Najran is also mentioned in the Qur'an. Apart from this, the Sunnah also mentions other conversations of the Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, with the polytheists and the Jews. Therefore, Muslims should also improve their relations with other religions by keeping the path of interfaith cooperation smooth.
3. **Cooperation with Non-Islamic Places of Worship:** The Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) allows Muslims to cooperate with the worships of other religions to achieve common interests.

Following are some examples from the Sunnah regarding the above principles

1. **Treaty of Najran:** In the Sunnah, there is a mention of the treaty of the Prophet with the Christians of Najran. The treaty guaranteed Christian rights including religious freedom, security of life and property, equal justice, and cooperation in defense. The lives of the inhabitants of Najran and its surroundings, their religion, their lands, their wealth, their presence and absence, their caravans, their messengers, their idols, all this is the peace of Allah and are under the guarantee of his messenger. No change will be made in their present condition.

³⁵ Abu Dawood 30:52

None of their rights shall be encroached upon, nor shall the idols be desecrated; no priest shall be removed from his priesthood, no bishop from his episcopate, no monk from his monasticism, nor any administrator of the synagogue from his office, and who Even more or less in their possession will remain so. During their time, no crime or blood of ignorance will be avenged, nor will they be allowed to oppress them, nor will they be oppressed, whoever takes usury from them is exempt from my guarantee. The fulfillment of what is written in this agreement is the responsibility of Allah and the Prophet Muhammad, until another command of God is revealed in this regard. They will abide by the conditions that have been made with them, they will not be forced to do anything by cruelty.^{36 37}

This Agreement sets forth the following rights:

- Their lives will be safe.
- Their land, property and wealth etc. will remain in their possession.
- No change shall be made in any of their religious systems.
- Religious officials will remain in their positions.
- Crosses and statues shall not be damaged.
- Nothing of theirs shall be seized.
- Military service will not be taken from them.
- Usher of the produce will not be taken.
- No army will be sent to their country.
- Full justice will be done in their cases and cases.
- They will not be wronged.
- Usury will not be allowed.
- A non-criminal shall not be held in exchange for a criminal.
- And no cruel trouble shall be given

2. **The Letter to the Monks of St. Catherine:** Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) likewise granted to the monks of St. Catherine, but to all Christians, a Charter, which has rightly been said to be the noblest monument of

³⁶ Bilaziri, Ahmad bin Yahya, *Fatuh al-Buldan*, Al-Cahra, 1957, Dar al-Nashr, p. 364

³⁷ Hamidullah, Muhammad, Dr.; *The Political Documents*, Al-Ahdi al-Nabawi and Khilafat al-Rashida, Al-Cairo, 1941, Press of the Committee of Compilation and Translation, pp. 81, 80.

enlightenment and toleration that the history of the world can present. This is one of them. This document, which has been recorded verbatim by historians of Islam, is an amazing example of expansiveness and liberalism. Due to this document, the Christians got some exceptional privileges which they did not get even under their co-religion rulers.

The main points of this agreement was following that Christians are promised that:

- No undue taxes shall be levied on them.
- None of their priests shall be expelled from their territory.
- No Christian shall be compelled to renounce his religion.
- No monk shall be expelled from his monastery.
- No pilgrim shall be prevented from traveling on pilgrimage.
- No church shall be demolished to build mosques or houses for Muslims.
- Christian women who were married to Muslims were assured that they would be allowed to adhere to their religion and that no coercion would be done to them.
- If the Christians require assistance for the repair of their churches or monasteries or for any other matter of their religion, the Muslims shall give them assistance.
- This aid will not be interpreted as participation in their religion, but it will be considered as providing for the needs of the needy and obeying the orders of God and the Messenger, which were issued in favor of Christians.
- If the Muslims are at war with an outside Christian power, no Christian living within the limits of the Muslims shall be treated with contempt on account of his religion. If a Muslim treats a Christian in this way, then he will be guilty of disobeying the Prophet³⁸

3. **Agreement with Magians of Hajar:** He made the following agreement with the Magi of Hajr. The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, wrote to the people of Hajr (the Magi of Bahrain):

“In the name of Allah, the Merciful. In the name of Ahl al-Hajar, peace has been granted to you by the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. I praise Allah that there is no god but He.

³⁸ Fatuh al-Buldan, p. 364

Then: I admonish you for the sake of Allah and for your own sake, not to go astray after being guided and not to misbehave after gaining guidance. Your deputation came to me and I did not say anything to him that was displeasing, although if I had tried to claim my full right I would have banished you. I have made allowance for your absence and have mercy on your presence. So you should all be grateful for Allah's blessings. I liked your behavior. Whoever among you is righteous will not be held responsible for any evildoer. When my messengers come to you, obey them and help them in preaching the commandments of God. Whoever among you shows good character will not be impeachable in my eyes, nor in the presence of Allah.”³⁹

The Christians of Najran were people of the book, that is, they were disbelievers, not polytheists. But these Magi were completely polytheists. The tolerance of Mercy to the Worlds was the same with them as it was with the People of the Book. This was the way of Islam by which non-Muslims came to the circle of Islam.

4. 6. Hazrat Muhammad ﷺ sent Aman Nama to the People of the Book, especially the non-Muslims who lived in Maqna, Hunain and Khyber, which guarantees the fundamental rights of non-Muslims, and it is surprising that this Aman Nama The term is till the Day of Resurrection. See what Dr. Muhammad Hameedullah has written in Al-Wathaiq Saiyayat:

“Beginning with the name of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Merciful. This Aman Nama is from the Messenger of God, Muhammad, for the following classes:(a) People of Hunain (b) People of Khyber (c) People of Maqna And for the offspring of all of them, peace until the end of time. I give them the glad tidings of peace with the praise and praise of God the Fearless,

³⁹ The Political Documents, 1961 Al-Ahdi al-Nabawi and Khilafat al-Rashida, Dar ul Nafas, Beirut, p61.

besides whom there is no god. After that, I have been informed through divine revelation that the three classes will return to their respective homes, so let them all return. For there is refuge from God and God's Messenger. Not only is there safety for your lives, but (A) For your religion (B) For your wealth (c) For your slaves (d) For all your property. God and His Messenger are responsible for all of them.”⁴⁰

Apart from the above concessions, these concessions are also given:

- Jizya is waived
- Forehead hair will not be shaved (a practice once done for freed slaves).
- The Islamic army will not attack you.
- Beggars will not be taken.
- There will be an exception from participation in military campaign.
- You will be excused for vacating your home for military purposes.
- Dhimmi-like restrictions on clothing and its color are forgiven.
- Horse riding is allowed.
- Going out armed is allowed.
- You can fight against the attacker on your own. In such a fight, you will not be asked to pay for the death of your opponent or retribution.
- But when one of you kills a Muslim unjustly, then just as qisas or diat is required on a Muslim killer, it is also required on you.
- You will not be slandered unjustly.
- Neither will you be considered in the rank of ordinary dhimmis.
- You will be assisted upon your request.
- Upon your arrival, you will be entertained. And in the rights of the state, you have the following items:
- You will not be asked to pay gold, silver, wheat, cattle, agriculturists and wear a belt around your waist.

⁴⁰ Ibid p 68

- A leader will be appointed for you from among yourselves. Or from the Ahlul-Bayt of the Messenger of God.
- There will be no obstacle in the way of carrying your funeral.
- This honor of yours is due to Umm al-Mu'minin (Safiyya, your cousin).
- It is obligatory upon the Ahl-e-Bayt of the Prophet (PBUH) and all Muslims to respect your nobles.
- Your small sins will be forgiven.
- Whoever is on a journey among you is under the protection of God and His Messenger.
- In Islam, it is not permissible to forcibly convert someone to Islam.
- Whoever among you enters the religion of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and follows his commandments, a quarter of the stipend from among the people of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is fixed for him. This amount is fifty dinars. This scholarship is a gift from me for you.
- It is obligatory upon the family of the Prophet (PBUH) and all Muslims to adhere to this pledge.
- Whoever does good to the people of Hunain and Khaybar and those who live in Muqnaah, he should be rewarded better than his kindness.
- And whoever does evil to any of them (each of them), let him be avenged.
- Whoever reads my letter or listens to it and changes it or opposes it is cursed by Allah and the angels and the whole world. Such a cursed person will not only be deprived of my intercession on the Day of Resurrection, but I will be his enemy in front of God, and whoever I am an enemy to, God will also be his enemy. And whoever is an enemy to God, his abode is Jannah. Hell is a very painful place which is witnessed by God Oneness, Angels, Throne bearers and Muslims.⁴¹

Causes of Destruction of Religious and Cultural Heritage in Islam:

In the above discussion, we have examined the protection of religious heritage in the light of Islamic teachings. Presented principles and examples of protection of religious

⁴¹ Ibid p 68

heritage in the light of Quran and Sunnah. All these rules were for every religious heritage which is permissible to keep in the light of Islamic Sharia. In this discussion we will examine some of the reasons why Islam orders the erasure of these signs. Following are some of these motivations.

1. Harmful and corrupting:

Islam forbids keeping any antiquated or corrupt or harmful site. Or if its harm is greater than its benefit, Islam orders to erase and eliminate this thing in view of the harm. For example, a building is on the verge of collapse and cannot be repaired or even protected, such a building may cause loss of life, such a building cannot be maintained but must be demolished to protect people's lives even if no matter how ancient or sacred it is. The same principle can be applied to those antiquities which destroy the morals and social values of the people.

Many Shariah texts emphasize that people should be protected from harm in all cases, as the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“No harm shall be inflicted or reciprocated”⁴².

Allah said in Quran:

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ

*And when they leave 'you', they strive throughout the land to spread mischief in it and destroy crops and cattle. Allah does not like mischief.*⁴³

2. Spread of falsehood

Thought is the basis of human behavior and actions. Individually and collectively man can live a life full of peace, security and happiness thanks to ideas. And if these ideas become corrupt, then not only the individual but also the society starts moving towards destruction. Similarly, if it is proved that a religious or cultural heritage or any antiquity is destroying the beliefs of the

⁴² Sunan Ibn Majah, Kitab al-Ahkam, Chapter Man Bana Fi Haqqhi Ma Yadurru Bajarih (Hadith Number: 2340)

⁴³ Al Quran: 2: 205

people, then it is necessary to destroy such an object logically and legally because it causes more social disorder than cultural heritage. Allah says in Quran:

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُونَ

In fact, We hurl the truth against falsehood, leaving it crushed, and it quickly vanishes. And woe be to you for what you claim! ⁴⁴

He also says:

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۗ فَإِنْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ ۗ وَيَمُخُّ اللَّهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

Or do they say, "He has fabricated a lie about Allah!"? "If you had," Allah would have sealed your heart, if He willed. And Allah wipes out falsehood and establishes the truth by His Words. He certainly knows best what is "hidden" in the heart. ⁴⁵

3. Erroneous Object of Worship:

If an idol, graven image, or statue was made particularly for worship, it cannot be considered a piece of cultural heritage unless it is no longer utilized for worship or veneration. The worship of idols and graven images is a phenomenon that, despite being one of the most blatantly corrupting myths, is damaging to culture and thought in and of itself. It is categorically forbidden by Islam and the other revealed [celestial] religions and poses a significant barrier to both cultural advancement and intellectual freedom. The fundamental reason why the revealed religions, and Islam in particular, vehemently oppose this phenomenon is that it stifles human thought, impairs intellectual capacity, and depletes the human personality of all reasoning.

Any outstanding architectural or aesthetic features that it may have cannot make it seem sufficiently positive to justify preserving or caring for it, unless it has changed from its previous status as, for example, an idol or a graven image, to

⁴⁴ Al Quran 21:18

⁴⁵ Al Quran 42: 24

no longer be seen as a threat to the human mind or a brake on intellectual and rational activity to the point where it is regarded as detrimental to culture, rationality, and thought.

The main well-established shari'a evidence that idols and graven images cannot be retained but rather must be destroyed and eradicated may be found in the previous statements that it is impermissible to try to maintain or resurrect untruth, including the following statement from God Almighty

فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ.

“So guard against the impurity of idolatry, and guard against the words of falsehood.”⁴⁶

The phrase "guard against" in this context has an absolute meaning and also refers to safeguarding against the preservation and protection of idols, not just against their worship. However, rather than a broad prohibition on their maintenance, the phrase may also merely refer to a specific command to avoid worshipping them.

In the light of the above discussion, we come to the conclusion that the Islam is a complete code of life. The Holy Quran is a comprehensive book which, among other things, guarantees the protection of the rights of non-Muslim minorities as well as the protection of their religious heritage and places of worship. Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the perfect model that provides clear guidance and light regarding the determination of the rights of Muslims and non-Muslims regarding human dignity and human rights. In the Islamic state, the non-Muslim citizen is assured of the responsibility of protecting life, property, honor and religious freedom, but it is also emphasized to have social relations with them. Relations between Muslims and infidels will be established on the basis of equality, which includes trade and diplomatic relations, etc. Islamic law guarantees protection of religious heritage of every religion under the umbrella of the Islamic state. Islam also protects the ancient heritage of any religion if it is not harmful or corrupt, it is not a source of propaganda of falsehood, and it is not erroneous Object of Worship.

⁴⁶ Al Quran: 22: 30

2.5.Methods of Preserving Religious Heritage in Islam

Islam is one of the world's oldest and most influential religions, with a rich cultural heritage that spans centuries. The preservation of religious heritage in Islam is critical to maintaining its traditions, values, and beliefs. Islamic heritage encompasses various aspects, including religious texts, artifacts, monuments, and architecture. The following are some of the methods used to preserve religious heritage in Islam.⁴⁷

2.5.1. Preservation through Written Records:

The preservation of religious heritage in Islam began with the documentation of the Quran, which contains the teachings and principles of the religion. Muslims believe that the Quran is the word of God, and it is considered to be the ultimate source of guidance for all Muslims. To preserve the Quran, it was written down on various materials such as parchment, leather, and stone. This enabled the preservation of the Quran over time and made it possible for Muslims to study and learn from it.

Apart from the Quran, Muslims also wrote down the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in collections known as Hadith. These Hadiths contain the Prophet's teachings and actions, which serve as a guide for Muslims in various aspects of life. The preservation of Hadiths was done through meticulous documentation by scholars who devoted their lives to the study of Islam.⁴⁸

2.5.2. Preservation through Oral Tradition:

Apart from the written records, the preservation of religious heritage in Islam is also done through oral tradition. This method involves the transmission of knowledge, traditions, and beliefs from one generation to another through storytelling, recitation, and memorization. Muslims believe that the Quran was initially transmitted through oral tradition and that it is still essential to preserve this tradition.

To preserve the oral tradition, Muslims have developed various techniques, such as the memorization of the Quran, recitation, and storytelling. Memorization of the Quran is a widespread practice among Muslims, especially children, who are taught to memorize

⁴⁷Rico, Trinidad. "Islam, heritage, and preservation: an untidy tradition." *Material religion* 15, no. 2 (2019): 148-163.

⁴⁸ Alami, Mohammed Hamdouni. 2011. *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition: Aesthetics, Politics and Desire in Early Islam*. London: I.B. Tauris pp 57-69.

the entire Quran by heart. Recitation involves the reading of the Quran in a specific manner, and it is considered a form of worship. Storytelling is another method used to preserve religious heritage in Islam, where stories about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his companions, and other Islamic figures are told to children to instill Islamic values and morals.⁴⁹

2.5.3. Preservation through Artifacts:

Islam has a rich heritage of artifacts, including calligraphy, pottery, textiles, and metalwork, which reflects the religious and cultural diversity of the Islamic world. These artifacts serve as tangible reminders of Islamic heritage, and their preservation is essential to maintaining the Islamic cultural identity.

To preserve artifacts, Muslims have developed various techniques, such as restoration, conservation, and digitization. Restoration involves the repair and reconstruction of damaged artifacts to their original state. Conservation involves the prevention of further deterioration of artifacts by storing them in controlled environments, protecting them from physical damage, and preventing insect infestations. Digitization involves the creation of digital copies of artifacts, which makes them accessible to a wider audience and helps in their preservation.⁵⁰

2.5.4. Preservation through Monuments and Architecture:

Islam has a rich heritage of monuments and architecture, including mosques, mausoleums, palaces, and fortresses, which serve as symbols of Islamic art, culture, and religion. The preservation of these monuments and architecture is essential to maintaining Islamic heritage and identity.

To preserve monuments and architecture, Muslims have developed various techniques, such as restoration, conservation, and adaptive reuse. Restoration involves the repair and reconstruction of damaged monuments and architecture to their original state. Conservation involves the prevention of further deterioration of monuments and architecture by protecting them from physical damage, preventing insect infestations, and controlling environmental conditions. Adaptive reuse involves the conversion of

⁴⁹ ibid

⁵⁰ ibid

monuments and architecture into new uses that preserve their historical and cultural significance.⁵¹

2.5.5. Preserving through Education

Education is one of the most effective methods used to preserve religious heritage in Islam. Islamic education is a lifelong process that begins with the study of the Quran and Hadiths and continues with the study of Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and history. The preservation of Islamic heritage through education involves teaching and learning about the principles, values, and practices of Islam.

Islamic education is essential to the preservation of Islamic heritage because it helps in the transmission of knowledge and traditions from one generation to another. Islamic education is typically provided in mosques, madrasas, and Islamic centers, where students learn from qualified scholars who have dedicated their lives to the study of Islam. Islamic education is also available online, where students can access courses and resources from anywhere in the world.

Islamic education not only preserves Islamic heritage but also promotes the understanding and appreciation of Islamic values and culture. Islamic education helps in the development of critical thinking, moral reasoning, and ethical decision-making, which are essential skills for navigating the complexities of modern society. Islamic education also fosters a sense of community and belonging, which is essential to maintaining the Islamic identity.

In conclusion, the preservation of religious heritage in Islam involves various methods, including written records, oral tradition, artifacts, monuments and architecture, and education. These methods serve as tangible reminders of Islamic heritage, and their preservation is essential to maintaining the Islamic cultural identity. The preservation of Islamic heritage is a collective responsibility that requires the involvement of individuals, communities, and governments. By preserving Islamic heritage, we can ensure that the principles, values, and practices of Islam continue to be passed on to future generations.⁵²

⁵¹ ibid

⁵² ibid

2.6.Challenges to Preserving Religious Heritage in Islam

Islam is one of the world's oldest and most influential religions, with a rich history and a wealth of religious heritage. The Islamic heritage comprises various elements such as buildings, manuscripts, artworks, religious texts, tombs, mosques, and shrines. The Islamic cultural heritage represents the history, traditions, and beliefs of Muslims around the world. However, preserving this heritage is not without its challenges. Challenges Faced in Preserving Religious Heritage in Islam are following:

2.6.1. Political instability

One of the significant challenges in preserving religious heritage in Islam is political instability. Many Muslim countries have experienced political instability and conflict, which has led to the destruction of many religious sites and artifacts. For example, in Syria, the ongoing civil war has led to the destruction of many ancient religious sites, including mosques, shrines, and historical buildings. Similarly, in Iraq, the rise of ISIS led to the destruction of many religious sites, including the ancient city of Palmyra. Political instability makes it challenging to protect and preserve the religious heritage, as the safety and security of these sites cannot be guaranteed.⁵³

2.6.2. Modernization

Another challenge faced in preserving religious heritage in Islam is modernization. As Muslim societies become more modern, traditional values and practices are often abandoned, and religious heritage can be lost. For example, many traditional Islamic practices, such as the use of calligraphy and ornate decoration in mosques, are being replaced with more modern and minimalist designs. The younger generation may not understand the historical and cultural significance of the traditional practices, which can lead to the loss of these cultural assets.⁵⁴

2.6.3. Lack of funding

A lack of funding is another major challenge in preserving religious heritage in Islam. Many religious sites and artifacts require significant investment to be properly preserved, but funding is often scarce. This can lead to neglect and deterioration, which

⁵³ Lababidi, Rim, and Falvia Ravaoli. "Heritage Preservation in Islamic Contexts." (2017).pp 19-30.

⁵⁴ ibid

can ultimately result in the loss of these important cultural assets. In some cases, governments and religious organizations may not prioritize the preservation of these sites, which makes it challenging to secure funding for such projects.⁵⁵

2.6.4. Environmental degradation

Environmental degradation is also a challenge in preserving religious heritage in Islam. Climate change, pollution, and other environmental factors can damage religious sites and artifacts, leading to their deterioration or destruction. For example, rising sea levels and storm surges can damage coastal mosques and other structures. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and storms can also damage the religious heritage, which makes it challenging to protect and preserve these sites.⁵⁶

2.6.5. Neglect

Neglect is another challenge faced in preserving religious heritage in Islam. Many religious sites and artifacts have been neglected for years, leading to their deterioration or destruction. This can be due to a lack of funding, political instability, or simply a lack of interest in preserving these cultural assets. Neglect can result in irreversible damage, which makes it challenging to restore or preserve these sites.⁵⁷

2.6.6. Urbanization

Urbanization is also a challenge in preserving religious heritage in Islam. As cities expand and grow, traditional neighborhoods and religious sites are often destroyed or replaced with modern developments. This can lead to the loss of important cultural assets, including mosques, shrines, and other religious sites. The rapid expansion of cities makes it challenging to protect and preserve the religious heritage.⁵⁸

2.6.7. Vandalism

Vandalism is a growing problem in many Muslim countries, and it can have a significant impact on the preservation of religious heritage. Religious sites and artifacts are often targeted by vandals who deface or destroy them, often for political or

⁵⁵ ibid

⁵⁶ ibid

⁵⁷ ibid

⁵⁸ ibid

ideological reasons. The vandalism of religious sites can cause irreparable damage, which makes it challenging to preserve and protect these cultural assets.⁵⁹

2.6.8. Lack of awareness

Finally, a lack of awareness is also a challenge in preserving religious heritage in Islam. Many people, particularly the younger generation, may not understand the historical and cultural significance of the religious heritage. This can lead to a lack of interest in preserving these sites and artifacts, which can ultimately result in their loss. Therefore, it is essential to raise awareness about the importance of preserving religious heritage in Islam, particularly among the younger generation, to ensure its preservation for future generations.⁶⁰

In conclusion, preserving religious heritage in Islam is essential to maintaining the history, traditions, and beliefs of Muslims around the world. However, it is not without its challenges, including political instability, modernization, lack of funding, environmental degradation, neglect, urbanization, vandalism, and a lack of awareness. Addressing these challenges will require the cooperation of governments, religious organizations, and individuals to ensure the protection and preservation of the religious heritage for future generations.⁶¹

2.7.Overcoming These Challenges: An analysis

Preserving religious heritage in Islam is a critical task that requires a concerted effort from various stakeholders, including governments, religious organizations, individuals, and the international community. The preservation of religious heritage is essential for maintaining the history, traditions, and beliefs of Muslims worldwide. However, this task is not without its challenges, which include political instability, modernization, lack of funding, environmental degradation, neglect, urbanization, vandalism, and a lack of awareness.

- Political instability is a significant challenge that can lead to the destruction of religious heritage sites and artifacts. Establishing peace and stability in countries facing conflict is critical to ensuring the preservation of these cultural

⁵⁹ ibid

⁶⁰ ibid

⁶¹ ibid

assets. Governments, religious organizations, and the international community must work together to address the root causes of conflict and work towards a peaceful resolution. In addition, governments can invest in security measures to protect religious sites and artifacts from destruction.

- Modernization can pose a threat to traditional Islamic practices and designs, making it crucial to raise awareness about their cultural and historical significance. Governments and religious organizations can promote the use of traditional Islamic architecture and decorative arts in modern building designs through education and training programs for architects, designers, and builders.
- A lack of funding can also impede the preservation of religious heritage in Islam. Governments and religious organizations can invest in the preservation of religious sites and artifacts through public-private partnerships, grants, and other forms of financial support. Tax incentives for individuals and organizations that contribute to the preservation of religious heritage can also be established by governments.
- Environmental degradation can have a severe impact on religious heritage sites and artifacts. To protect them, governments and religious organizations can implement measures to reduce the impact of climate change and other environmental factors, such as sustainable building materials, green technologies, and conservation programs. Additionally, governments can establish protected areas around religious sites to limit the impact of development and urbanization.
- Neglect can also lead to the loss of religious heritage sites and artifacts. Governments and religious organizations can establish maintenance programs to ensure that these cultural assets are regularly inspected, repaired, and renovated for future generations. Public awareness campaigns can also be promoted to encourage individuals to take an active role in preserving their cultural heritage.
- Urbanization poses a significant challenge to preserving religious heritage sites and artifacts. Governments can establish zoning laws and other regulations to protect traditional neighborhoods and religious sites from development. Establishing buffer zones around religious sites can also help limit the impact of urbanization. Additionally, promoting the use of traditional building

materials and designs in new construction projects can help preserve the cultural heritage of the area.

- Vandalism can pose a severe threat to religious heritage sites and artifacts. Governments can establish security measures such as the installation of surveillance cameras, increased police patrols, and the establishment of community watch programs to deter vandals. Raising awareness about the importance of preserving these cultural assets and encouraging individuals to report any suspicious activity can also help prevent vandalism.
- Lastly, a lack of awareness can hinder the preservation of religious heritage sites and artifacts. Governments and religious organizations can promote education and training programs to raise awareness about the cultural and historical significance of religious heritage. Developing educational materials for schools, museums, and cultural institutions, as well as establishing cultural heritage tours, can also help promote awareness and understanding of the importance of preserving these sites and artifacts.

In conclusion, overcoming the challenges faced in preserving religious heritage in Islam requires a collective effort from various stakeholders. Governments, religious organizations, and individuals must work together to establish peace and stability, raise awareness, and provide financial and logistical support for the preservation of religious sites and artifacts. By implementing these strategies, we can ensure that these important cultural assets are preserved for future generations.

2.8. The Role of Islamic scholars and Institutions in Preserving Religious Heritage

Islamic scholars and institutions have been at the forefront of preserving Islamic religious heritage for centuries. Their role in this task cannot be overstated as they are responsible for the study, interpretation, dissemination, and application of Islamic knowledge. Scholars have dedicated their lives to the preservation of Islamic religious heritage, and they have contributed significantly to the development and maintenance of the Islamic cultural identity.

2.8.1. Preservation of Texts

The preservation of Islamic texts, such as the Quran and Hadiths, is one of the primary responsibilities of Islamic scholars and institutions. Scholars have been responsible for ensuring that these texts are accurately transmitted and preserved over time. The Quran is the primary source of Islamic religious heritage, and its preservation is of paramount importance to scholars and institutions. Scholars have devoted their lives to the study of the Quran, which includes understanding its language, context, and interpretation.

Similarly, the Hadiths are a vital source of Islamic heritage, and scholars have played a significant role in their preservation. Hadiths are the sayings, actions, and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, and they provide guidance on various aspects of life, including ethics, morality, and spirituality. Scholars have studied and interpreted Hadiths to ensure that they are accurately understood and applied in contemporary times.

2.8.2. Interpretation of Texts

Islamic scholars and institutions play a crucial role in the interpretation of Islamic texts. They provide interpretations that are relevant to contemporary issues and challenges. Interpretation is a critical aspect of Islamic religious heritage, as it enables individuals to understand the meaning and relevance of the texts in modern times. Scholars use their knowledge of Islamic history, jurisprudence, and language to provide interpretations that are grounded in Islamic tradition and relevant to contemporary contexts.

2.8.3. Education and Training

Education and training are crucial for the preservation of Islamic religious heritage. Islamic scholars and institutions provide courses and programs that cover various aspects of Islamic knowledge, including the Quran, Hadiths, Islamic jurisprudence, and history. Through education and training, scholars and institutions ensure that the knowledge is passed on to future generations. The importance of education and training in preserving Islamic religious heritage is demonstrated by the fact that the first revelation in Islam was "Read!".

Islamic institutions, such as madrasas and universities, have been established throughout the Islamic world to provide education and training in Islamic studies. These institutions provide a structured environment for the study of Islamic knowledge, and

they have produced some of the greatest Islamic scholars and intellectuals throughout history.

2.8.4. Preservation of Artifacts

Islamic scholars and institutions are also responsible for the preservation of Islamic artifacts, such as calligraphy, manuscripts, and art. These artifacts are essential components of Islamic heritage, and they provide insight into the history, culture, and spirituality of Islam. Scholars ensure that these artifacts are preserved and protected, so they remain accessible to future generations.

Calligraphy is an essential aspect of Islamic heritage, and Islamic scholars have played a vital role in its preservation. Calligraphy is a form of Islamic art that involves the use of beautiful writing to express Islamic religious and cultural themes. Calligraphy is used to decorate mosques, Islamic texts, and other Islamic artifacts, and it has been an integral part of Islamic culture for centuries.

2.8.5. Preservation of Monuments and Architecture

Islamic scholars and institutions also play a critical role in the preservation of Islamic monuments and architecture. Mosques, mausoleums, fortresses, and other structures are essential components of Islamic heritage, and scholars ensure that these structures are maintained and protected, so they remain a tangible reminder of Islamic heritage.

Islamic architecture is an important aspect of Islamic heritage, and it reflects the rich cultural and historical diversity of the Islamic world. Islamic scholars have studied Islamic architecture and have contributed to its preservation through research, documentation, and restoration efforts. Scholars have also played a crucial role in ensuring that Islamic architecture is accessible to future generations.

2.9. Preserving Religious Heritage: Examples from Islamic History

The preservation of religious heritage in Islamic history has been a priority for Muslims throughout time. Islam has a rich cultural and religious history that has been passed down through generations of believers. This heritage includes the preservation of religious sites, art, architecture, manuscripts, and libraries.

One of the most notable examples of the preservation of religious heritage in Islamic history is the Kaaba in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Kaaba is the holiest site in Islam and

has been preserved throughout history as a symbol of the faith. Muslims believe that the Kaaba was built by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael and has been the center of Islamic pilgrimage for over 1,400 years. The Kaaba has been renovated and restored several times throughout history to maintain its structural integrity and preserve its religious significance.⁶²

Another significant example of the preservation of religious heritage in Islamic history is Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, Palestine. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the third holiest site in Islam, and Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ascended to heaven from this site during his Night Journey. Al-Aqsa Mosque has been preserved and protected by Muslim rulers throughout history, including the Umayyad Caliphate, the Crusader Kingdoms, and the Ottoman Empire.

The Prophet's Mosque in Medina, Saudi Arabia, is another example of how Islamic heritage has been preserved throughout history. The mosque was built during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and has been expanded and renovated throughout history to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims and visitors. The mosque houses the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and two of his companions, Abu Bakr and Umar. The mosque has been meticulously preserved and is a significant site for Muslims around the world.⁶³

The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, Palestine, is another example of the preservation of Islamic religious heritage. The Dome of the Rock is an iconic building that is one of the most recognizable symbols of Islamic architecture. Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) ascended to heaven from this site during his Night Journey. The building has been renovated and restored throughout history to maintain its structural integrity and preserve its religious significance.⁶⁴

Islamic art and architecture have played a significant role in preserving Islamic heritage. Islamic art is characterized by intricate designs and patterns, often featuring calligraphy and geometric shapes. Islamic architecture is known for its domes, arches, and minarets.

⁶² Al Ghabban, Ali 2012. "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Its Heritage." In *Roads of Arabia: Archaeology and History of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, edited by Ali Al Ghabban, Béatrice André-Salvini, Françoise Demange, Carine Juvin, and M. Cotty, 35–39. Paris: Musée du Louvre.

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Dome of the Rock." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, August 18, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Dome-of-the-Rock>.

Examples of preserved Islamic architecture include the Alhambra in Spain⁶⁵, the Great Mosque of Samarra in Iraq⁶⁶, and the Taj Mahal⁶⁷ in India. These structures have been meticulously preserved and are significant sites for Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

Manuscripts and books have also played a significant role in the preservation of Islamic heritage. Islamic manuscripts contain a wealth of knowledge about Islamic theology, law, history, and culture. Many Islamic libraries have been established throughout history to collect and preserve these manuscripts, including the Library of Alexandria in Egypt⁶⁸, the Dar al-Kutub in Morocco⁶⁹, and the Qumran library in Iran⁷⁰. These libraries have been meticulously preserved and are a testament to the importance of Islamic heritage and the preservation of knowledge.

Islamic heritage has also been preserved through the arts. Islamic calligraphy, for example, Islamic calligraphy is a form of art that is characterized by intricate designs and patterns, often featuring verses from the Quran. Islamic calligraphy has been used to preserve religious texts and to convey the beauty of the faith. Islamic music and poetry have also played a significant role in preserving Islamic heritage. Islamic music and poetry are often used in religious ceremonies and are a testament to the importance of music and poetry in the Islamic tradition.

the Great Mosque of Cordoba⁷¹ in Spain is another significant example of Islamic architecture that has been preserved over time. The mosque was built during the reign of the Umayyad Caliphate in the 8th century and was later converted into a Christian cathedral during the Reconquista. However, the mosque's original structure and design were preserved, and it was eventually restored to its original state in the 10th century.

⁶⁵ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Alhambra." Encyclopedia Britannica, June 22, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Alhambra-fortress-Granada-Spain>.

⁶⁶ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Sāmarrā'." Encyclopedia Britannica, January 24, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Samarra>.

⁶⁷ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Taj Mahal." Encyclopedia Britannica, September 4, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Taj-Mahal>.

⁶⁸ El-Abadi, M.. "Library of Alexandria." Encyclopedia Britannica, August 17, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Library-of-Alexandria>.

⁶⁹ 1. "Dar Al-Kutub Manuscripts," UNESCO.org, accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/dar-al-kutub-manuscripts>.

⁷⁰ Dimant, Devorah. "The Library of Qumran: Its Content and Character." *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years After Their Discovery 2000*: 170-176.

⁷¹ 1. "The Great Mosque of Córdoba (Article)," Khan Academy, accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/early-europe-and-colonial-americas/ap-art-islamic-world-medieval/a/the-great-mosque-of-cordoba>.

The Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul⁷², Turkey, is another example of the preservation of Islamic heritage. The Topkapi Palace was the primary residence of the Ottoman sultans for over 400 years and now serves as a museum that houses many significant Islamic artifacts, including manuscripts, ceramics, and textiles. The museum's collections provide insight into the cultural and historical importance of the Islamic world.

The Timbuktu Manuscripts in Mali⁷³ are also an essential example of the preservation of Islamic heritage. The Timbuktu Manuscripts contain over 700,000 manuscripts that were written between the 13th and 16th centuries, and they provide valuable insight into the Islamic intellectual tradition in Africa. These manuscripts have been meticulously preserved and are a testament to the importance of knowledge in the Islamic world.

The architectural legacy of the Fatimid Caliphate is another example of the preservation of Islamic heritage. The Fatimid Caliphate was a Shia Muslim dynasty that ruled Egypt and parts of North Africa from the 10th to the 12th century. The Fatimids were known for their distinctive architectural style, which included the use of carved stucco, ornate calligraphy, and colorful tiles. Examples of Fatimid architecture can still be seen today in the cities of Cairo and Tunis, where many mosques, palaces, and other buildings have been preserved.

Islamic art and architecture have also been preserved through the use of technology. Digital technology has made it possible to create high-resolution images of Islamic artifacts, including manuscripts, calligraphy, and textiles. These digital images allow scholars and enthusiasts to study and appreciate Islamic art and architecture from around the world.

In conclusion, the preservation of Islamic heritage is a vital part of maintaining the cultural and historical identity of the Islamic world. Through the preservation of religious sites, art, architecture, manuscripts, and libraries, Muslims have been able to pass down their cultural and religious traditions to future generations. The examples mentioned above are just a few of the many ways that Islamic heritage has been

⁷² Zelazko, A.. "Topkapi Palace Museum." Encyclopedia Britannica, June 9, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Topkapi-Palace-Museum>.

⁷³ 1. "Mali - Timbuktu Manuscripts," UNESCO.org, accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/mali-timbuktu-manuscripts>.

preserved throughout history, and they serve as a reminder of the importance of preserving cultural heritage for future generations.

2.9.1. Relevance of Islamic Heritage Examples to Contemporary Times: An analysis

The preservation of Islamic heritage is as important today as it has been throughout Islamic history. Islamic heritage is a vast and diverse range of artifacts, including buildings, manuscripts, artwork, and more, that reflect the rich cultural and religious history of the Islamic world. Preserving these artifacts is important for several reasons that are relevant to contemporary times.

One reason why preserving Islamic heritage is important is that it helps to maintain cultural identity. Muslims around the world share a rich cultural heritage that is reflected in their art, architecture, and other artifacts. By preserving these artifacts, Muslims can maintain a connection to their cultural roots and pass down their traditions to future generations. This is particularly important today, as Muslim communities face increasing pressure to assimilate into secular cultures that do not necessarily value or respect Islamic cultural traditions.

Secondly, the preservation of Islamic heritage helps to promote understanding and respect for Islamic culture. Islamic art and architecture, for example, are known for their beauty and intricate designs. By preserving these artifacts and making them accessible to the public, non-Muslims can appreciate and learn more about Islamic culture. This can help to foster greater understanding and respect between different cultures, which is particularly important in an increasingly globalized world where different cultures often come into contact with one another.

Thirdly, the preservation of Islamic heritage helps to promote education and scholarship. Islamic manuscripts and libraries contain valuable information about Islamic history, culture, and religion. By preserving these manuscripts and libraries, scholars can continue to study and learn about the Islamic intellectual tradition. This can help to advance knowledge and understanding in fields such as history, art history, and religious studies.

Fourthly, the preservation of Islamic heritage can help to promote tourism and economic development. Many of the examples mentioned earlier, such as the Great

Mosque of Mecca and the Topkapi Palace Museum, are popular tourist destinations that attract visitors from around the world. By preserving these sites, governments and local communities can promote tourism and economic development, which can help to create jobs and boost the local economy.

In contemporary times, the preservation of Islamic heritage faces new challenges, such as the effects of climate change, political instability, and conflict. Climate change, for example, is causing sea levels to rise, which is putting many Islamic heritage sites, such as those in coastal cities like Cairo and Istanbul, at risk of flooding. Political instability and conflict, meanwhile, can lead to the destruction of cultural heritage sites, as has been seen in places like Iraq and Syria.

Despite these challenges, there are still many ways in which Islamic heritage can be preserved and protected in contemporary times. One way is through the use of technology. Advances in digital technology have made it possible to create digital copies of artifacts and documents, which can be stored and accessed remotely. This can help to protect these artifacts from damage or destruction and make them accessible to a wider audience.

Another way to preserve Islamic heritage is through collaboration between governments and local communities. Governments can provide funding and support for the preservation of heritage sites, while local communities can be involved in the preservation and promotion of these sites. This can help to ensure that heritage sites are protected and maintained for future generations, while also promoting tourism and economic development.

In conclusion, the preservation of Islamic heritage is as important today as it has been throughout Islamic history. By preserving these artifacts, Muslims can maintain a connection to their cultural roots, promote understanding and respect for Islamic culture, advance knowledge and scholarship, and promote tourism and economic development. Despite the challenges faced in contemporary times, there are still many ways in which Islamic heritage can be preserved and protected for future generations.

**3. CHAPTER NO. 3 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES TO BUDDHIST
HERITAGE IN PAKISTAN**

CHAPTER NO. 3

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES TO BUDDHIST HERITAGE IN PAKISTAN

3.1.HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BUDDHISM IN PAKISTAN

Buddhism is one of the oldest religions in the world, founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who later became known as the Buddha, in ancient India over 2,500 years ago. The religion, which is based on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, spread quickly throughout Asia and played a significant role in shaping the history and culture of many countries, including Pakistan. In this essay, we will explore the historical background of Buddhism in Pakistan, including how it spread, the important personalities who played a role in its spread, the influence of Buddhism on art, architecture, and literature, the resurgence of Buddhism in modern Pakistan, and the reasons for its decline.

3.1.1. Spread of Buddhism in Pakistan

Buddhism is an ancient religion that originated in India around the 6th century BCE. The religion, founded by the Buddha, or Siddhartha Gautama, taught the path to enlightenment through the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. The teachings of Buddhism spread quickly throughout ancient India, and eventually made its way to the region that is now Pakistan.⁷⁴

The spread of Buddhism in Pakistan was largely due to the efforts of Buddhist monks and traders who traveled the region spreading the teachings of the Buddha. The region was part of the ancient kingdom of Gandhara, which was located in present-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. Gandhara was a melting pot of different cultures and religions, and was also a hub of trade and commerce. As a result, Buddhism was able to spread quickly and easily throughout the region.

The spread of Buddhism in Pakistan was also greatly influenced by the presence of powerful rulers and kings who supported the religion. One such ruler was Ashoka the

⁷⁴ "Buddhism in Pakistan: A Study of the Development of Buddhism in Pakistan" by Muhammad Nawaz Khan in Pakistan Journal of History 67-68

Great, who was the emperor of the Mauryan Empire in ancient India. Ashoka was a strong supporter of Buddhism and he helped to spread the religion throughout his empire, which included present-day Pakistan. Ashoka built many stupas and monasteries, and sent out missionary monks to spread Buddhism in the region. He also inscribed edicts on rocks and pillars promoting the teachings of the Buddha and encouraging non-violence and tolerance.⁷⁵

Another important personality was Nagarjuna, who was a renowned Buddhist philosopher and monk who lived around the 2nd century CE. Nagarjuna was born in South India and later he moved to Gandhara, where he spread the teachings of Buddhism and established many monasteries. Nagarjuna's teachings were influential in the development of the Mahayana Buddhism, which emphasized the concept of compassion and the Bodhisattva path.⁷⁶

The spread of Buddhism in Pakistan was also helped by the presence of trade routes, such as the Silk Road, which passed through the region. Merchants, traders, and travelers along these routes were exposed to Buddhism and many were inclined to adopt the religion. Additionally, the region's proximity to India, where Buddhism was already well-established, also made it more susceptible to the religion's spread.

The ancient Buddhist university in Gandhara, Taxila, was a major center of Buddhist learning in the region that is now Pakistan. Taxila was known for its high-quality education and its rigorous curriculum, which covered a wide range of subjects including Buddhist philosophy, theology, ethics, and Buddhist art and architecture. The university had a strong tradition of Buddhist scholarship and was considered one of the most important centers of Buddhist learning in the ancient world. The teachers and scholars at Taxila played a critical role in spreading Buddhism in the region. They disseminated Buddhist teachings and philosophy through their writings, lectures, and discussions with students and other scholars.

⁷⁵ "Buddhism in Pakistan: A Historical Perspective" by Muhammad Nasir Khan in *Journal of Religious Studies* 34-60

⁷⁶ "The Spread of Buddhism in Pakistan: A Study of the Development of Buddhism in Pakistan" by Muhammad Saleem in *Journal of Asian Studies* 25-38

In addition to the university, Taxila was also home to a number of Buddhist monasteries and temples, which served as centers of Buddhist worship and religious practices. These monasteries and temples were often built and maintained by wealthy patrons and were places where local people could come to learn more about Buddhism and engage in Buddhist practices.⁷⁷

3.1.2. Historical Buddhist Figures Belongs to Indus Valley, Modern-Day Pakistan

- **Khema**, a Buddhist bhikkhuni⁷⁸ who was one of the top female disciples of the Buddha and is considered the first of the Buddha's two chief female disciples, along with Uppalavanna. Khema was born into a royal family in Sagala, modern-day Sialkot in Punjab, Pakistan, and was the wife of King Bimbisara of the ancient Indian kingdom of Magadha. Khema was convinced to visit the Buddha by her husband, who hired poets to sing about the beauty of the monastery he was staying at to her. She attained enlightenment as a laywoman while listening to one of the Buddha's sermons and later entered the monastic life under the Buddha as a bhikkhuni. The Buddha declared her his female disciple foremost in wisdom, with her male counterpart being Sariputta. After going forth as a bhikkhuni, Khema became known for her wisdom and is famous for preaching to King Pasenadi on the issue of the existence of the Buddha after death. She also taught her friend Vijayā, leading her to become a nun as well, after which she soon became an arahant.⁷⁹
- **Bhadda Kapilani** was a Buddhist bhikkhuni and a leading disciple of Gautama Buddha. Before entering the sangha, she was the wife of Mahakassapa, a disciple of Buddha. Both of them renounced their comfortable life and became ascetics. Bhadda Kapilani spent most of her time in the education of younger nuns and instructing them in monastic discipline. The Buddha praised Bhadda as being the foremost among the nuns who could recollect past lives. She is also regarded as the foremost in analyzing the previous reincarnations of beings and their previous karma, as described in the Jataka of the Pali Canon. Overall,

⁷⁷ ibid

⁷⁸ A bhikkhunī or bhikṣuṇī is a fully ordained female in Buddhist monasticism. Male monastics are called bhikkhus. Both bhikkhunis and bhikkhus live by the Vinaya, a set of rules.

⁷⁹ Thakur, Amarnath (1996). *Buddha and Buddhist Synods in India and Abroad*. Abhinav Publications. p. 81. ISBN 978-81-7017-317-5.

Bhadda Kapilani is significant as an important figure in the history of Buddhism and a model for women's empowerment in the religion.⁸⁰

- **Queen Anojā** was the wife of King Mahākappina, who renounced his worldly possessions to become a Buddhist monk. According to Buddhist legends, Anojā and her companions followed him in chariots, crossing rivers by an act of truth (saccakiriyā), and became Stream-enterers upon hearing the Buddha preach. Anojā was ordained by Uppalavanna, and it is said that Mahākappina was present but made invisible by the Buddha. Anojā was believed to have hailed from Sagala in the Madra Kingdom, which is in modern-day Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan. Some believe she was named Anoja because of the color of the Anoja flowers, while others believe it was because of an offering she made to the Buddha in a previous incarnation.⁸¹
- **Kumāralāta** was a 3rd-century founder of the Sautrāntika school of Buddhism, who originated from Taxila, a region in modern-day Pakistan. He was known for his intelligence, great learning, and abilities, and was regarded as one of the "four Suns illuminating the world". Kumāralāta's work, the *Kalpanāmaṇḍitikā Dṛṣṭāntapaṅkti*, also known as Kumāralāta's Garland, emphasizes the core values of Buddhist urban businesspeople, including religious piety, the pursuit of wealth, social respectability, a strong work ethic, and rational decision-making. Kumāralāta's religious vision of poverty and wealth conferred religious legitimacy to the pursuit of wealth, providing an economic outlet for religious fervor and a solid financial basis for the monastic establishment. Kumāralāta's works had an influence on the development of Japanese Buddhism, and he was considered one of the most significant figures in the Sautrāntika school.⁸²
- **Asaṅga** was a spiritual figure in Mahayana Buddhism who lived in the 4th century CE. He was born in Puruṣapura (present-day Peshawar, Pakistan) and is regarded as the founder of the Yogachara school. He and his half-brother Vasubandhu are considered to be the major classical Indian Sanskrit exponents of Mahayana Abhidharma, Vijñānavada (awareness only), and Mahayana

⁸⁰ Murthy, K. Krishna (1987). *Glimpses of Art, Architecture, and Buddhist Literature in Ancient India*. Abhinav Publications. p. 146. ISBN 978-81-7017-226-0.

⁸¹ Buswell, Robert E. Jr.; Lopez, Donald S. Jr. (2013-11-24). *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton University Press. p. 496. ISBN 978-0-691-15786-3.

⁸² Winternitz, Moriz (1996). *A History of Indian Literature*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishe. p. 258. ISBN 978-81-208-0265-0.

teachings on the bodhisattva path. Asaṅga spent many years in serious meditation and study under various teachers but became unsatisfied with his understanding. He then used his meditative powers to travel to Tuṣita Heaven to receive teachings from Maitreya Bodhisattva on emptiness, and how he continued to travel to receive teachings from Maitreya on the Mahayana sutras. Asaṅga went on to write some key treatises (shastras) of the Yogācāra school, and he is credited with founding 25 Mahayana monasteries in India, including Veluvana in Magadha.⁸³

- **Grab Dorje**, also known as Guru Rinpoche or Padmasambhava, was an important Buddhist master who lived in the 8th century A.D. in the region of Oddiyana, which is now part of present-day Swat in Pakistan. He is widely considered the second Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism and is revered as the founder of the Nyingma school of Buddhism.

According to legend, Grab Dorje was born from a lotus flower and was raised by a king. He received extensive training in the teachings of Buddhism and other spiritual practices, becoming a highly accomplished master. He was invited to Tibet by King Trisong Detsen to help establish Buddhism there and became one of the most influential figures in the spread of Buddhism throughout the region. Grab Dorje is credited with many accomplishments, including the founding of numerous monasteries and the transmission of many Buddhist teachings and practices. He is also known for his role in subduing various malevolent spirits and demonic forces that were obstacles to the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. His life and teachings continue to inspire and guide many Buddhists around the world.⁸⁴

- **Vasubandhu** was a Buddhist monk and philosopher who lived in India during the 4th-5th century CE. He is considered to be one of the most important figures in the development of Mahayana Buddhism and is known for his influential works on Buddhist philosophy, including the *Abhidharmakosa-bhasya*, the *Vimsatika*, and the *Trimsika*.

⁸³ Engle, Artemus (translator), Asanga, *The Bodhisattva Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment: A Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhumi*, Shambhala Publications, 2016, Translator's introduction.

⁸⁴ Dargyay, Eva M. (1998) [1977]. Wayman, Alex (ed.). *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet*. Buddhist Tradition Series. Vol. 32 (2nd revised ed.). Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt Ltd. P.19, ISBN 81-208-1579-3.

Vasubandhu was born in the kingdom of Gandhara, which is located in what is now modern-day Swat, Pakistan. He was born into a Brahmin family and was initially a follower of the Sarvastivadin school of Buddhism. However, he later converted to the Mahayana tradition and became an important advocate for this school of thought.

Vasubandhu's philosophical contributions to Buddhism include his development of the Yogacara school, which emphasizes the practice of meditation and the cultivation of inner wisdom to achieve enlightenment. He also contributed to the development of the Madhyamaka school, which emphasizes the concept of emptiness and the ultimate nature of reality.

Vasubandhu's works were highly influential in the development of Buddhist philosophy and continue to be studied and discussed by scholars and practitioners of Buddhism today. His contributions have had a significant impact on the development of Mahayana Buddhism and continue to shape the way that Buddhists approach spiritual practice and philosophical inquiry.⁸⁵

- **Padmasambhava**, also known as Guru Rinpoche, was an 8th-century Buddhist master who played a crucial role in spreading Buddhism in Tibet. He is widely regarded as one of the most important figures in Tibetan Buddhism and is revered as a master of meditation, magic, and mantra.

According to legend, Padmasambhava was born from a lotus flower in the land of Oddiyana, which is believed to be located in present-day Swat, Pakistan. He was known for his extraordinary powers and was invited to Tibet by King Trisong Detsen to help establish Buddhism in the country.

Padmasambhava is credited with establishing the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, which is the oldest of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism. He is also known for his role in bringing the teachings of the Vajrayana or Tantric tradition to Tibet.

Padmasambhava's teachings emphasize the importance of meditation and the use of esoteric practices to achieve enlightenment. He is often depicted holding a vajra or thunderbolt and a skull cup, which represent his mastery over the

⁸⁵ Tola, Fernando; Dragonetti, Carmen (2004). *Being as Consciousness: Yogācāra Philosophy of Buddhism*. Motilal Banarsidass Publ. p. 55. ISBN 978-81-208-1967-2.

forces of nature and his ability to transform negative emotions into positive energy.

Today, Padmasambhava continues to be revered as a great master and his teachings continue to be studied and practiced by followers of Tibetan Buddhism around the world.⁸⁶

- **Raja Tridiv Roy** was a prominent Pakistani politician, diplomat, and writer of Bengali and Chakma descent. He served as the Minister of Minority Affairs in the cabinet of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Roy was also the 50th Raja or King of the Chakma tribe, which is an ethnic minority group in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region of present-day Bangladesh. He ruled as king from May 1953 until his abdication in 1971, following the Bangladesh Liberation War. Despite the war, Roy chose to remain in Pakistan and later became known for his writings, diplomacy, and leadership in the Buddhist community of Pakistan.

Roy was a prominent figure in the Chakma community and worked tirelessly to promote their rights and interests in Pakistan. He was also known for his efforts to promote religious harmony and tolerance, particularly between Muslims and Buddhists in the country.

Raja Tridiv Roy passed away on September 17, 2012, leaving behind a legacy as a prominent leader and advocate for minority rights in Pakistan.⁸⁷

3.1.3. Decline of Buddhism in this Region

The decline of Buddhism in the region that is now Pakistan was a complex and gradual process that was influenced by a number of different factors. Some of the most important reasons for the decline of Buddhism in the region include political instability, economic changes, religious competition, and cultural assimilation.

One of the main reasons for the decline of Buddhism in the region was political instability. The region was ruled by a number of different kingdoms and empires over the centuries, many of which were in conflict with one another. This political instability led to the disruption of trade routes, the destruction of cities, and the decline of Buddhist

⁸⁶ Boord, Martin (1993). *Cult of the Deity Vajrakila. Institute of Buddhist Studies*. P. 115, ISBN 0-9515424-3-5

⁸⁷ Hyatt, Ishrat (18 September 2012). "Eulogy for a friend". *The News International*. Archived from the original on 16 April 2013. Retrieved 29 March 2023.

institutions such as monasteries and temples. Many Buddhist sites were abandoned or destroyed during this time, and the Buddhist community was scattered and weakened.

Another important factor in the decline of Buddhism in the region was economic change. As the economy of the region shifted from a primarily agrarian-based system to a more urban-based system, many Buddhist communities found themselves struggling to survive. The decline of Buddhism was also influenced by the growth of new economic centers, such as the Silk Road, which shifted the focus of trade away from the region and reduced its economic importance.

The arrival of the Huns in the region also played a role in the decline of Buddhism. The Huns were a nomadic warrior people who invaded and conquered much of central Asia in the 5th and 6th centuries. Their invasions and conquests led to the destruction of many Buddhist communities, as well as the institutions that supported them. The Huns were known for their brutal tactics, and many Buddhists were either killed or forced to flee their communities. This further contributed to the decline of Buddhism in the region and the weakening of its influence

Religious competition was also an important factor in the decline of Buddhism in the region. As Buddhism was gradually replaced by Islam, many Buddhist communities found themselves marginalized and in decline. The introduction of Islam brought new religious and cultural practices to the region, and many Buddhists were absorbed into the Muslim community.

Finally, cultural assimilation played a role in the decline of Buddhism in the region. As Buddhism was gradually absorbed into the larger cultural and religious traditions of the region, its influence and importance diminished. This was especially true as Buddhism was gradually replaced by other religions, such as Islam, which offered a more comprehensive and integrated religious and cultural system. Over time, Buddhism became less and less distinct as a separate religion and its influence declined.

3.1.4. Resurgence of Buddhism in Modern Pakistan

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of Buddhism in Pakistan. This has been driven by a number of factors, including increased interest in Buddhism among the Pakistani diaspora, greater awareness of the religion's history and heritage in Pakistan, and the growing popularity of Buddhism as a spiritual practice. Additionally, the

government's efforts to preserve and promote the country's Buddhist heritage, such as the restoration of ancient monasteries and stupas, have also played a role in this resurgence.

One of the major reasons for the resurgence of Buddhism in Pakistan is the growing interest in the religion among the Pakistani diaspora, particularly in countries like the United States and Canada. Many Pakistanis living abroad have become interested in Buddhism as a way to reconnect with their cultural heritage and to explore different spiritual practices. This interest has also led to an increase in the number of books, documentaries, and other resources on Buddhism in Pakistan.

Another factor that has contributed to the resurgence of Buddhism in Pakistan is the growing awareness of the religion's history and heritage in the country. Many Pakistanis have become interested in learning more about the ancient Buddhist kingdoms that once flourished in the region, as well as the art and architecture that was produced during this time. Additionally, the government's efforts to preserve and promote the country's Buddhist heritage, such as the restoration of ancient monasteries and stupas, have also played a role in this resurgence.

3.2. SCOPE OF BUDDHIST HERITAGE IN PAKISTAN

Most Buddhists live in Southeast Asian countries (Singapore, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Cambodia), China, Japan, Nepal, Bhutan, Korea, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, and India. But surprisingly, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where the number of Buddhists is only around 2000-1500, has a vast and authentic history of Buddhism. Apart from Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism, Pakistan has been home to great Buddhist monasteries, stupas, and ancient universities. In particular, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab regions are rich in Buddhism's rich historical and cultural heritage.

The history of Buddhism in Pakistan is about 2,300 years old and dates to the time of King Ashoka. Many Buddhist buildings and their remains found in the Indo-Greek Empire, the Miora Empire of Ashoka, the Kushan Empire, and the Pala Empire are part of present-day Pakistan. Buddhist archeological sites have been discovered in many parts of Pakistan, including pottery, statues, coins, many everyday objects, schools, monasteries, and hundreds of stupas built during the Ashoka period. Museums in

Peshawar and Taxila are steeped in Buddhist history. Rare Buddha statues are also kept in the Lahore Museum. Traces of Buddhism have been discovered in many places in Pakistan. Let's take a look at them.

2.1.1. Gilgit-Baltistan:

Buddhism spread to Gilgit Baltistan through the ancient Silk Road trade routes. As travelers and traders moved through the area, they brought with them ideas and cultural practices, including Buddhism. The region also played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism as it served as a gateway to other regions of Central Asia and China.

Gilgit Baltistan is home to numerous ancient Buddhist sites, many of which date back to the 1st century BCE. Some of the most prominent historical sites of Buddhism in Gilgit Baltistan include:

- **Kargah Buddha:** This is a rock carving of Buddha that is located near the Kargah Nullah in Gilgit. It is believed to date back to the 7th century CE and is considered one of the most significant Buddhist carvings in the region.⁸⁸
- **Thalpan Buddha:** This is another rock carving of Buddha that is located in the Thalpan Valley of Skardu. It is believed to date back to the 8th century CE and is considered a masterpiece of Gandhara art.
- **Alchi Monastery:** This is an ancient monastery located in the Alchi village of Skardu. It was founded in the 11th century CE and is considered one of the oldest and most well-preserved Buddhist monasteries in the region.
- **Shigar Fort:** This is an ancient fort located in the town of Shigar. It was built in the 17th century CE and served as a royal palace for the local rulers. It is also home to a number of ancient Buddhist artifacts, including manuscripts and prayer flags.
- **Kharpocho Fort:** This is another ancient fort located in the Skardu region. It is believed to have been built in the 4th century CE and served as a military base for the local rulers. It is also home to a number of ancient Buddhist relics, including stupas and rock carvings.

⁸⁸ Bernier, Ronald M. (1997). *Himalayan architecture*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press. pp. 180

Overall, the spread of Buddhism to Gilgit Baltistan played a significant role in shaping the cultural and historical identity of the region. Today, the area is home to numerous ancient Buddhist sites that serve as a reminder of the rich cultural heritage of the region.⁸⁹

3.2.1. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa:

As the abode of the Gandhara civilization, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was a stronghold of Buddhism, and various monasteries, seminaries, museums, and stupas are scattered here and there. The first to be mentioned is the ancient Buddhist civilization that led to the spread of Buddhism.

- Takht Bai, Mardan: It was a center of Gandhara civilization that has attracted the attention of tourists from far and wide. This place provides very detailed information and evidence about the ancient civilization of Buddhism. The village was founded on the remains of an ancient town, which is still in good condition today. Archaeological excavations have uncovered Buddhist temples, monasteries, open courtyards, large standing statues, and high-rise walls adorned with sculptures. The historical significance of Takht-i-Bai was first brought to the attention of the French General Court in 1836 when research and excavation work began in 1852.⁹⁰
- Seri / Sehri Bahlol: The ruins of Bahlol or Sehri Bahlol represent an ancient, fortified city built during the Kushan period. The remains of the Buddha here have not yet been completely excavated. Ironically, the locals have also carried out illegal excavations in their homes to damage the site. Utensils, statues, ornaments, and coins are commonly discovered here. This place is in dire need of government and international patronage.⁹¹
- Shahbaz Garhi and Jamal Garhi, Mardan: Shahbaz Garhi is a beautiful and lush village surrounded by mountains where at some height in the 3rd century BC a blunt rock of the Ashoka period is located. The inscriptions on the rock, which consists of two large pieces, are inscribed in the ancient script "Khrushti". Its

⁸⁹ *Rock Carvings At The Sacred Rock Of Hunza, And Near Gilgit And Chilas*. 1979. Ebook. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000042046>.

⁹⁰ Centre, UNESCO. 2022. "Buddhist Ruins Of Takht-I-Bahi And Neighbouring City Remains At Sahr-I-Bahlol". *Whc.Unesco.Org*. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/140/>.

⁹¹ *Ibid* "Buddhist Ruins Of Takht-I-Bahi And Neighbouring City Remains At Sahr-I-Bahlol".

historical significance is that it is the first example of ancient texts and scripts throughout South Asia. The rock is also part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.⁹²

Located 13 km north of Mardan, Jamal Garhi has been an ancient Buddhist monastery that probably lasted from the 1st to the 5th century. Statues discovered from the ruins of Jamal Dheri are a staple of the British Museum and Calcutta Museum today, while a specimen of the Khrushchevic script discovered from the monastery was sent to the Peshawar Museum.⁹³

- Pushkalavati, Charsadda: The ruins of Pushkalavati, the capital of the Gandhara Empire, are located at the confluence of the Kabul and Swat rivers, just outside the present-day city of Charsadda. It includes the remains of two cities and several stupas.⁹⁴
- Barikot, Swat: Barikot, the gateway to the Swat Valley, is located on the banks of the Swat River. Notable objects to be discovered here include a large green statue of Siddhartha Buddha on his horse and a relic resembling a stupa with two lions carved into the rock.⁹⁵
- Saidu Sharif, Swat: Saidu and the adjoining city of Mingora are surrounded by several Buddhist shrines, including Ali Grama, Batkara 1 and 2, Matlai, and the valley of the river Jambil. Statues of Gautama Buddha have been discovered in many areas around Saidu, most of them are carved into the rocks.⁹⁶
- Mangalore's Rock, Swat: It contains the second largest statue of Buddha carved in the rock. In this valley, there are many Buddha statues in Banjut, Saldara, Nangrial, and Jahanabad areas, most of them are carved in the rock. The most famous statue here is the "Sukhorai Buddha" statue of Jahanabad.⁹⁷

⁹² Hultzsch, Eugen. 1925. *Inscriptions Of Asoka, New Edition By E. Hultzsch*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. pp 56-57

⁹³ Cunningham, Alexander. 1966. *Report For The Year 1872-73*. Varanasi: Indological Book House. Pp46-53

⁹⁴ Khan, M. Nasim, 2005. "Terracotta Seal-Impressions from Bala Hisar, Charsadda", in *Ancient Pakistan*, Vol XVI, p. 13.

⁹⁵ Olivieri, Luca Maria, Fabio Marzaioli, Isabella Passariello, Elisa Iori, Roberto Micheli, Filippo Terrasi, Massimo Vidale, and Antonio D'Onofrio. 2019. "A New Revised Chronology And Cultural Sequence Of The Swat Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan) In The Light Of Current Excavations At Barikot (Bir-Kot-Ghwandai)". *Nuclear Instruments And Methods In Physics Research Section B: Beam Interactions With Materials And Atoms* 456: 148-156. doi:10.1016/j.nimb.2019.05.065.

⁹⁶ "Saidu Sharif - SWAT". 2022. SWAT. <https://www.visitswatvalley.com/saidu-sharif/>.

⁹⁷ Sardar, Badshah. 2005. *Buddhist Rock Carvings In The Swāt Valley*. 1st ed. [Islamabad]: Badshah Sardar. P.103

- But-Kara Stupa, Mingor: The But-Kara Stupa near Mingora was built by King Ashoka of Miora. Many archeological remains excavated from here are housed in a museum in Torino, Italy.⁹⁸
- Chakdara, Lower Dir: During excavations in 1962-65, Ahmad Hassan Dani discovered the first-century Buddhist stupa and monastery here. Archaeological remains of "Anand Dheri" have also been discovered at Gulabad, near the village of Uch, to north of Chakdara. According to the Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zheng, an incident is attributed to this place. To save the people from the famine, Buddha took the form of a dead dragon in this valley to feed the hungry people.⁹⁹
- Kanishka Stupa Peshawar: Located on the outskirts of Peshawar city, this stupa was built in the 2nd century BC by Kanishka, the ruler of the Kushan Empire, to preserve the relics of Buddhism. After the excavations, Buddhist relics which include the 3 bones of Buddha were moved to Mandalay, Burma. However, a six-corner box is preserved in the Peshawar Museum.¹⁰⁰
- Bhamala Stupa, Hari Pur: It includes a main cross-shaped and 19 beautiful small stupas. This cross-shaped stupa resembles an ancient pyramid.¹⁰¹
- Ahan Posh, Orakzai: Several Buddhist relics, monasteries, and stupas have been discovered in excavation at Orakzai Agency. Unfortunately, the valuable things excavated from here are now part of the British Museum, and the government of Pakistan has not made any serious effort to bring them back.¹⁰²
- Peshawar Museum, Peshawar: This is the largest museum of antiquities related to Buddhism and Buddhist empires in the world, this museum was built in 1907. The Peshawar Museum houses hundreds of rare Buddha statues, ancient stupas and their relics, coins, historical and rare items such as utensils, seals, jewelry, etc., and the ruins of monasteries.

3.2.2. Punjab:

⁹⁸ Rhi, Ju-Hyung. 1994. "From Bodhisattva To Buddha: The Beginning Of Iconic Representation In Buddhist Art". *Artibus Asiae* 54 (3/4): 207. doi:10.2307/3250056.

⁹⁹ Prof Ahmad Hasan Dani (1968). "Excavation at Andandheri" (PDF). *Ancient Pakistan*.p38

¹⁰⁰ Le, Huu Phuoc. 2010. *Buddhist Architecture*. USA: Grafikol. P180

¹⁰¹ Ibid p179

¹⁰² FUSSMAN, Gérard. "Documents Épigraphiques Kouchans (II)." *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* 67 (1980): 45–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43732244>.

As far as Punjab is concerned, traces of Buddhism have been discovered in a vast area in the north, including stupas and monasteries. Almost all the discoveries have been made in Taxila in Rawalpindi district and adjoining areas, while in the area of Rahim Yar Khan, traces of a Buddhist monastery have also been found.

- Taxila: Taxila is an ancient city 22 miles from Rawalpindi which literally means "city of cut stone". It was here that Raja Ambhi accepted the obedience of Alexander the Great, after which Alexander reached the shores of Jhelum to fight Raja Porus. The Greek ruler of Bactria, Rano Demeris, conquered the region of Gandhara in 190 BC and made Taxila his capital¹⁰³. Even during the reign of Maharaja Ashoka, the Great, the city flourished and was a center of Buddhist learning. The famous Chinese traveler Hyun Sang came here in the 7th century AD. He has mentioned the greatness of this city in his travelogue. Some of the ruins discovered in the city of Taxila date back to the sixth century. Apart from this, many things from the period of the Moria Empire, Indo-Greek, and Kushan Empire have also been discovered here. According to a tradition, the University of Taxila was the first university in the world¹⁰⁴. The ruins of Taxila were recently rediscovered by Sir Alexander Cunningham in the 19th century. In 1980, it was declared a "World Cultural Heritage Site" by UNESCO¹⁰⁵, while in 2006 it was declared the most popular tourist destination in Pakistan. There is a beautiful Gothic style museum, which houses specimens of Gandhara art from the 5th century BC, ten thousand coins (some of which are from the Greek period), jewelery, pottery, stones, Buddha statues and other valuable artifacts. Are Those interested in history should visit this museum. Other notable sites here are Bhir Mound, Dharmarajika Stupa, Sirkap, and Sirsukh cities, Shrine of double-headed Eagle, Jandial Temple, Julian Buddhist Monastery, etc.
- Mankiala Stupa, Rawalpindi: Mankiala is located near Rawat Fort, 36 km south of Islamabad. One of the reasons for the area's fame is the stupa of Gautama

¹⁰³ Allchin, B. and Allchin, F., 1982. *The rise of civilization in India and Pakistan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.127.

¹⁰⁴ Marshall, John (2013-06-20). *A Guide to Taxila*. Cambridge University Press. p. 10. ISBN 978-1-107-61544-1.

¹⁰⁵ Centre, U., 2022. Taxila. [online] Whc.unesco.org. Available at: <<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/139/>> [Accessed 23 January 2022].

Buddha, where, according to tradition, the Buddha fed seven hungry leopard cubs by cutting some flesh from his body.¹⁰⁶

3.2.3. Azad Kashmir:

Leading the list of Buddhist archeological sites in Azad Jammu and Kashmir is the "Ancient Buddhist University of Sharda"¹⁰⁷.

During the reign of Kanishka I (Prince of Nepal), Sharda was the largest educational institution in Central Asia. There was a formal education in Buddhism as well as a complete education in history, geography, form, logic and philosophy. The school had its own script, which was similar to Devanagari. The name of this script was also Sharda. This university building was built by Kanishka I. The Sharda University building is in the shape of a platform. The construction of the building amazes even today's engineers. This building is different from all the ancient buildings found in the subcontinent, especially the platform built in the middle of it offers a special architectural pattern. It is about a hundred feet high and has carvings on the walls around it. There is a door on the south side. There is no roof over the building. After Kartarpur,

3.2.4. Sindh:

By the way, traces of Buddhism have been found in many places in Sindh, but the condition of most of them is deteriorating. Most of the sculptures discovered here are housed in the Shivaji Rao Museum in Mumbai. The following places are important here.

- Thal Mir Rakn, Nawabshah: This is a unique type of stupa which is located at 15 km from Daulatpur Safan city of Nawabshah district and north of Qazi Ahmed city. It is the only Buddhist monument in Sindh with a dome-shaped roof. The monument is 60 feet high and is built of mud and bricks.¹⁰⁸
- Kahujdro, Mirpurkhas: Excavations in the 30-acre area uncovered stupas, clay and glass vases, engraved bricks and stones, and various antiques, some of

¹⁰⁶ Hassan, Shiraz. 2022. "The Forgotten Mankiala Stupa". DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1140468>.

¹⁰⁷ Muddassar, S., 2022. *Kashmir Diary: Sharda University and the Goddess Of Knowledge*. [online] <https://www.morenews.pk>. Available at: <<https://www.morenews.pk/kashmir-diary-sharda-university-and-the-goddess-of-knowledge/#:~:text=The%20Sharda%20University%20is%20situated,and%2094.6%20feet%20in%20width.>> [Accessed 18 January 2022].

¹⁰⁸ Lohuizen-De Leeuw, J., 1979. *South Asian archaeology 1975*. 1st ed. Leiden: Brill, p.156.

which are housed in the Karachi Museum. Today the condition of this stupa is very dilapidated.¹⁰⁹

- Brahmanabad Stupa, Sanghar: The Brahmanabad Stupa is located on the side of Tando Adam-Sanghar Road in Sanghar District. The locals call it "Brahmanabad Jo Thal". This sacred stupa of old is still standing in dilapidated condition in the sandy plain. The repair work of this paved brick stupa is being carried out under the supervision of Archaeological Department, Government of Sindh.¹¹⁰

Buddhist heritage in Sindh, Pakistan, is extensive and varied but often in poor condition and various stages of deterioration. One of the most notable Buddhist sites in Sindh is the stupa at Mohenjo-daro in Brahmanabad, Mansura Sanghar district. Mohenjo-daro was once a thriving city in the Indus Valley Civilization and was a major center of Buddhism during the Mauryan and Gupta periods. The stupa at Mohenjo-daro is considered to be one of the oldest Buddhist structures in the region, dating back to the 3rd century BCE.

Another notable site is the Sirah-ji-takri near Rohri in Sukkur. This site is believed to have been an important center of Buddhism during the Mauryan period and was known for its rich cultural heritage. It was a hub of trade and commerce, attracting merchants and travelers from all over the region. The site features several ancient structures, including a large stupa and several monasteries.

In Mirpur Khas, Nawabshah, is the Kahu-Jo-Daro, another important Buddhist site. This site is famous for its rich history, and was once a thriving city with a large Buddhist community. It was a major center of Buddhism during the Mauryan and Gupta periods and was known for its well-preserved structures and rich cultural heritage.

Another significant Buddhist site is the Sudheran-Jo-Thul near Hyderabad. This site is believed to have been an important center of Buddhism during the Mauryan period and was known for its rich cultural heritage. It was a hub of trade and commerce, attracting merchants and travelers from all over the region.

¹⁰⁹ Harle, James C. 2022. *The Art And Architecture Of The Indian Subcontinent*. London: Yale University Press. p.117

¹¹⁰ Khan, Mohammad. 2022. "SITUATIONER: Nine Trenches Into The Past Of Sindh". *DAWN.COM*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1617739>.

In addition to these well-known sites, there are several other important Buddhist structures in Sindh, including the Thul Mir Rukan stupa, the Thul Hairo Khan Stupa, and the Bhaleel-Shah-Thul square stupas. These stupas date back to the 5th to 7th centuries CE and are considered to be some of the finest examples of Buddhist architecture in the region.

The Kot-Bambhan-Thul buddhist tower near Tando Muhammad Khan is another important Buddhist site in Sindh. This tower is considered to be one of the oldest Buddhist structures in the region, and is believed to have been built in the 3rd century BCE. It is a unique example of ancient Buddhist architecture and is considered to be a masterpiece of the period.

Many terracotta tiles from Kaho-Jo-Daro and Buddha statues are exhibited in the Chatrapati Shivaji Museum in Mumbai, India. These artifacts are significant evidence of the rich cultural heritage of Buddhism in Sindh and serve as a reminder of the once thriving Buddhist community in the region.

In conclusion, despite the numerous Buddhist heritage sites located in Sindh, Pakistan, many of these sites are in various stages of deterioration and in need of preservation and restoration. The rich cultural heritage of Buddhism in Sindh is an important part of the region's history and should be protected and preserved for future generations to appreciate and learn from.

3.2.5. Balochistan:

Though few, traces of Buddhism have been found in a few places in Balochistan. At the top of these are the caves of Gondrani, located 20 km north of Bella town in Lasbela district.¹¹¹ This place is also called "the city of Mai Gondrani", "the city of Roghan" and "the abode of souls". Historians are unable to tell the history of the city, but they speculate that a great Buddhist monastery was established here in the 8th century. Since this area was then part of the Buddhist Empire, this hypothesis can be considered true.

On the other hand, some historians say that although these caves have Buddhist characteristics, we cannot conclude that they are related to Buddhism. These caves of Gondrani, also known locally as "old houses", are built in the form of small rooms

¹¹¹ "House Of The Spirits | The Express Tribune". 2022. *The Express Tribune*. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/336879/house-of-the-spirits>.

inside the rocks and are connected to each other by inland passages. In the British Raj, their number is said to be 1500 but today their number is close to 500. Sadly, they are on the verge of extinction today.

3.3.Methodology

Pakistan is a land with a rich history that includes Buddhism, an ancient religion with deep cultural and spiritual roots. In this chapter, we're going to explore the problems and difficulties that Buddhist heritage in Pakistan faces. We've gathered information by talking to experts and visiting important places like Takht-i-Bai. Our research falls into four main themes:

Theme 1: Understanding the Importance of Buddhist Heritage

We'll start by explaining why Buddhist heritage is so important in Pakistan. We'll look at its history and why it matters today. This helps us understand why it's crucial to protect and preserve this heritage.

Theme 2: The Challenges of Keeping Buddhist Heritage Safe

Preserving and protecting this heritage isn't easy. We'll talk about the difficulties, like how new buildings and vandalism can harm ancient sites. These challenges are making it hard to keep Buddhist heritage safe.

Theme 3: Why Buddhist Heritage is Getting Worse

We'll dig deeper to find out why these problems are happening. We'll explore the reasons behind the damage and destruction of Buddhist heritage. Understanding these reasons is important to find solutions.

Theme 4: How Local People See and Help Buddhist Heritage

Lastly, we'll look at the role of local communities and what they think about Buddhist heritage. We'll see how they can be part of the solution and help protect this valuable heritage.

This chapter shows that the challenges facing Buddhist heritage in Pakistan are complex. It's not just about preserving old buildings; it's about understanding the history, the problems, and involving local communities. We hope this chapter helps us

see the importance of protecting and cherishing Pakistan's Buddhist heritage for the future.

3.4. Research Strategy

To figure out the issues and challenges to the Buddhist heritage in Pakistan, most of the information in this study came from semi-structured interviews with the people who know the issues and challenges to Buddhist heritage in Pakistan from academia, officials, Buddhist monks, and public living around the precious Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. The process of collecting, sorting coding and analysing the data is described below. Moreover, the case study methodology was adopted to conduct this part of research. Takht-i-Bahi was adopted as case study to observe and analyse the issues and challenges to Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. Most of the data for this research was collected from interviews, field notes, and content analysis. A thorough and in-depth case studies and the collection of large requires a qualitative approach, that is precisely what was done in this study.

Data Collection:

The researcher visited around five public and private universities in order to meet the expert of Pakistani Buddhist heritage from the academia The researcher interviewed more than 10 university lecturers, Assistant Professors and Professors of Buddhist studies and religious studies in formal one-on-one settings, asked them semi-structured questions on issues and challenges to Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. The English and Urdu languages were used for this purpose. The researcher also conducted interviews with ambassadors and counselors of the Buddhist majority countries to know their points of view regarding Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. These interviews were also conducted one-on-one and face-to-face with the duration of 40 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews from Pakistani heritage officials were also conducted to know government measures in this regard and to know the issues and challenges to religious heritage in Pakistan specifically in terms of Buddhism. The researcher also visited the Takht-i-Bahi, an ancient Buddhist sacred place located near Sehri Behlol, Mardan, KPK to get in-depth insights of this place. The researcher prepared visit and observation report of this site and also conducted the interviews from the officials to figure out the issues and challenges faced by this Buddhist monastery as a case study. The researcher also conducted some interviews from the locals to know their living style and behaviour in

regarding this site. The researcher also conducted interviews from two Buddhist monks who had visited Pakistan and observed their religious heritage in the country. These interviews were conducted online by using zoom meeting. This all process took six months of researcher to complete the interviews.

After the conduction of interviews, the researcher transcribed and coded each one, marked when an interviewee brought up with potential information regarding the research and made the list of information with scientific methodology. In transcription process, the researcher added all the new and useful information to the list given by interviewee and checked to see if other interviewee had mentioned the same information.

Data validity and Reliability:

Data validity and reliability was checked by researcher. Validity was checked by sending professionals and their items were verified. The reliability was tested by distributing questionnaire to 5 different people from universities in order to check the results. The researcher checked if the questions are understood by the respondents and reliability of the data provided.

Scope:

There are limitations to this study. It was hard to gather the information. Some of the people being interviewed did not feel comfortable talking about the subject, so the interview sometimes took a lot longer than an hour. I had to spend time getting to know them and ask a lot of indirect questions. Another most uneasy thing was to be rescheduled already proscribed meeting times and taking appointments from worthy academicians, officials, ambassadors, and monks. Aside from the fact that some people did not trust the interviewers, and it was very hard to move all over the institutes and travel to different places to conduct interviews. Transcribing and analyzing the almost twenty interviews were another daunting challenge. Most of the teachers in the universities did not respond and others were quite surprised when I requested them an interview, they said no one ever come with this type of research tool to them from the field of religious studies.

Ethics:

After the department gave its approval from an ethical point of view, these interviews began. The interviewees gave their permission for the interviews to be done and recorded, and they signed a formal permission form before the interviews began. It was made sure to use this data only for academic purposes. It was promised to interviewees to not reveal their identity.

Research Instrument:

Semi-structured interview questionnaire is the instrument of this research.

Sampling:

The purposive methodology of sampling was adopted by the researcher to choose the desired interviewees for this research. Almost 20 people were chosen by the researcher from academia, bureaucracy, officials locals, public and the representatives of Buddhism in the world. The researcher chose the sample grounded on his own judgment and the objectives of the research. These interviewees are the main unit of analysis for this study. Moreover, Takht-i-Bahi was chosen as a case study to analyse the issues and challenges faced by Buddhist heritage in Pakistan.

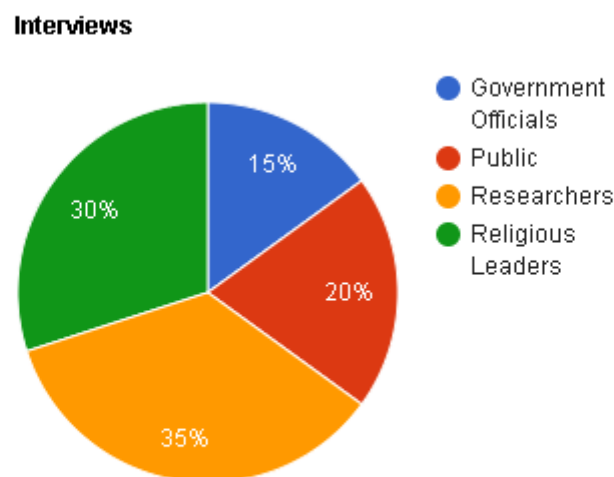


Figure. 1: showing the percentage of interviews

Population:

The all Buddhist religious heritage in Pakistan is included in population. The experts of Buddhism, monks, stakeholders, officials and locals living around the Buddhist sites like Taxila, Takht-i-Bahi, Swat etc are included in the population for this study.

Data Analysis:

Data collected through interviews was assessed, analyzed, and interpreted in light of the objectives of the study. The conversations were analyzed using a phenomenology, which is the researcher's thoughts and knowledge of how people's personal experiences with a phenomenon affect their understanding of it. Giorgi, who came up with this method, says that "describe" is the key word in this research. The goal is to learn about "social and psychological phenomena from the people involve's points of view".* Phenomenology is the only sort of research that lets an investigator be a part of an individual's experiences and get close to the minds of the people being studied. This lets the researcher get a deep considerate of the topic being studied in relation to the real involvements of the people being investigated.

3.5. Analysis of the Interviews:

The researchers performed in-depth interviews with 10 academics from different universities of Islamabad and also some expert interviews to validate the findings and used phenomenology to sort, organize, and analyses the data from those interviewees.

Interviews:

After the interviews were done and the data was analyzed, the findings about issues and challenges were discussed in the following themes.

3.6. Theme 1: Overview and Significance of Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan

- Buddhist heritage in Pakistan is deeply rooted in his historical association with the Gandhara civilization which played a crucial role in the spread of Buddhism to China, Central Asia, Japan, and Korea. Gandhara has been a prominent Buddhist center from the third century BCE to the eleventh century CE.

- Gandharan architecture and figurative sculpture provide a look into the religious life of this region as well as a paradigmatic model for studying the greater South Asian Buddhist tradition.
- There are almost 34 Buddhist archaeological sites in Pakistan which are spread in different regions of the country.
- There are eight UNESCO heritage sites in Pakistan in which two sites belong to Buddhist heritage.
- The first Greater Gandharan Buddhist structures, Butkara I in the Swat valley and the Dharmarajika complex in Taxila, were most likely erected in the second century b.c. These early Buddhist centres have many traits with modern Buddhist monuments in India, such as enormous hemispherical stupas (solid mounds containing Buddha relics).
- Taxila is one of the most important sites, featuring numerous stupas, monasteries, and universities that were essential centers of learning in ancient times. It has also included in UNESCO world heritage sites.
- Swat Valley is Known as the "Valley of the Stupas," it contains numerous Buddhist stupas and monastic remains.
- Takht-i-Bahi is a well-preserved monastic complex with stupas and viharas, showcasing the architectural excellence of Gandhara. It has also included in UNESCO world heritage sites.
- Butkara Stupa is an impressive ancient stupa in Swat, adorned with intricate carvings depicting Buddhist stories and symbols.
- Rani Gatt is a Buddhist archaeological site from the Gandahara culture found in the Buner District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Ranigat is a wonderful illustration of the area's Buddhist heritage.
- Jaulian is an ancient Buddhist monastery in Taxila, known for its beautiful stone carvings and inscriptions.
- Fasting Buddha of Bhamala is a large Buddha statue, believed to be the tallest ancient Buddha figure in the world.
- Jandial Temple: A unique Buddhist temple with Greek architectural elements, emphasizing the cultural fusion in the region.
- Dharmarajika Stupa: A significant stupa in Taxila, believed to contain the ashes of the Buddha's disciple, Sariputta.

- Kanishka Stupa: Associated with the great Kushan king Kanishka, this stupa represents an era of Buddhist patronage and artistic expression.
- Gumbatuna Stupa: A well-preserved stupa in Swat, showcasing the Gandharan art style.
- Schist Reliefs of Buddha: Various schist panels and reliefs in Taxila and Swat depict scenes from the life of Buddha and Buddhist mythology.
- Indo-Greek Coinage: Some of the coins from the Indo-Greek period feature Buddhist symbols and motifs, providing valuable historical insights.
- Buddha's Footprints: Some sites in Pakistan claim to house footprints of Buddha, attracting pilgrims and researchers alike.
- Buddhist Inscriptions: Numerous inscriptions in Prakrit and Kharosthi script found on pillars and artifacts, providing valuable historical information.
- For Buddhists, Buddha's tooth relic is a one-of-a-kind, valuable, and sacred object. Fortunately, Pakistan possesses the valuable deserving teeth at Dir Museum Chakdara, which may draw a large Buddhist pilgrimage and visitors.
- Buddhist Manuscripts: Fragments of ancient manuscripts, such as the Bajaur and Mansehra manuscripts, offer insights into Buddhist teachings and scriptures.

3.7.Theme 2: Challenges in the Preservation and Protection of Buddhist Heritage

- Antiquity smugglers: It is highlighted by experts that some people illegally excavate, loot, and smuggle the antiquates and artifacts to collectors and dealers which is a major loss to Buddhist heritage in Pakistan and it is causing its deprivation. Antiquity smuggling is one of the major issues that affect the preservation of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. The smuggling of antiquities is a business that has been going on for decades. The smugglers steal artifacts from archaeological sites and sell them to collectors and dealers in other countries. This not only deprives Pakistan of its cultural heritage but also makes it difficult for archaeologists to study and understand the history of Buddhism in Pakistan.
- Religious Fanaticism: It is also highlighted that some extremist groups have targeted and destroyed Buddhist sites and objects such as statues and artifacts. For example, A 1,700-year-old statue was demolished by a few Pakistanis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan's north-western region, in 2020. Some expert

also said that in Pakistan, ancient Buddhist rock carvings, paintings, and sculptures are frequently ruined. Paintings are sometimes darkened and repainted with Pakistan's national flag. Pakistan is the birthplace of the world's first civilisation.

- According to experts opinion, government ineptitude is one of the major issues that affect the preservation of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. The government has failed to provide adequate funding and resources for the preservation and restoration of Buddhist heritage sites. For example, the Takht-i-Bahi Buddhist Monastery in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is in a state of disrepair due to lack of government funding. As it was reported by Dawn News, the Takht-i-Bahi Buddhist Monastery in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is in a state of disrepair due to lack of government funding.¹¹²
- Public disinheritance is one of the major issues that affect the preservation of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. The local population has little interest in preserving the Buddhist heritage sites and often use them for their own purposes. For example, the ruins of the ancient city of Taxila are being used as a garbage dump. This not only damages the heritage sites but also makes it difficult for archaeologists to study and understand the history of Buddhism in Pakistan.¹¹³
- Development projects are one of the major issues that affect the preservation of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. The construction of new roads, buildings, and other infrastructure often leads to the destruction of heritage sites. For example, the construction of the Karakoram Highway has damaged many Buddhist heritage sites in Gilgit-Baltistan.¹¹⁴

¹¹²The Express Tribune. "Takht-i-Bahi Monastery in Disrepair Due to Lack of Funds." The Express Tribune, August 22, 2021. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2323055/takht-i-bahi-monastery-in-disrepair-due-to-lack-of-funds>.

¹¹³ The Express Tribune. "Takht-i-Bahi Monastery in Disrepair Due to Lack of Funds." The Express Tribune, August 22, 2021. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2323055/takht-i-bahi-monastery-in-disrepair-due-to-lack-of-funds>.

¹¹⁴ The status, conservation and management of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. Academia.edu. Accessed August 7, 2023.

https://www.academia.edu/43396239/The_status_conservation_and_management_of_Buddhist_heritage_in_Pakistan.

- Population growth is one of the major issues that affect the preservation of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. The increasing population puts pressure on the land and resources around heritage sites, leading to encroachment and damage. For example, the ruins of the ancient city of Taxila are being encroached upon by the local population.
- Lack of trained personnel: There is a lack of trained personnel for the preservation and protection of these heritage sites. Many people who work at these sites are not properly trained in preservation and protection techniques. This lack of training has led to the destruction and looting of many Buddhist heritage sites. It is important to train personnel in preservation and protection techniques to prevent further damage to these sites.
- Lack of proper documentation: There is a lack of proper documentation of these heritage sites. Many artifacts found at these sites are not properly documented, which makes it difficult to track them if they are stolen or lost. This lack of documentation has led to the destruction and looting of many Buddhist heritage sites. It is important to properly document all artifacts found at these sites.
- Lack of proper conservation techniques: There is a lack of proper conservation techniques for these heritage sites. Many artifacts found at these sites are not properly conserved, which leads to their deterioration over time. This lack of conservation has led to the destruction and looting of many Buddhist heritage sites. It is important to use proper conservation techniques to preserve these artifacts.
- Lack of proper storage facilities: There is a lack of proper storage facilities for artifacts found at these heritage sites. Many artifacts are stored in inadequate conditions, which leads to their deterioration over time. This lack of storage facilities has led to the destruction and looting of many Buddhist heritage sites. It is important to provide proper storage facilities for all artifacts found at these sites.
- Lack of proper security measures: There is a lack of proper security measures at these heritage sites. Many sites are not properly secured, which makes them vulnerable to theft and vandalism. This lack of security measures has led to the destruction and looting of many Buddhist heritage sites. It is important to provide proper security measures for all heritage sites.

- **Lack of proper legislation:** There is a lack of proper legislation for the preservation and protection of these heritage sites. The current laws are inadequate in protecting these sites from destruction and looting. This lack of legislation has led to the destruction and looting of many Buddhist heritage sites. It is important to enact proper legislation for the preservation and protection of all heritage sites.

Following diagram is showing the frequency of issues and challenges to Buddhist heritage in Pakistan as per expert’s opinion.

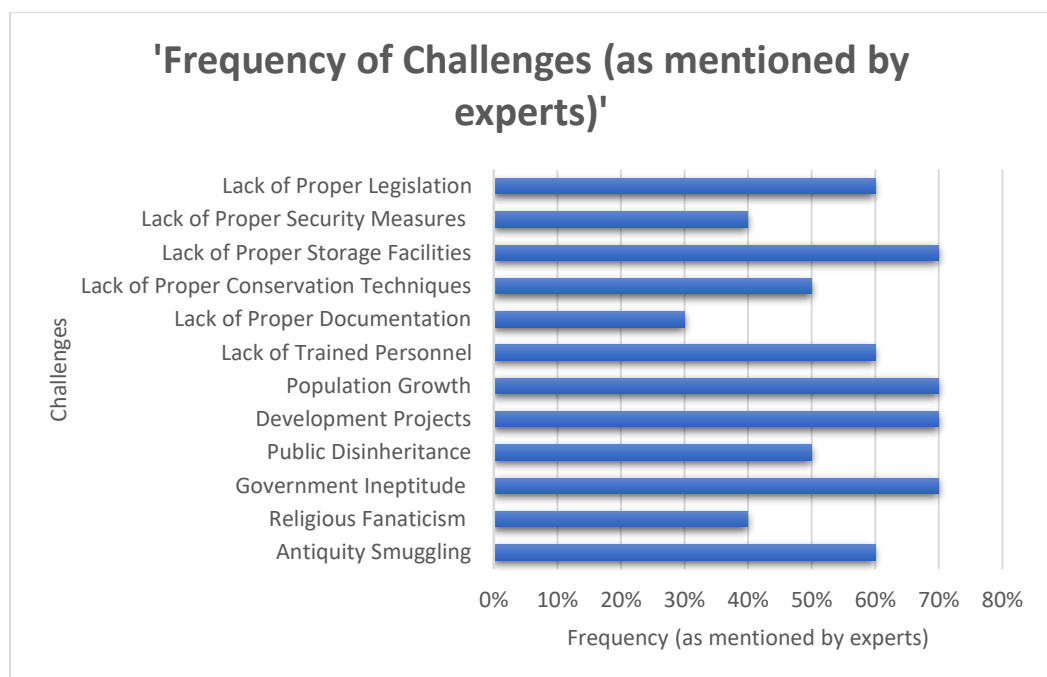


Figure. 2: Showing the frequency of of challenges to Buddhist heritage in Pakistan

3.8.Theme 3: Factors Contributing to Deterioration and Destruction of Buddhist Heritage

- **Iconoclasm and Religious Motives:** Certain extremist ideologies view religious images and symbols as heretical and engage in iconoclasm, destroying religious artifacts as part of their beliefs. This has led to the destruction of Buddhist heritage, including statues and images.
- **Media Influence:** Media coverage can sensationalize destruction and attempts at destruction, amplifying the impact of attacks. Biased or partial coverage may

not adequately highlight the role of communities in protecting heritage or religious teachings related to these assets.

- **Religious Dominance:** Radical groups have used attacks on heritage as a means to assert religious dominance over perceived oppressors or other religious communities. These incidents often carry messages of religious victory and dominancy.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Limited awareness or understanding of the cultural and historical significance of Buddhist heritage can contribute to its deterioration. Communities may not fully comprehend the importance of preserving these sites.
- **Urbanization and Development:** Rapid urbanization and development pressures can encroach upon heritage sites, leading to physical damage and alteration of the landscape. This is particularly relevant when urban expansion is prioritized over heritage preservation.
- **Resource Extraction:** Illegal digging and resource extraction for economic gain can result in irreversible damage to heritage sites. These activities often go unchecked and cause significant harm to the integrity of the sites.
- **Conflict-Induced Damage:** Conflicts, both local and regional, can lead to intentional destruction of heritage sites as collateral damage or due to ideological reasons. These incidents can result in the loss of valuable heritage resources.
- **Neglect and Inadequate Maintenance:** Lack of proper maintenance and neglect due to limited resources can contribute to the deterioration of Buddhist heritage. Without regular upkeep, structures and artifacts can deteriorate over time.

Following is a pivot table and diagram elaborating factors contributing to deterioration and destruction of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan.

Factors Contributing to Deterioration and Destruction of Buddhist Heritage	Average of Frequency (as mentioned by experts)
Lack of Awareness	80%
Neglect and Inadequate Maintenance	80%
Urbanization and Development	70%
Resource Extraction	50%
Media Influence	50%
Iconoclasm and Religious Motives	40%

Religious Dominance	40%
Conflict-Induced Damage	30%

Figure. 3: A pivot table showing the Factors Contributing to Deterioration and Destruction of Buddhist Heritage

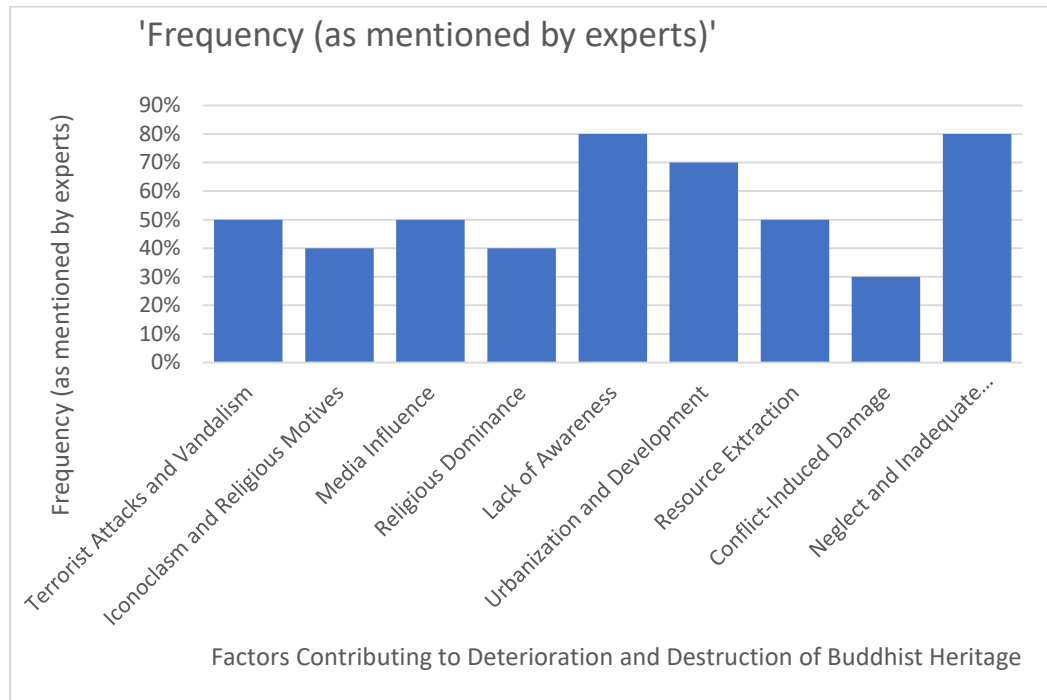


Figure 4: Showing the Factors Contributing to Deterioration and Destruction of Buddhist Heritage

3.9.Theme 4: Community Engagement and Local Perceptions

- **Cultural Pride and Identity:** Majority of local community does not feel pride to this heritage. It is the lack of the sense of belongingness with this heritage.
- **Educational Initiatives:** Educational programs and workshops that highlight the historical significance of Buddhist sites, their architectural marvels, and their contributions to art, philosophy, and trade, fostering a deeper understanding among locals are lacking.
- **Community Involvement:** Lack of engagement of local residents in preservation efforts, and encouragement to take pride in maintaining these heritage sites as communal assets, showcasing their responsibility as caretakers.

- **Interfaith Dialogue:** The respondents emphasized the shared historical and cultural ties between different faith communities, using Buddhist heritage as a platform for interfaith dialogue, understanding, and harmony.
- **Artistic Expression:** The respondents emphasized to encourage local artists to draw inspiration from Buddhist art and architecture, blending traditional elements with contemporary creations to reflect the evolving cultural landscape.
- **Collaborative Research:** The respondents suggested to collaborate with universities, research institutions, and heritage organizations to conduct archaeological studies, ensuring accurate documentation and preservation strategies.
- **Local Businesses:** The experts emphasized to facilitate partnerships between local businesses and heritage sites, creating sustainable enterprises like handicraft shops, cafes, and accommodations, benefiting the community economically.
- **Heritage Awareness Campaigns:** The respondents felt need to launch multimedia campaigns using digital platforms, local media, and community workshops to raise awareness about the importance of preserving Buddhist heritage and its relevance in modern times.

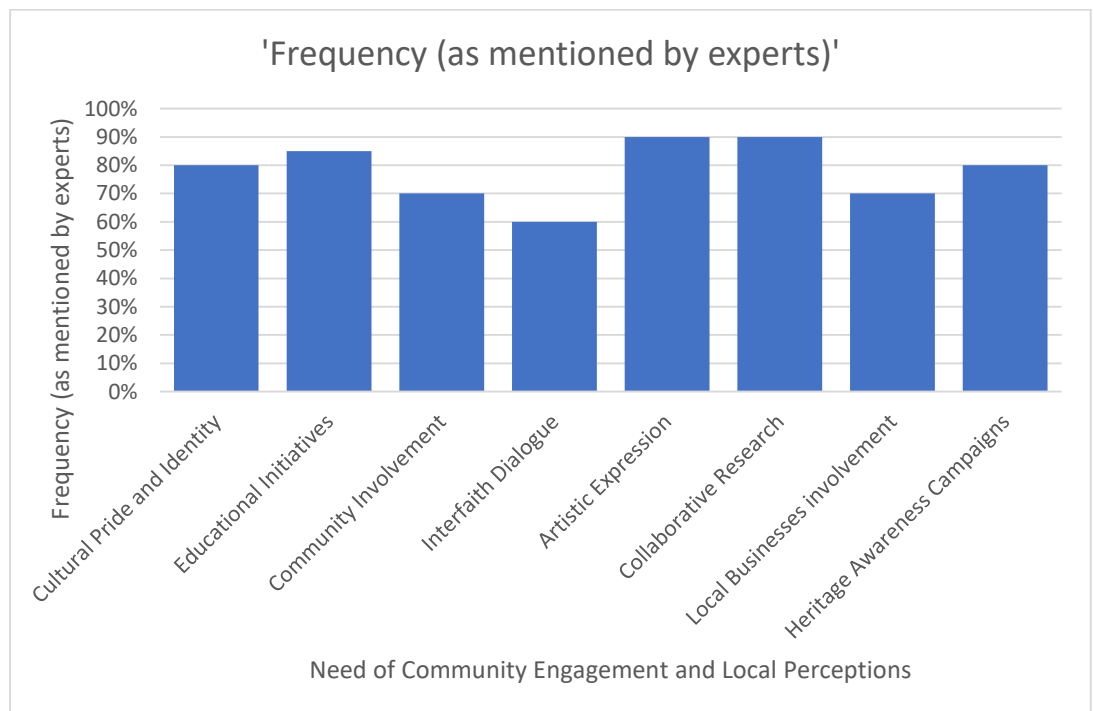


Figure 5: Need of community engagement and local perception for development of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan.

3.10. Takht-i-Bai Observation:

As I set foot on the hallowed grounds of Takht-i-Bahi, an archaeological site ensconced in the verdant landscapes of Mardan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, I embarked on a journey through time, history, and spirituality. This comprehensive report seeks to delve deeper into the intricate tapestry of this exceptional Buddhist monument, delving into its historical significance, architectural marvels, and the techniques to expound upon its splendor.



Figure 6: Panoramic view of Mardan Takht-i-Bahi Throne (Photo credit to Анастасия Смирнова)

Introduction:

The name "Takht-i-Bahi," translating to 'throne of the water spring' in Pashto and Urdu, evokes images of a site shrouded in mystique and history. This UNESCO World Heritage Site stands as a testament to the grandeur of ancient Buddhist architecture, showcasing an astonishingly well-preserved complex that once housed the spiritual pursuits of monks and scholars. Let us unravel the layers of this treasure trove, exploring its history, architecture, and techniques to enhance our understanding of its magnificence.

Historical Significance:

Takht-i-Bahi, founded in the 1st century CE, bore witness to centuries of Buddhist practice and learning. The site served as a flourishing monastic center, fostering intellectual discourse and meditation. The origin of its name remains uncertain, with local beliefs suggesting a connection to springs or wells atop the hill. This multifaceted etymology adds to the enigma surrounding the site's nomenclature, invoking intrigue as we step into its ancient embrace.

Architectural Splendor:

The architectural layout of Takht-i-Bahi is a testament to the mastery of its builders. The complex comprises four distinct areas, each with its unique significance:

Stupa Court: Nestled within a central courtyard, a cluster of stupas stands as symbols of reverence and devotion. These circular structures echo with the chants of the past, resonating through time.

Monastic Chambers: A contemplative atmosphere permeates the individual cells arranged around a central courtyard. Assembly halls and dining areas serve as reminders of the communal lifestyle monks led.

Temple Complex: Reflecting the evolution of architectural styles, this area houses stupas and structures akin to the Stupa Court but with distinctive features. It stands as a testament to the site's adaptability and development over time.

Tantric Monastic Complex: The dark cells of this complex evoke curiosity and contemplation, possibly utilized for specific Tantric practices. Their presence adds layers of mysticism to the site's narrative.

The entire complex is meticulously constructed using local stone, held together by lime and mud mortar, a manifestation of the architectural prowess of its era.

UNESCO World Heritage Site:

In 1980, Takht-i-Bahi was officially recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, underscoring its immense cultural and historical value. This accolade solidifies its place as a paramount relic of Buddhism's influence on the region and its architectural heritage.

My visit to Takht-i-Bahi was a journey through time, exploring the rich tapestry of Buddhism's influence on this region's architecture and culture. The well-preserved structures and serene surroundings offer a glimpse into the ancient way of life and spiritual pursuits. As I left the site, I carried with me a deeper appreciation for the enduring legacy of Buddhism and the remarkable craftsmanship of its followers.

3.11. Observation Report on Takht-i-Bahi: Challenges and Preservation

Efforts

Date: 2023-08-08

Takht-i-Bahi, an awe-inspiring Indo-Parthian archaeological site nestled in Mardan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, presents a magnificent window into the past. As I observed the sprawling complex, I couldn't help but notice that amidst its grandeur, there are numerous challenges and problems that threaten its preservation. This report aims to shed light on the issues faced by Takht-i-Bahi and the commendable efforts being undertaken to safeguard its legacy.

Challenges Faced:

Urban Encroachment While the location of Takht-i-Bahi on elevated hills has historically shielded it from invasions, modern-day urban expansion poses a significant threat. The neighboring city remains of Sahr-i-Bahlol are increasingly encroached upon by settlements that have grown directly over ancient ruins. This encroachment jeopardizes the integrity of the site and its surroundings.

Inadequate Boundaries: The boundaries established for the protected area are proving inadequate due to rampant urbanization. These expanding urban areas place additional

pressure on the already strained preservation efforts. This situation highlights the need for robust boundary management to safeguard the site's sanctity and integrity.

Vegetation Growth and Drainage Issues: Uncontrolled vegetation growth within the site is a significant factor contributing to its decay. Inadequate drainage exacerbates the problem, leading to deterioration of the structures. The lush growth, while visually appealing, is detrimental to the site's structural integrity.

Unauthorized Encroachment and Digging Unauthorized human and animal encroachment, coupled with illegal digging, poses a severe risk to the site. Such activities not only damage the structures but also disturb the historical context that helps scholars unravel the site's past significance.

Pollution and Environmental Degradation: Pollution from local factories and vehicular traffic adds to the challenges. The pollutants accelerate the deterioration of the site's structures, affecting their authenticity and longevity. This environmental stress compounds the preservation efforts.

Preservation Efforts:

Protection Under Ancient Preservation Act: Both the Buddhist Ruins of Takht-i-Bahi and the Neighbouring City Remains at Sahr-i-Bahlol were identified as protected monuments under the Ancient Preservation Act of 1904. This legal framework acknowledges the significance of these sites and aims to safeguard them from various threats.

Boundary Management: Efforts are being directed toward defining and maintaining adequate boundaries for the site's protection. Proper demarcation and boundary management would deter urban encroachment and offer a clear delineation of the protected area.

Vegetation Control and Drainage Enhancement: Addressing the issue of uncontrolled vegetation growth requires systematic vegetation control measures. Additionally, improving drainage systems within the site would mitigate water-related decay, contributing to the preservation of the structures.

Community Engagement and Education: Raising awareness about the historical and cultural significance of Takht-i-Bahi among local communities can foster a sense of

ownership and responsibility. Engaging the local populace in preservation efforts can deter unauthorized activities and encroachments.

Restoration and Documentation: Preserving the authenticity of the site involves restoration of damaged structures and careful documentation of findings. Skilled artisans trained in traditional techniques play a pivotal role in restoring the original form and design of the structures.

As I concluded my observation of Takht-i-Bahi, I realized that the challenges it faces are juxtaposed with the dedication and commitment of preservationists, scholars, and the local community. The site's exceptional historical and architectural value underscores the importance of collective efforts to ensure its longevity for generations to come. By acknowledging the problems and embracing the preservation strategies, Takht-i-Bahi can continue to stand as a testament to human history and ingenuity.

In light of the comprehensive findings derived from interviews and analysis, the challenges and preservation efforts surrounding Takht-i-Bahi paint a complex picture of the intersection between historical preservation and contemporary challenges. This archaeological marvel, nestled in Mardan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, stands as both a testament to ancient ingenuity and a battleground for the preservation of cultural heritage.

As the sun sets on the imposing remnants of the past, it becomes evident that the journey towards safeguarding Takht-i-Bahi is a multifaceted endeavor, intricately woven with the threads of history, culture, and modern realities. The themes that emerged from the interviews unveil the layers of challenges that threaten the site's existence, while also illuminating the resilience and determination of individuals and organizations dedicated to its preservation.

The first theme encapsulates the profound historical significance of Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. Takht-i-Bahi, as a representative of this legacy, holds the stories of a civilization that played a pivotal role in spreading Buddhism across the world. The recognition of this significance not only speaks to the reverence for the past but also underscores the need for its protection against the tide of time.

The second theme exposes the formidable challenges that stand in the way of preserving Takht-i-Bahi's legacy. From antiquity smugglers stripping the site of its treasures to

religious fanaticism leading to acts of destruction, these challenges pose a grave threat to the very essence of the site. Government inefficiency, urbanization, population growth, and the lack of trained personnel and proper resources compound the struggles in maintaining the site's integrity. The preservation of Takht-i-Bahi is entangled in a web of complexities that require a multi-pronged approach.

The third theme shines a light on the factors contributing to the deterioration and destruction of Buddhist heritage. Beyond the obvious physical elements, the interplay of historical conflict, neglect, and ideological tensions manifests in the degradation of these sites. The challenges are not only rooted in the present but also carry echoes of the past, adding layers of complexity to the preservation efforts.

The fourth and final theme introduces the critical role of community engagement and local perceptions in the preservation process. Acknowledging the cultural pride, educational initiatives, and economic opportunities tied to heritage, this theme underscores the significance of involving local communities in the preservation journey. By fostering a sense of ownership and appreciation, heritage sites can transform from mere relics of the past to living testimonies of the shared cultural fabric.

In conclusion, my observation of Takht-i-Bahi and the insights gleaned from interviews and analysis reinforce the delicate balance between preservation and challenges. As the echoes of history reverberate through the ages, it is the collective efforts of scholars, preservationists, communities, and policymakers that will shape the destiny of this site. Just as Takht-i-Bahi stands as a bridge between ancient wisdom and modern aspirations, its preservation is a bridge connecting the past and the future. It is a testament to human resilience and the enduring quest to honor the treasures of our shared heritage.

**4. CHAPTER NO. 4: PROSPECTUS BENEFITS OF BUDDHIST
HERITAGE FOR PAKISTAN**

Chapter No.4

PROSPECTUS BENEFITS OF BUDDHIST HERITAGE FOR PAKISTAN

Introduction:

Pakistan has a long history, and part of that history is deeply connected to Buddhism, a peaceful and ancient religion. In this chapter, we'll explore how Pakistan benefits from its Buddhist past. It's like discovering hidden treasures that can help the country in many ways today.

Imagine Pakistan as a beautiful tapestry woven with different threads, and one of those threads is Buddhism. This thread has been there for over 2,000 years, leaving behind important things like old temples and statues. These remind us of how Buddhism once thrived here and left a lasting impact.

In this chapter, we'll look at three important ways Buddhism still helps Pakistan today: socially, in terms of religion, and in politics. It's like seeing how pieces of the past continue to shape the present. This is a story that's sometimes overlooked because Pakistan is mostly known for its Islamic heritage. But it's crucial to understand how Buddhism also played a big role in shaping the country. As we explore this chapter, we want to show you how these ancient remains are more than just history; they're part of Pakistan's identity, culture, and even politics.

We'll show you how preserving and promoting these historical treasures can bring many benefits. From attracting tourists and improving international relationships to helping different religious groups get along and understand each other better, Pakistan's Buddhist heritage is like a bridge to unity, culture, and progress.

As we go deeper into this chapter, we'll break down the stories, actions taken today, and future possibilities that make Pakistan's Buddhist heritage a valuable and active part of the country's growth. It's a story of how the past keeps influencing the present and how history can make people's lives better in Pakistan.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Pakistan can use this heritage in terms of preservation of cultural identity. This heritage can create and boost the sense of belongingness to this land among its

inhabitants. Moreover, Pakistan can boost the tourism and local economy with the help of this heritage.

4.1.1. Preservation of Cultural Identity: Social Benefits of Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan

Cultural identity is a fundamental aspect of human societies, shaping the way individuals perceive themselves and their connection to their communities and nations. In Pakistan, the rich Buddhist heritage holds a special place in the hearts of people, serving as a testament to the country's historical, cultural, and social roots. This essay delves into the profound social benefits of preserving Pakistan's Buddhist heritage, exploring how these heritage sites contribute to the preservation of cultural identity. It highlights the historical significance of these sites, their deep connection to the cultural identity of local communities, and the pivotal role they play in fostering a sense of pride and belonging among the people.¹¹⁵

4.1.1.1. Historical Significance of Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan

Buddhist heritage in Pakistan, dating back thousands of years, offer a tangible link to the past and provide insight into the cultural, artistic, and intellectual achievements of bygone eras. It can also describes the artistic and architectural achievemnets of its era.

4.1.1.1.1. Guardians of Ancient History

Buddhist heritage sites scattered across Pakistan stand as guardians of the nation's ancient history. These sites, dating back thousands of years, offer a tangible link to the past and provide insight into the cultural, artistic, and intellectual achievements of bygone eras. The historical significance of these sites goes beyond their physical structures; they embody the narratives of civilizations that flourished in the region, allowing people to connect with their ancestral heritage.

4.1.1.1.2. Cultural Time Capsules

The Buddhist heritage sites, such as those in the Gandhara region, serve as cultural time capsules that encapsulate the artistic and architectural achievements of their time. These sites showcase the fusion of various cultural influences, symbolizing the region's ability to embrace diversity and foster cross-cultural exchanges. By preserving these cultural

¹¹⁵ Rizvi, Uzma Z. "Community engagement in archaeology and heritage in Pakistan." *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* 9, no. 1 (2022): 1-8.

time capsules, Pakistan ensures that future generations can learn about their roots, fostering a sense of continuity and identity.

4.1.1.1.3. Continuity Amidst Change

In a rapidly changing world, where cultural landscapes are constantly evolving, the preservation of Buddhist heritage provides a sense of continuity and stability. These sites stand as constants in a world of flux, offering a point of reference for individuals to anchor their cultural identities. This continuity fosters a feeling of connection to previous generations and cultivates a sense of cultural pride that transcends the passage of time.¹¹⁶

4.1.1.2. Connection to the Cultural Identity of Local Communities

4.1.1.2.1. Living Heritage

Buddhist heritage sites are not static relics of the past; they are living heritage that plays a vibrant role in the lives of local communities. For many individuals residing near these sites, the heritage is an integral part of their cultural and social identity. It influences their rituals, traditions, and ways of life, forming a direct link to their ancestors and their historical journey. This connection to living heritage strengthens the sense of belonging within these communities.

4.1.1.2.2. Community Identity and Interaction

Buddhist heritage sites often serve as focal points for community interaction, cultural events, and religious practices. Local communities gather at these sites for celebrations, festivals, and ceremonies, reinforcing a collective identity that transcends individual differences. The shared experience of these events enhances social cohesion and highlights the importance of these sites as spaces for the expression and reinforcement of cultural identity.

4.1.1.2.3. Transgenerational Knowledge Transmission

¹¹⁶ ibid

The preservation of Buddhist heritage provides an opportunity for the transgenerational transmission of cultural knowledge. Elders within local communities pass down stories, legends, and traditions associated with these sites, enabling younger generations to connect with their cultural heritage on a deeper level. This knowledge transmission fosters a sense of cultural pride and awareness, nurturing a stronger bond between generations and their shared history.

4.1.1.3. Role in Fostering a Sense of Pride and Belonging

4.1.1.3.1. Symbol of Cultural Resilience

Buddhist heritage sites embody cultural resilience in the face of historical challenges and changes. The survival of these sites through various periods of turmoil and transformation serves as an enduring testament to the strength of the cultural identity they represent. People take pride in these symbols of resilience, recognizing their own ability to preserve their cultural heritage despite external pressures.

4.1.1.3.2. Source of Local Pride

Buddhist heritage sites evoke a sense of local pride within communities that are home to these historical treasures. The presence of these sites amplifies community self-esteem, as residents take pride in their roles as custodians of cultural legacy. This local pride extends beyond the immediate vicinity of the sites, contributing to a sense of collective ownership and responsibility for Pakistan's cultural heritage.

4.1.1.3.3. Empowerment and Inclusion

The preservation of Buddhist heritage contributes to social empowerment and inclusion by providing opportunities for marginalized communities to participate in cultural activities and heritage preservation efforts. As local communities engage in site management, restoration projects, and cultural events, they gain a stronger sense of agency and ownership in shaping their cultural narratives. This empowerment fosters a feeling of inclusivity and social cohesion.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Tasneem, Somia, Maheen Khawar, and Rabia Hayat. "Cultural Tourism in Pakistan: Prospects and Challenges." *Pakistan Vision* 23, no. 2 (2022).

4.1.2. Boost to Tourism and Local Economy:

Cultural heritage has the power to attract visitors from near and far, contributing to economic growth, local development, and community well-being. In Pakistan, the rich Buddhist heritage spread across the country holds immense potential to bolster tourism and stimulate the local economy. This essay explores the social benefits of preserving Pakistan's Buddhist heritage, focusing on how these heritage sites attract domestic and international tourists, generate economic impact for local communities and businesses, and contribute to job creation and income generation.¹¹⁸

4.1.2.1. Attracting Domestic and International Tourists

4.1.2.1.1. Cultural Tourism Potential

Pakistan's Buddhist heritage sites offer a unique blend of historical, artistic, and spiritual experiences that attract both domestic and international tourists. These sites hold significance for Buddhists as well as travelers interested in history, art, and cultural exploration. The allure of experiencing ancient stupas, monasteries, and sculptures, combined with the mystique of historical narratives, creates a compelling draw for visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences.¹¹⁹

4.1.2.1.2. Showcasing Global Heritage

Buddhist heritage sites in Pakistan, particularly those in the Gandhara region, resonate with people worldwide due to their global historical significance. These sites have a cross-cultural appeal, attracting tourists from countries with Buddhist traditions as well as those interested in exploring ancient civilizations. The recognition of Pakistan's cultural diversity and historical contributions through its Buddhist heritage fosters a sense of curiosity and exploration among international visitors.¹²⁰

4.1.2.1.3. Pilgrimage Tourism

Buddhist heritage sites are revered pilgrimage destinations for Buddhists around the world. Pilgrims visit these sites to pay their respects, seek spiritual enlightenment, and connect with their religious heritage. The influx of pilgrims not only contributes to the

¹¹⁸ *ibid*

¹¹⁹ *ibid*

¹²⁰ Rizvi, Uzma Z. "Community engagement in archaeology and heritage in Pakistan." *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage* 9, no. 1 (2022): 1-8.

vibrancy of these sites but also generates economic opportunities for local communities that provide services such as accommodations, food, and guided tours.¹²¹

4.1.2.2. Economic Impact on Local Communities and Businesses

4.1.2.2.1. Stimulating Local Economies

The influx of tourists to Buddhist heritage sites brings direct economic benefits to local communities. Visitors spend money on accommodations, meals, transportation, souvenirs, and other goods and services, injecting funds directly into the local economy. This economic circulation enhances the livelihoods of residents and creates a positive ripple effect across various sectors.¹²²

4.1.2.2.2. Diversifying Income Sources

Communities near heritage sites often have limited economic opportunities. The development of tourism infrastructure and services diversifies income sources, reducing dependency on traditional occupations. This diversification not only improves local economic resilience but also encourages creativity and entrepreneurship as individuals tap into the tourism industry to provide unique experiences and products.¹²³

4.1.2.2.3. Ancillary Services and Businesses

The growth of tourism around Buddhist heritage sites fosters the emergence of ancillary businesses that cater to tourists' needs. These include handicrafts, souvenir shops, eateries, transportation services, and guided tours. The establishment and expansion of such businesses generate additional employment opportunities for local residents, further boosting the local economy.

4.1.2.3. Job Creation and Income Generation

4.1.2.3.1. Employment Opportunities

Tourism-related activities and services create diverse employment opportunities for individuals with varying skill sets. From hotel staff and tour guides to artisans and drivers, a range of roles emerge to support the needs of tourists. The job opportunities

¹²¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/470979/buddhists-heritage-in-pakistan> accessed on 1, August, 2023.

¹²² Kaleem, Inayat, Minhas Majeed Khan, and Ms Areeja Syed. "Religious Tourism: A key sector for Pakistan's Socio-Economic Growth." *Peshawar Islamicus* 11, no. 2 (2020): 1-10.

¹²³ Kaleem, Inayat, Minhas Majeed Khan, and Ms Areeja Syed. "Religious Tourism: A key sector for Pakistan's Socio-Economic Growth." *Peshawar Islamicus* 11, no. 2 (2020): 1-10.

generated by tourism can be particularly beneficial for marginalized populations, women, and youth, providing avenues for skill development and income generation.

4.1.2.3.2. Skill Enhancement and Training

As local communities engage with the tourism industry, they often acquire new skills and knowledge to meet visitors' demands. Training programs for guides, artisans, and hospitality staff not only improve service quality but also enhance the employability of individuals. These skills are transferable, offering opportunities for future employment and economic mobility.

4.1.2.3.3. Sustainable Income Streams

Tourism centered around Buddhist heritage sites provides a reliable and sustainable source of income for local communities. Unlike some industries that experience seasonal fluctuations, cultural tourism can attract visitors year-round, ensuring a consistent flow of revenue. This stability contributes to the economic well-being of local residents and reduces vulnerability to economic shocks.

4.2. RELIGIOUS BENEFITS

Pakistan can get spiritual benefits from Buddhist heritage by promoting religious pilgrimage to these sites. This heritage can also be used to promote interfaith dialogue and religious harmony.

4.2.1. Spiritual Significance and Pilgrimage:

Religious heritage holds a profound significance for individuals and communities, serving as a bridge between the past and the present, and offering spiritual insights that transcend time. In Pakistan, the Buddhist heritage sites carry not only historical and cultural value but also religious significance for various communities. This essay explores the religious benefits of preserving Pakistan's Buddhist heritage, with a focus on the spiritual significance of these sites as places of modern-day pilgrimage and religious practices. It also highlights the contemporary potential for interreligious dialogue that these sites offer and examines the lessons from the past that can be applied to promote religious harmony today.

4.2.1.1. Modern-Day Pilgrimage and Religious Practices

4.2.1.1.1. Resurgence of Pilgrimage

Buddhist heritage sites in Pakistan hold spiritual significance for Buddhists around the world who consider these sites as places of pilgrimage. Pilgrims visit these locations to connect with their faith, pay homage to historical figures, and seek spiritual enlightenment. The resurgence of pilgrimage to these sites reflects a modern-day quest for spiritual connection and understanding that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries.

4.2.1.1.2. Shared Spaces for Different Faiths

In addition to Buddhist pilgrims, the heritage sites also attract visitors from other religious backgrounds. These sites have the potential to become shared spaces where individuals from various faiths can engage in contemplation, reflection, and reverence. The coexistence of diverse groups at these sites fosters an environment of interfaith understanding and mutual respect, promoting a sense of unity beyond religious differences.

4.2.1.1.3. Fostering Personal Growth

The spiritual significance of Buddhist heritage sites lies not only in their historical importance but also in their capacity to inspire personal growth and transformation. These sites provide an opportunity for individuals to reflect on the impermanence of life, the interconnectedness of all beings, and the pursuit of inner peace. The lessons derived from these reflections contribute to the spiritual well-being of individuals and, by extension, to the harmony of communities.

4.2.1.2. Contemporary Potential for Interreligious Dialogue

4.2.1.2.1. Interfaith Exchange

The presence of Buddhist heritage sites offers a platform for interreligious dialogue and exchange. Such sites provide opportunities for followers of different faiths to engage in conversations about their spiritual beliefs, practices, and values. These interactions foster mutual understanding and break down stereotypes, contributing to the promotion of harmony and cooperation among diverse religious communities.¹²⁴

4.2.1.2.2. Common Ethical Values

¹²⁴ Spivak, Dimitri. "Dialogue and Heritage in the Cultural Strategy of unesco: A Brief Overview." *Culture and Dialogue* 5, no. 2 (2017): 242-252.

Buddhist teachings often emphasize ethical values such as compassion, tolerance, and non-violence, which are shared by many world religions. The promotion of these common ethical values through the exploration of Buddhist heritage sites can serve as a unifying force among religious communities. By highlighting the intersections of these values, these sites become catalysts for building bridges of understanding among people of different faiths.

4.2.1.2.3. Cultural Diplomacy for Interfaith Harmony

The cultural diplomacy potential of Buddhist heritage sites can be harnessed to foster interfaith harmony. Pakistan can organize international seminars, conferences, and cultural events centered around these sites, inviting religious leaders, scholars, and practitioners from various faiths to participate. These events provide a neutral space for open dialogue, enabling participants to explore shared spiritual values and discuss ways to promote peace and harmony.¹²⁵

4.2.1.3. Contemporary Potential for Interreligious Dialogue

4.2.1.3.1. Building Bridges of Understanding

The Buddhist heritage sites in Pakistan provide a contemporary platform for interreligious dialogue between Buddhists and Muslims, as well as individuals from various faiths. These sites offer spaces for reflection and exploration, where people can engage in discussions about spirituality, ethics, and shared values. By participating in these dialogues, individuals can build bridges of understanding that transcend religious divides.¹²⁶

4.2.1.3.2. Common Themes in Wisdom

Buddhist teachings and Islamic principles share common ethical values, such as compassion, justice, and humility. The exploration of these shared themes within the context of Buddhist heritage sites can serve as a catalyst for interfaith dialogue. By recognizing the similarities in their respective traditions, individuals from different religious backgrounds can find common ground for meaningful conversations.¹²⁷

4.2.1.3.3. Promoting Religious Harmony

¹²⁵ *ibid*

¹²⁶ Abe, Masao. *Buddhism and interfaith dialogue*. Vol. 1. University of Hawaii Press, 1995.

¹²⁷ *ibid*

The preservation and promotion of Buddhist heritage sites can be part of a broader strategy to promote religious harmony in Pakistan. These sites can be used as platforms for seminars, workshops, and conferences that bring together religious leaders, scholars, and practitioners from different faiths. By facilitating open and respectful discussions, these events contribute to fostering a culture of mutual respect and acceptance.¹²⁸

4.3. POLITICAL BENEFITS¹²⁹

Political benefits of Buddhist heritage includes diplomatic and soft power opportunities, National unity and identity, cultural diplomacy and bilateral relations.

4.3.1. Diplomatic and Soft Power Opportunities

The multifaceted dimensions of Pakistan's historical and cultural heritage offer a plethora of untapped possibilities, transcending time and borders. Among these diverse facets, the legacy of Buddhism emerges as a potent source of wisdom, connection, and soft power. This article delves into the strategic potential of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage to augment international diplomacy, elevate the nation's global standing, and foster cultural diplomacy, thereby fortifying international relations.

4.3.1.1.Utilizing Heritage for International Diplomacy

The profound historical lineage of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage provides a unique diplomatic avenue that reaches beyond the confines of contemporary geopolitics. By capitalizing on this heritage, Pakistan can cultivate deeper relationships with countries sharing historical or religious affinities with Buddhism. The groundwork for cooperation can be laid through bilateral agreements and collaborative projects in fields like archaeological research, conservation, and cultural exchange. The cultural tapestry woven into Buddhist sites like Taxila and Takht-i-Bahi can serve as a conduit for interpersonal engagements and diplomatic interactions, facilitating meaningful dialogues and forging lasting connections.

4.3.1.2.Enhancement of Pakistan's Global Image

¹²⁸ ibid

¹²⁹ The data on Political benefits has been collected from interviews to various experts

The concept of soft power, embodying a nation's ability to influence through culture and values, is intrinsically tied to its international image. Pakistan's Buddhist heritage harbors the potential to recalibrate this image by spotlighting the nation's cultural depth and historical significance. By actively championing and safeguarding these sites, Pakistan can underscore its commitment to preserving its heritage, projecting an image of a nation that values its past and is open to cultural exchanges. This endeavor can counter misconceptions, generate positive narratives, and contribute to a more nuanced global perception of Pakistan.

4.3.1.3. Cultural Diplomacy and Fostering International Relations

Cultural diplomacy, a formidable tool in the realm of international relations, finds a natural ally in the form of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage. Cultural events, exhibitions, and festivals anchored around these heritage sites can operate as diplomatic platforms, congregating diplomats, scholars, artists, and journalists from around the world. These gatherings provide a fertile ground for cross-cultural dialogue, where shared appreciation for the historical, artistic, and spiritual facets of Buddhist heritage can transcend political divergences. By nurturing an environment of understanding and collaboration, cultural diplomacy rooted in Pakistan's Buddhist legacy can cultivate bonds that transcend national boundaries.

Cultural diplomacy has demonstrated its efficacy in fostering trust and cooperation among nations. The resonance of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage goes beyond the realms of academia, resonating universally due to its messages of peace, tolerance, and harmony. The very essence of Buddhism encapsulates values that traverse cultural nuances, transforming it into a bridge uniting individuals from disparate backgrounds. By channeling these values through cultural diplomacy initiatives, Pakistan can create a platform where nations partake in meaningful dialogues, steering towards shared objectives.

The diplomatic and soft power potential embedded within Pakistan's Buddhist heritage is a latent resource awaiting recognition. By strategically integrating this heritage into international diplomacy, Pakistan can tap into deep-seated historical bonds with other nations, promoting dialogue and collaboration. Moreover, the utilization of this heritage can magnify Pakistan's global identity, painting a portrait of a nation dedicated to preserving cultural heritage and engaging on a global stage. Through cultural

diplomacy initiatives, Pakistan can cultivate channels for international interaction, breaking free from political constraints and encouraging harmonious relationships built upon common values. In an interconnected world, Pakistan's Buddhist heritage becomes a reminder that cultural legacies have the potential to shape diplomatic narratives and foster connections that endure across borders.

4.3.2. National Unity and Identity

Within the intricate tapestry of Pakistan's cultural mosaic, the legacy of Buddhism emerges as a unifying force, weaving threads of common history that transcend ethnic and regional divisions. This exploration delves into the vital role of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage in nurturing national unity and identity, forging connections among diverse groups, and mitigating potential regional and ethnic tensions. Through contributing to a shared historical narrative, fostering a sense of collective heritage, and offering a common historical backdrop, the Buddhist heritage plays a pivotal role in cementing Pakistan's unified identity.

4.3.2.1. Contribution of Buddhist Heritage to National Unity

Pakistan's Buddhist heritage serves as a powerful bridge, linking individuals of various backgrounds with a common historical legacy. It offers a touchstone that resonates beyond cultural and linguistic disparities, connecting people across geographical divides. By sharing reverence for ancient sites such as Taxila and Takht-i-Bahi, Pakistanis recognize a shared historical foundation that predates modern borders. This recognition kindles a sense of belonging to a larger entity, nurturing a collective identity that bridges ethnic and regional disparities.

4.3.2.2. Creating a Sense of Shared History Among Diverse Groups

The significance of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage extends beyond historical artifacts; it shapes a sense of shared history that transcends surface-level differences among diverse ethnic and regional groups. By acknowledging these heritage sites as integral to the nation's narrative, Pakistan celebrates its vibrant multiethnic diversity while simultaneously embracing a united national identity. This acknowledgment and celebration of a shared past foster camaraderie and inclusivity, echoing a common purpose and destiny that binds citizens together.

4.3.2.3. Mitigation of Regional and Ethnic Tensions

The historical resonance of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage reaches far and wide, presenting an opportunity to alleviate tensions and disputes that could otherwise arise from localized identities. As this heritage finds recognition, it offers a common thread that can help mitigate ethnic and regional tensions. By embracing a narrative that transcends geographical affiliations, Pakistan's heritage redirects focus from potential divisive issues towards a shared historical tapestry that encourages collaboration instead of confrontation.

In times of heightened ethnic and regional discord, the unifying power of cultural heritage takes on heightened importance. By acknowledging and harnessing the significance of Pakistan's Buddhist legacy, the nation can shift the spotlight away from divisive factors, placing greater emphasis on a shared history that binds its people. This shift in perspective nurtures a collective consciousness that prioritizes national identity over regional differences, reminding citizens that their diversity is a strength, not a source of division.

The preservation and celebration of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage is more than an act of cultural appreciation; it is a deliberate political strategy that taps into the potential for national unity. In embracing this legacy, Pakistan asserts that its diversity contributes to a rich national fabric, rather than a collection of disparate parts. By recognizing the historical significance of its Buddhist sites, Pakistan affirms a common history that unites individuals and communities, transcending regional affiliations and fostering a spirit of collaboration.

The political benefits of Pakistan's Buddhist heritage extend well beyond its aesthetic or historical value. This heritage serves as a potent tool in nurturing national unity, fostering shared identity, and easing regional tensions. It reinforces the idea that all citizens, regardless of ethnic or regional background, share a historical narrative that forms the bedrock of the nation. As Pakistan continues its journey of evolution, the acknowledgement and celebration of its Buddhist heritage can contribute significantly to building a harmonious, united nation that cherishes its diversity while embracing a common identity.

4.3.3. Cultural Diplomacy and Bilateral Relations

Cultural heritage possesses a unique ability to transcend political boundaries and foster connections among nations. Pakistan's rich Buddhist heritage, with its historical

significance and global appeal, holds immense potential to enhance the country's diplomatic relations through cultural diplomacy. This essay explores how Pakistan can capitalize on its Buddhist heritage to strengthen bilateral relations, collaborate with other countries for heritage preservation, and demonstrate the positive outcomes of such efforts through case studies. Additionally, it discusses how leveraging this heritage can foster international cooperation and understanding, thereby reaping political benefits for the nation.

4.3.3.1. Collaboration with Other Countries on Heritage Preservation

4.3.3.1.1. Shared Cultural Responsibility

Buddhist heritage sites in Pakistan are not only of national significance but also hold global importance. Many countries, including those with historical ties to Buddhism, share an interest in preserving these sites for their cultural and religious value. Collaborative efforts toward heritage preservation can strengthen Pakistan's diplomatic relations with these nations, as a shared cultural responsibility can create bonds that transcend political differences. Collaborative projects could include joint research initiatives, conservation efforts, and exchange programs involving experts and scholars from multiple countries.

4.3.3.1.2. Case Studies Demonstrating Positive Diplomatic Outcomes

Several case studies highlight how collaboration on heritage preservation has led to positive diplomatic outcomes for Pakistan. For instance, the joint efforts between Pakistan and Sri Lanka to preserve the ancient city of Taxila have not only enhanced cultural ties but also paved the way for strengthened economic and political relations. Similarly, collaborations with countries like China, Japan, and South Korea, which have significant Buddhist populations, can be mutually beneficial. These collaborations have resulted in increased tourism, cultural exchanges, and diplomatic interactions, showcasing the potential of heritage preservation to enhance bilateral relations.

4.3.3.1.3. Leveraging Heritage for International Cooperation and Understanding

Leveraging Buddhist heritage for international cooperation goes beyond preserving physical sites; it also involves promoting cultural understanding and intercultural dialogue. By hosting international seminars, workshops, and conferences on Buddhist

history, art, and philosophy, Pakistan can provide a platform for experts from various countries to engage in meaningful discussions. These interactions can foster mutual respect, understanding, and collaborative problem-solving, thereby enhancing diplomatic ties and contributing to peaceful international relations.

4.3.3.2. Case Studies Demonstrating Positive Diplomatic Outcomes

4.3.3.2.1. Pakistan-Sri Lanka Collaboration on Taxila Preservation

The collaboration between Pakistan and Sri Lanka for the preservation of Taxila has yielded positive diplomatic outcomes. This joint effort not only showcases the commitment of both nations to cultural heritage but also strengthens their bilateral relations. Through mutual cooperation, both countries have exchanged expertise, resources, and knowledge in heritage preservation. This collaboration has facilitated cultural exchanges, educational initiatives, and people-to-people interactions, resulting in a more robust diplomatic relationship.

4.3.3.2.2. China-Pakistan Collaboration on Buddhist Heritage

China and Pakistan's collaboration on preserving Buddhist heritage, especially through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), exemplifies the potential for positive diplomatic outcomes. The establishment of Buddhist heritage corridors and the promotion of pilgrimage tourism have not only deepened cultural ties but have also contributed to economic development and increased people-to-people contact. This collaboration showcases how heritage preservation can be intertwined with broader economic and diplomatic goals.

4.3.3.2.3. Regional Cooperation: Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan

The Buddhist heritage that spans Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan provides an opportunity for regional cooperation and dialogue. Collaborative efforts to preserve and promote shared heritage sites, such as the Gandhara region, can foster dialogue among these nations. Such dialogue can transcend political tensions and contribute to improved relations, demonstrating how cultural diplomacy can be a stepping stone toward resolving regional disputes.

4.3.3.3. Leveraging Heritage for International Cooperation and Understanding

4.3.3.3.1. Cross-Cultural Dialogue and Understanding

International seminars and conferences focused on Buddhist heritage can bring together scholars, experts, and enthusiasts from various countries. These platforms provide opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue and mutual learning. By highlighting the shared history and values represented by Buddhist heritage, Pakistan can promote a sense of shared humanity, which is fundamental for international cooperation and understanding.

4.3.3.3.2. Soft Power Projection

Leveraging Buddhist heritage as a tool of soft power projection allows Pakistan to present itself as a country deeply rooted in history and culture. By promoting cultural heritage through exhibitions, art shows, and cultural festivals, Pakistan can capture global attention and admiration. This positive image can, in turn, enhance its diplomatic standing and create an environment conducive to building strong international relations.

4.3.3.3.3. Cultural Exchanges and Tourism

The promotion of tourism around Buddhist heritage sites can create opportunities for cultural exchanges and interactions between people from diverse backgrounds. Tourists from different countries visiting these sites can engage with local communities, experience the rich cultural tapestry, and foster personal connections. Such interactions contribute to building bridges of understanding and goodwill among nations.

In conclusion, Pakistan's Buddhist heritage holds immense potential for enhancing its diplomatic relations through cultural diplomacy. Collaborative efforts with other countries on heritage preservation, as demonstrated by case studies, showcase the positive outcomes of such initiatives. Furthermore, leveraging this heritage for international cooperation and understanding can strengthen Pakistan's position in the global arena and contribute to a more peaceful and interconnected world.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The look at the study of exploration of the Buddhist history in Pakistan and its protection, along an examination of the Islamic attitude on religious heritage. The outcomes provided a wealthy tapestry of historic, cultural, religious, and political dimensions, revealing the complicated interplay among heritage and the broader societal context. The findings underscore the profound importance of spiritual heritage as a unifying pressure that transcends time, connecting groups, fostering expertise, and shaping identities.

- Buddhism spread in Pakistan via the endeavors of clergymen, buyers, and rulers, with the aid of change routes such as the Silk Road, highlighted the interconnectedness of cultural alternate and spirituality.
- The prominence of the Gandhara location and the illustrious figures who play vital role in spread of Buddhism, like Nagarjuna and the ancient Buddhist university in Taxila, showcased the profound effect of the philosophy on art, ethics, and schooling.
- Islam is a religion with its rich heritage.
- It respects other religions and allows them to worship according to their rituals.
- Quran, Sunna,h and Islamic history is full of examples of protection of minorities' religious and worship places.
- Muslim rulers had allowed others to freely worship according to their religion in an Islamic state.
- The Buddhist heritage in Pakistan is in good condition but still need to take more steps to protect this heritage.
- Pakistan can get social benefits in terms of education, job creation, and fostering the sense of belonging to this heritage.
- Pakistan can use this heritage to promote interfaith dialogue, peace and harmony.
- Moreover, Pakistan can use this heritage as cultural diplomacy, and to promote its soft image to the world.

Recommendations

- Researchers must collaborate throughout disciplines which includes records, archaeology, anthropology, sociology, and non secular research to gain a holistic understanding of spiritual historical past's effect on society.
- Employ advanced digital documentation strategies like 3-d scanning and virtual reality to create accurate and reachable facts of background sites. This aids in studies, training, and preservation.
- Undertake comparative research with other areas to identify successful maintenance techniques, permitting the edition of quality practices to the specific context of Buddhist historical past in Pakistan.
- Government organizations should allocate committed price range for the maintenance of spiritual historical past sites, ensuring that they're safely maintained, protected, and promoted.
- Enact and implement strong history maintenance legal guidelines that penalize antiquity smuggling, vandalism, and harm to background sites. Include provisions for community involvement in heritage control.
- Foster partnerships with personal corporations for the sustainable development of tourism infrastructure round history websites. This collaboration can generate revenue for protection whilst respecting historical past integrity.
- Establish diplomatic tasks that leverage non secular historical past to decorate international family members. Collaborate with countries sharing ancient or spiritual ties to promote cultural exchange and cooperation..
- Local groups must actively interact within the preservation of heritage websites, contributing to their protection, protection, and merchandising as part of their shared cultural identity.
- Individuals can support background conservation through donations to NGOs, collaborating in volunteer activities, or advocating for background renovation in public forums.

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Ref. No. ML-1-6/2023/IT&C -

Date: 24-07-2023

Subject: Request for Assistance and Support for an Academic Research on Buddhist Heritage Preservation in Pakistan.

1. I, hereby certify that Mr. Muhammad Abu Bakar, son of Muhammad Bashir, possessing Registration No: NUML-F21-29926 and CNIC 34302-4554723-7, is currently enrolled as an M. Phil student in the Department of Islamic Thought and Culture at the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.
2. Mr. Muhammad Abu Bakar is diligently pursuing his academic endeavors, and he is currently working on his thesis titled "Islam and Protection of Religious Heritage: A Case Study of Buddhist Relics in Pakistan" under my supervision and guidance. As part of his research, one of the chapters in his thesis focuses on "Issues and Challenges to Buddhist Heritage in Pakistan."
3. To ensure the quality and authenticity of his research, Mr. Abu Bakar aims to conduct interviews with experts in the field. Therefore, I kindly request your assistance in facilitating and supporting him during this crucial phase of his research. Your valuable insights and contributions will undoubtedly enrich the scholarly work and contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the area of religious heritage preservation in Pakistan.
4. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Your cooperation is highly appreciated, and your involvement in fostering academic research is commendable.

Sincerely,

Dr. Riaz Ahmad Saeed

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Dept. of Islamic Thought & Culture
NUML, Islamabad
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Registrar
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Islamabad

Jul 24, 2023