CHAH MIRAN LAHORE: LAND OF HAZRAT MIRAN HUSSAIN ZANJANI

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ABSTRACT

Historic walled cities are recognized with its context and urban environment and old cities are associated with specific places, personalities and events, identifying their architectural values and rituals. The core objective of this research is the identification and protection of historic areas outside the city walls maintaining the legitimacy of historic environment. One of the remarkable example is historic city of Lahore with its neighborhood districts. Various type of observatory surveys has been conducted to visualize the impacts of urbanization on the historic environment of the selected case study "Chah Miran" which was populated due to a saint Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani and is termed as Land of Miran. Selected area is one of the oldest neighborhood districts of Mughal Lahore and the most significant landmarks are "Khui Miran" and "Shrine of Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani". Rapid urbanization changed the historic urban landscape and provision of modern needs created jumble of shops due to the increasing commercial activities. There is a need to identify and conserve the historic core of Lahore.

Keywords: Urban activities, Neighborhood districts, Historic environment, Chah Miran, Miran Hussain Zanjani.

INTRODUCTION

Walled city Lahore is situated on the trade route between Kabul, Kashmir and Delhi, at a distance of two miles from river Ravi and it was urbanized in 1000 CE and a mud fortification was constructed around the city during the medieval period. The city got its climax when Emperor Akber declared Lahore as Capital of the Mughal Empire and a fort was constructed for the royal family. Urban hierarchy of the city was determined by the Guzars or main spines. These guzars define not only the borders of the districts but also serves as hub of commercial and communal activities. These spines are termed as Bazaars which serve for commercial activities and junction of these guzars are termed as Chowks which serve as center of commercial as well as communal activities. Each district was composed of Mohallas and koochas which were defined by streets and galies (WCLA, 2020).

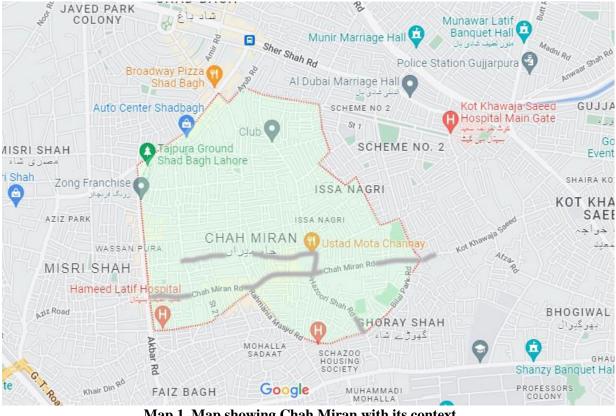
The city experienced various invasions and its glory obliged to the invaders who gifted the city with architectural and historical significance. Various types of structures were constructed and the most important was city wall with its gates whereas the burial places were located outside these city walls. The city was attacked by the invaders and got wealth of historic monuments. After the conquest of city by Mehmood Gaznavi, four saints migrated to old Hindu Lahore to introduce Islam following the orders of their spiritual father. Hazrat Farukh Zanjani who was known as Shah Zanjani (Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani) with his brothers Hazrat Musa Hussain Zanjaniand Hazrat Yaqoob Zanjani and Hazrat Ali Hajveri (Data Gunj Bakhsh) who was spiritual brother of Shah Zanjani. They settled in the suburb of the walled city for meditation and preaching of Islam and performed key role in the expansion of the historic city outside the city gates due to the shortage of living space within city walls. This process of urbanization in the East and South continued while in the western corner, river Ravi was flowing (Jalandhary, 1962).

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During the rule of Chughtais, a Muslim saints, Shah Zanjani came to Lahore for the preaching of Islam to obey the orders of his spiritual father and he was entitled "Meer" a designation awarded to saints exercising specific spiritual powers. He selected a place near river Ravi in the suburbs of walled city for meditation and prayers. He made his place in a garden which was named afterwards on his name Bagh-e-Zanjan. The followers of saint resided with him developing the area in a village outside the city walls. When the number of followers increased, the issue of drinking water raised and Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani constructed a well and a house near his worship place. The followers also constructed their mud houses near the well. The meaning of well was in local language "Khui" and the area became famous as Miran di Khui or KhuiMiran. The well in Persian language is translated as "Chah", thus currently the area is being pronounced as Chah Miran on the language of the Zanjan, the birth place of saint which was Persian(Cheema, 1969).

During the reign of Akber, the surrounding villages were added to the precincts of Lahore and the whole city with new boundaries were divided into districts and the village Chah Miran was termed as Mouza / District Khui Miran, afterwards was well known as Chah Miran. The selected area "Chah Miran" is situated at a distance of one kos from Delhi gate and it is one of the oldest areas in the suburbs of walled city which was subdued due to the religious influences of a sufi saint. The area and its surrounding has number of tombs of the saints and members of the Royal family members. These saints came to sub-continent for the preaching of Islam and they turned people towards Islam on the basis of their own attitudes and life style and the members of royal families were followers of these saints and were used to visit them frequently(Hindi, 1882).



Map 1 Map showing Chah Miran with its context Source: Google maps (edited by author)

The selected area was famous due to the tomb of saints and his sacred well. The water of this well was also used by his followers for the treatment of skin diseases. Adjacent areas of Chah Miran includes historic districts such as Ghoray Shah, Kot Khwaja Saeed and Mandvi Prince Pervaiz. These areas were urbanized due to the migrated saints. Although, there is no architecturally significant and historic structure in the Chah Miran but it is on the thorough fare from Delhi gate to north-eastern corner of Northern Lahore. However, significant structures such as Tomb of Prince Pervaiz and Baradari of Sher Singh are part of adjacent districts creating religious environment (Dastgir, 1961).

Southern Lahore has been influenced due to rapid urbanization and gardens have been transformed in the muddle of shops and encroachments violating the historic character. Poverty and joblessness are the key issues. The people are living miserable life and they need attention of the authorities for the removal of encroachments and creating breathing spaces in the chaos of commercial activities and the tombs of these saints should also be protected to pay homage for their religious services.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

When the old city was occupied by the Muslim rulers, the area was enlightened by the presence of sufi saints to spread Islam and they inhibited with their followers on the bank of river Ravi in the close vicinity of the historic city. Walled city extended its borders outside the city walls. Most of these neighborhoods were named on their names such as Chah-e-Miran, Kot Khawaja Saeed and even the nearby roads were known on the name of these saints such as Chah Miran Road, Huzoori Shah Road and Ghorey Shah Road. On the other hand, when population increased inside the city walls, people moved towards these neighborhoods. These neighborhoods became the part of historic environment. These districts were developed by the succeeding rulers such as Sikhs and British. Sikh community also respected these sufi saints and visited them at multiple times for the prayers (Dastgir, 1961).

The socio-economic condition of these surrounding areas was encroached by shopkeepers, house owners, street hawkers and migrants. Random increase in population affected the social life pattern of the residents. These areas were also neglected in terms of provision of infra structure, depriving them of from the basic needs. Similarly, the historic structures in these areas were also ignored and deteriorated with the passage of time due to the negligence of the authorities. There are significant structures in the selected area and its surrounding such as tombs of sufi saints, Samadhs and Baradari of Sher Singh, Tomb of one of royal family: Tomb of Prince Pervez. The people were used to visit these Shrines from far off places. There is a need to pay attention to these areas for the protection, not only these historic structures but also to save historic environment.

Evolution of Chah Miran

Various gardens were developed outside the city walls during the Mughal and Sikh period. Some of the famous gardens are:

- 1. Bagh-e-Zanjan
- 2. NaulakhaBagh
- 3. Bagh-e-Shah Bilawal
- 4. Mandvi Pervez
- 5. Bagh-e-Raja Teja Singh
- 6. Bagh-e-Raja Dina Nath
- (By Kamran Mirza) (By Shah Jahan)

(By Miran Hussain Zanjani)

- (By Pervez Jahangir)
- (By Raja Teja Singh)
- (By Raja Dina Nath)

The area is famous for its gardens and after urbanization, these gardens were occupied by the residences (Cheema, 1969).

These gardens were captured by the winds of the time and converted into urban communities due to the urban interventions and human vandalism. Built structures replaced these gardens and beauty of Lahore which was due to these gardens, became the story of the past. Old Lahore was famous due to these chains of gardens around the walls and also termed as City of Gardens. Visitor had to cross these gardens approaching towards the city gates (Goulding, 1924). All of these gardens were ruined by the intrusions of the invaders. A part of these gardens became the burial place of the founder which are sufi saints or members of the royal families. On the traditional pattern, Bagh-e-Zanjan became the burial place of Hazra Miran Hussain Znjani. The area extended its boundaries due to the people who came to visit the shrine of the saint and settled in the area permanently.

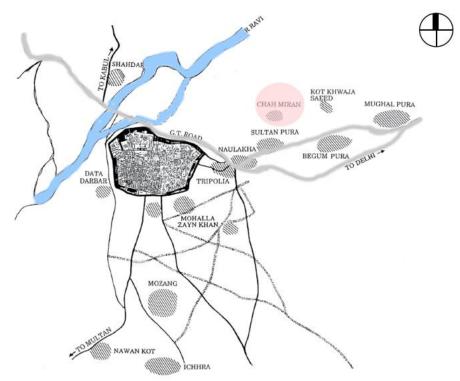


Figure 1 map showing walled city Lahore with its historic districts Source: Walled City of Lahore by WCLA (edited by author)

The shrine of Miran Hussain Zanjani is the oldest one in the area and his urs is celebrated every year. A dispensary has been established which is being organized by Auqaf & Religious Affairs Department for the medical treatment of the people living in the nearby locality (Cheema, 1969). Number of saints visited the area, placed their religious seat here and buried at the place of their adulation. Their followers built Darbars on the burial places of the saints. Dispensaries and mosques were added with few of them. These Shrines or Darbars are now organized by the Auqaf (Shahzad, 2013).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data was collected regarding evolution and development of the neighborhood and visual survey has been conducted to study the impacts of historic shrines on the surrounding neighborhoods. During visual survey, it was observed that the population around these shrines belonged to poor and illiterate as compared to the rest of Lahore. They aren't in the position to upgrade their life styles and they need help to regenerate and refurbish the area. Detailed plans were drawn to understand the social spaces for the communal activities. Rapid urbanization influenced the social and economical character of the area and traditional activities transformed into commercial activities resulting over-population. Spatial analysis was done to study the impacts of these sacred structures on the life pattern of the residents. The poor condition of the area and dilapidated condition of the heritage sites need immediate attention for the improved socio-economic conditions of these societies. The shrine which is included in the list prepared by Auqaf & Religious Affairs Department, Lahore Zone, Pakistan has been selected as case studies. Due to the social and economical condition of the residents, these shrines are more congested as people of these areas are waiting for the help of God through these sacred personalities.

Case Study – Chah Miran

Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani and his brother Hazrat Musa HussainZanjani, saints of tenth century are buried in Chah Miran or Mauza Khui located in Southern Lahore. Misri Shah is located on its southeast and Railway station is located in northeast. The sufi saints migrated from the Zanjan, a city in Iran to obey the order of spiritual father. They are most respected and practiced adulation for centuries. Kannahiya Lal wrote in his book that a big festival was ceremonial of the area but the colors of the religious festival have been faded with the passage of time. The selected site can be accessed through circular road and Grand Trunk Road. From the circular road, we have to pass an underpass named DoMoria pull (due to the two Apertures) linking the circular road with Grand Trunk Road as this bridge is for carrying Railway line above. After passing by the Rahim Bazaar and moving through Misri Shah, GhandaNala and ChowkNakhuda ,wearrived at Neelum Cinema, a landmark of the area. A road, leading to the gate of shrine, has been named as ChahMiran Road and it has been encroached by shop fronts, dynamic food stalls, tongas and rickshaws (Dastgir, 1961).

Location & Context



Map 2 map of Chah Miran Lahore showing figure Source: map box (edited by author)

The way to the shrine of Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani is through Miran Hussain Bazaar which is an extension from Chah Miran Bazaar and is covered with colorful clothes to create shades for the visitors. It was a narrow street for pedestrian movement to approach the north entrance of the shrine, fixed for female devotees.

With the increase in vehicular movement, parking place was declared off the main bazaar. The walking bazaar showing the dresses, shoes, flowers stalls, fabric lengths and other utilities give the ambiance that give the image and respect of the shrine. Shrine is located on the raised platform and a flight of stairs located on the north-eastern side provides access to the shrine through mosque.

4.2 Khui Miran

Khui Miran can still be located in the area in the form of a single room which was famous as prayer chamber of Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani. The well is not operational due to the construction of tube wells. The people living in the neighborhood visit the sacred place in the memory of the preaching of Islamic religion by the saint. The room is square shaped with an arched doorway and a doom as an identification of the place used by saint. This khui is 1000 years old.

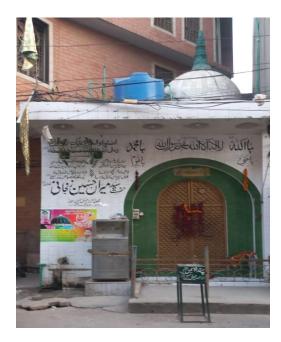




Figure 2 (b) Street view of Khui Miran Source: Author

Figure 2 (a) Khui Miran Source: Author

Chah Miran shrines

Shrines located in the area have been divided into two groups depending upon the vicinity. **Chah Miran Shrines Group I**

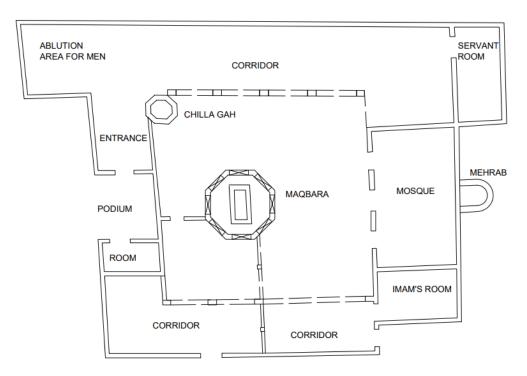
There are number of shrines / Darbars in Chah Miran which are included in the list developed by Auqaf and Religious Affairs Department. The most famous are included in the case studies. Chah Miran Group of Shrines includes shrines:

- I. Shrine of Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani
- II. Shrine of Hazrat Musa Hussain Zanjani
- III. Shrine of Hazrat Hazuri Shah
- IV. Shrine of Hazrat Takia Ujagar Shah

Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjan is settled in the area along the banks of river Ravi and the area became famous on the name of Hazrat Fakhar ud Din being titled as "Miran". Hazrat Musa Hussain Zanjani took his place near his elder brother while Hazrat Yaqoob Zanjan selected an area near the walled city. Three saints preached Islam in the historic neighborhoods around the walled city and buried at the places of their meditation. Their burial places became the sacred places for their followers and termed as "Darbars". These Darbars are located in the area which was known as "Mauza Khui" and currently known as Chah Miran.(Jalandhary, 1962)

Shrine of Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani

Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani bornin Zanjan in 958 CE / 347 AH. He came to Lahore on the instructions of his spiritual father Hazrat sheikh Abu Al-Fazal Khatil in 998 CE/387 AH. He spent a long period in this part of the sub-continent to preach Islam and died in Lahore in 1042 CE/431 AH. He has been buried at the place of his worship and a shrine has been constructed on his grave by his followers and relatives as the saint has no children of his own. Shrine is located in the Bagh-e-Zanjan which has now been disappeared due to the urbanization of the area.





plan of Shrine of Hazrat Miran Hussain Zanjani

Source: Aftab e Zanjan by (Redrawn by author)

The structure of the tomb is octagonal in plan and a mosque is located on the west of tomb. Initially, tomb and mosque were two separate structures. However, a roof of modern period with a dome over the grave is connecting the two structures. There are houses in the west and south directions. Main entrance is from the east keeping Qibla aligned. There are rooms on the both sides of the eastern entrance used as madrassa. North side of the shrine is for the female devotees, In front of the eastern gate, there is an open space for communal activities. There is a health clinic / dispensaryalong the northern wall for free treatment of poor managed by Evacuee Trust Board of Punjab (ETPB). The landmark of the site is three old big Banyan shady trees. People enjoy cool environment under these shady trees. Shrine is famous in the locality due to the miracles of the saint.

A chilla gah is also located in the prayer hall of the mosque. It was believed that Hazrat Khawaja Moin-ud-din Chisti visited the shrine and spent some time for prayer due to love and respect for the saint. The condition of the tomb is not well, although it is renovated by theAuqaf (Cheema, 1969).



Figure 3 Chillagah of Hazrat Moinuddin Chisti inside Shrine of Hazrat Miran Hussain zanjani Source: Author

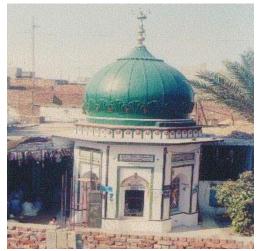


Figure 4 Shrine of Hazrat Miran Hussain zanjani Source: Author

Shrine of Hazrat Musa Hussain Zanjani

For a visit to the tomb of Mir Musa Zanjani (b. 341/952), the brother of Syed Hussain, you will need to retrace your steps to the car park and drive south, turning right (west) on Akram Road, which leads you to an area known as Pak Nagar (earlier called Bharat Nagar). The mosque adjacent to the tomb is highly decorative in contemporary style and is named as Jamia Masjid Hanfia Zanjani (Dastgir, 1961).

Shrine of Hazrat Hazori Shah

Shrine is situated on the Hazori Shah Road named on the name of saint Hazrat Ahmad famous as Hazrat Hazori Shah. According to the plate fixed on his grave, his forefathers migrated from Delhi and he performed his religious duties in ChahMiran and died in the Sikh period. There is a mosque adjacent to the shrine. There is a big shady banyan tree in the close vicinity of the shrine. There are two types of shrines, one of them are with dispensary or others are without dispensaries. This shrine is also with a mosque and a dispensary with an open space having a big shady banyan tree. The name of saint is Ahmad but he was famous as Hazrat Hazori Shah. His urs is being celebrated in the month of Shaban.



Figure 5 Darbar of Hazrat Hazori Shah Source: Author

Shrine of Hazrat Takia Ujagar Shah

Shrine of Hazrat Takiaujagar Shah is located on the Chah Miran Road on the thorough fare from Chowk Hazoori Shah to Chowk Dhobhi Ghat, a place fixed for washing of clothes. There is a mosque and office of Union Council with this shrine. More details are not available. The details are derived from the name plate on the grave.



Figure 6 Shrine of Hazrat Takiya Ujagar Shah Source: Author

Chah Miran Shrine Group II

Chah Miran Shrines of Group II includes:

- i. Shrine of Hazrat Bahaudin (Ghoray Shah)
- ii. Shrine of Shah Bilawal Qadri

In the south of Shrine of Shah Musa Hussain Zanjani, travelling from Pak Nagar Road and crossing the University of Engineering & Technology on Grand Trunk Road, we come across Chah Miran Shrines group II.

Shrine of Hazrat Syed Bahaudin (Ghoray Shah)

To approach shrine of Hazrat Syed Bahaudin / Ghoray Shah, turning from G.T. Road to inner side of Singhpura Road and Sultanpura Road, there is a bazaar full of commercial activities and bustle. This bazaar ends at Chowk Ghoray Shah on Ghoray Shah Road. In the south of Chowk Ghoray Shah, Shrine of saint is located with celebrated horses (Now these horses has been removed due to religious contradictions) which were religious miracle of the saint. The area is famous on the name of the saint which was distinguished as Ghoray Shah on the basis of his love for horses. At Ghoray Shah Road, there is a large gateway painted in green color serves as main entrance to the courtyard with old banyan trees and graves. There is a fragrance of fresh rose petals stalls to spread on the grave as religious norm and a stall of horses made of clay, painted in multi color strips was placed at place of shrine to pay tribute, now this stall has also been removed.

The ghoray Shah Darbar is one of the most remarkable shrines with an enclosure. There is a mosque and old graveyard adjacent to the shrine. The shrine of young saint is presenting a feeling of tranquility and veneration. On the left of main gateway, there was window to have a look at grave of the saint. Shrine was on a raised floor surrounding with dwarf walls. Gate way was decorated with the figurative art, the prancing horses. Now the shrine has been renovated and one of the doorway to the grave has been developed near the main entrance of the complex and the previous entrance has also been used by the followers from the graveyard attached.



Figure 7 Shrine of Hazrat Syed Bahauddin Source: Author

There are two another graves of perhaps his companions in the enclosure. There is no roof over these graves, however, there a big tree which have covered these graves. Road is on the north side of the tomb and graves has surrounded rest of the three sides. A huge graveyard is located on the southeast and is famous with the name of saint "Ghoray Shah Qibristan". In this graveyard, there are graves of highly appreciated sufi saints in the graveyard according to Historian Qadri.

In spite of hustle and bustle of the people, the complex experiences the feeling of love and peace. There were presented horses everywhere in the compound which were evidence of the number of devotees visiting the place and the fence along the road was also edged with bundle of toy horses. All these horses made of different materials were symbol of love to saint but all are removed due to religious conflicts between the sects. The grandfather of the saint migrated from a historic city Bokhara to Uchch Sharif. The saint was famous for his piety in his early childhood and was nicknamed Jhulan Shah due to a physical issue of trembling manner. But he was God gifted and favored people in his innocence violating the ethics of spirituality. Scion of a syed family, Hazrat Bahaudin is believed to be a "wali" by birth. He rewarded his devotees fulfillment of all of their desires on presenting horses. On the show of spiritual powers, his father got furious and the saint died on the display of his father's temper. He died in 1594 CE. His urs is held every year on 13 & 14 Meraj Sharif (Dastgir, 1961).

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Shrine of Hazrat Shah Bilawal Qadri

Shrine of Shah BilawalQadri can be located on the road opposite of the Ghoray Shah Darbar. The saint was buried at a place which was known as Bagh of Raja Dina Nath. This bagh has been disappeared but the name of the garden still on the lips of the residents. This bagh was established just opposite the Shrine of Hazrat Bahaudin. A green tri-foil arch identifies the presence of shrine. The shrine is located in the inner side of the winding streets creating difficulties to locate the shrine but you can find the way to tomb on the guidance of the local people. There is no vehicular access; you will have to walk on foot to the zigzag streets after parking the car on road side.



Figure 8 Shrine of Hazrat Shah Bilawal Qadri near River Ravi Source: Author

The family of the saint migrated from Herat by train of Mughal Emperor Humayun when he came back to sub-continent. The ancestors of Shah Bilawal had settled in Sheikhupura about 30 km from Lahore. His father sent Hazrat Shah Bilawal to Lahore for spiritual learning from Hazrat Shamsuddin Qadri in 1634 CE at the age of seventy. The saint has been awarded spiritual powers to resolve the social and health issues of the followers. The saint established his Khanqah (monastery) along river Ravi. Poor and rich frequently visited his place for his prayers. The place was full of peace and calm. There was a big shady tree in the courtyard and a water tank for the qaris with flower trees. When the river Ravi changed its water course, the water came to the burial place of the saint. Maharaja Ranjit Singh who was a devotee of the saint, ordered fakir Azizuddin to remove the sacred body of the saint to a safe place. According to Kannahalal, the body was safe and looked just expired. After saying his Namaz e Janaza, saint was reburied at a new and safe place near the shrine of Ghoray Shah. The colorful activities of the Shrine has lost but a structure is there in the memory of the saint. The new burial place was in the winding streets, therefore, there is no frequent visits of the devotees. The saint is blessed by qadrisilsila and a mela is celebrated every year onhis urs on 28 Shaban (Jalandhary, 1962).

DISCUSSIONS

The historic districts around walled city of Lahore are developed by the sufi saints and are responsible for the existence of Islam in the region. There are number of Shrines in the area which are source of spiritual peace. The followers of them respect and believe in them for the divinity and peace. After the British annexation, these areas were neglected and transformed in congested and unplanned spaces where people are not provided basic needs of life. In the result of out-migration from the walled city, the wealthy people of these area also migrated to the colonial Lahore. The historic structures were also neglected and were thrown to the warm winds of the time.

Considering the worth and importance in the religion, these places are not only important historically but architecturally also. These areas are associated with the religious personalities which are entitled for spiritual powers and are source of mental and physical purity. Only structures are not

important and significant but cultural and religious activities are also need to be saved for the future generation for the revival of Islamic believes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of these historic neighborhoods reveals that there is a dire need to protect the neighborhoods rather to protect only buildings which are valued highly significant. They witness our religious and cultural activities and rise of Islam in the region. These shrines shows respect and religious values for these saints. They are our religious forefathers and are source of spiritual guidance. These areas with their architectural remains should be protected to save the religious environ and the socio-economic patterns of the residents.

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