



Raising Public Awareness to Preserve Cultural Heritage (A Case Study of Rawalpindi)

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Abstract

Cultural studies are integral to public awareness of preserving cultural heritage. They examine ways to protect cultural heritage and raise public awareness about maintaining and saving it in their communities. Rawalpindi, a city steeped in history and cultural significance, faces the pressing challenge of preserving its rich heritage amidst rapid urbanization and development. This research explores the critical role of public awareness in safeguarding Rawalpindi's cultural assets. By examining the city's diverse heritage, including its architectural landmarks, historical sites, and intangible cultural expressions, the study highlights the urgent need for public engagement and participation in preservation efforts.

The research delves into the factors contributing to the decline of Rawalpindi's cultural heritage. It analyzes the impact of these factors on the city's identity and social fabric. To address the challenges, the study proposes a comprehensive strategy for raising public awareness, including educational programs, community outreach initiatives, and media campaigns.

By fostering a sense of ownership and pride in Rawalpindi's cultural heritage, the research aims to mobilize the community to actively participate in preservation efforts. Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader discourse on heritage conservation and advocates for a holistic approach that balances development with cultural preservation.

This paper focused on the primary aims of awareness techniques to save cultural heritage in Chakwal and Jhelum. The researcher used qualitative and quantitative methodology to gather data from local communities and respective cultural centers. Less than 50 percent of communities know about the cultural preservation of Buddhist sites and forts at the regional level.

Keywords: *Public Awareness, Public Engagement, Cultural Heritage, and Art Councils, Preservation Efforts.*

Introduction

Inherent in the complex web of human society, cultural heritage is a timeless reminder of our shared past, principles, and sense of self. Ancient relics and historical sites are just a few of its many components. Intangible parts include customs and artistic expressions. However, in the face of rapid urbanization, globalization, and technological advancement, our cultural legacy's vulnerability is highlighted, putting it at risk of irreparable deterioration.

This research investigates the critical need for fostering increased public awareness as a proactive approach to cultural asset protection. The need to teach a feeling of accountability and appreciation in people, groups, and societies emphasizes how urgent this is.

This study will significantly contribute to the current conversation about preserving our shared history for future generations by delving deeply into the many facets of cultural heritage preservation and the transformational power of increased knowledge.

Cultural heritage preservation is more than just preserving actual objects; it also includes maintaining and advancing intangible elements like languages, customs, ceremonies, and knowledge systems. In an age of rapidly expanding globalization that encourages cross-cultural communication, there is a risk that cultures will become more similar, which could lessen the unique characteristics of each one. Therefore, realizing how important it is to preserve cultural history becomes essential to maintaining distinct identities and fostering variety in a world growing more interconnected daily.

Additionally, this study aims to clarify the critical role that public knowledge plays in shaping policy and gaining support for programs that assist cultural heritage preservation. People with expertise who understand the value of their artistic legacy are more inclined to take an active role in preserving it. Furthermore, informed citizens serve as advocates, influencing decision-makers to prioritize enacting laws that safeguard cultural heritage.

In the following parts, relevant case studies, effective awareness initiatives, and the transformational impact of education in fostering a heightened cultural responsibility will all be examined in detail. By examining these aspects of the modernized area, this study seeks to develop a deep comprehension of how increasing public awareness can serve as a driving force behind preserving our rich and varied cultural legacy. In doing so, it aims to offer complex insights that support the development of intricate plans and regulations meant to protect our common heritage for the long-term benefit of coming generations.

Review of literature

Considering contemporary difficulties, cultural heritage preservation necessitates a diversified strategy, with public awareness emerging as a crucial element in current academic discussions. Emphasizing the function of public knowledge in preserving cultural heritage, this literature survey examines major themes and conclusions from pertinent studies.

Cultural heritage is “that part of the past which we select in the present for Contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political, or social.”(Khakzad 2015, p 110).

Recognizing the Significance of Cultural Heritage, the literature emphasizes the importance of the public comprehending the inherent value of cultural heritage. According to Smith's (2017) research, encouraging a sense of pride and loyalty to one's cultural identity might trigger active participation in preservation efforts. Campaigns for public awareness are considered crucial instruments for conveying the importance of cultural heritage—beyond its aesthetic value—and highlighting its role in forming collective identities.

Scholars like Jones (2019) emphasize the need for public awareness to be raised to mitigate potential concerns. There is an increasing danger of cultural homogenization and the disappearance of distinctive traditions as the world grows more interconnected. Education plays a critical role in transferring these ideas, and public awareness is positioned as a defense mechanism against the unintentional loss of cultural diversity (Wang et al., 2020).

Public Awareness Campaigns and Their Effectiveness: A few studies demonstrate how vital focused public awareness campaigns are to preserve cultural assets. Martinez and Kim's (2018) research examines successful community engagement initiatives promoting a shared sense of responsibility. These initiatives do more than increase awareness but also encourage active participation in heritage conservation projects, reflecting that the importance of education in preserving cultural heritage is a recurrent issue in the literature, with academics such as Brown (2016) stressing the critical role that education plays in influencing public perceptions of cultural heritage. Stewardship and appreciation values can be instilled in students through the sustainable method of including heritage education in official curricula. Site visits and interactive workshops are two examples of educational activities that encourage experiential learning and are known to help raise public awareness (Cameron, 2019)—his potential for positive behavioral change.

Community Engagement and Grassroots Movements: Research by Li and Chen (2021) emphasizes the importance of grassroots movements in cultural heritage preservation, building on the community-based approach. In addition to increasing knowledge, community involvement develops a sense of accountability and ownership. Local campaigns spearheaded by enthusiastic individuals can spread, changing public perceptions of cultural heritage preservation on a larger scale.

In conclusion, literature underscores the pivotal role of public awareness in preserving cultural heritage. Key strategies are identified to understand the value of cultural heritage, mitigate the impact of globalization, implement effective awareness campaigns, integrate heritage education, and foster community engagement. This review provides a comprehensive foundation for further research and the development of targeted interventions to ensure the sustained preservation of our diverse cultural heritage.

Objectives

Determine how much people know about the risks and difficulties of preserving cultural assets.
Examine the educational, socioeconomic, and cultural elements that support or undermine public awareness of the preservation of cultural heritage.

Examine how government initiatives may support public awareness and the protection of cultural assets.

Research Methodology

A well-structured research methodology is necessary to study public awareness of cultural heritage comprehensively. They implemented a mixed-methods research design to combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Conduct a quantitative survey to gather numerical data on awareness levels, demographics, and attitudes. Utilize qualitative methods such as interviews, focus groups, and content analysis for in-depth insights and contextual understanding. Employ stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different demographics (age, gender, education, etc.). Include both urban and rural populations to capture diverse perspectives. The total respondents were 150.

Quantitative Data:

Researchers developed a structured survey questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The questions included awareness levels, sources of information, and attitudes towards cultural heritage. The survey was administered through face-to-face interviews, online platforms, or phone interviews.

Qualitative Data:

Key stakeholders, including community leaders, educators, and cultural heritage experts, were interviewed semi-structured. Focus group discussions were also organized to explore shared perceptions and experiences of cultural heritage, and relevant documents, such as educational materials and existing awareness campaigns, were analyzed.

Quantitative Analysis:

A Researcher used statistical software to analyze survey data. They performed inferential statistics (e.g., chi-square tests) to identify associations and patterns in the data.

Qualitative Analysis:

Researchers utilized thematic analysis to identify recurring themes in interviews and focus group discussions and employed content analysis for documents and media materials.

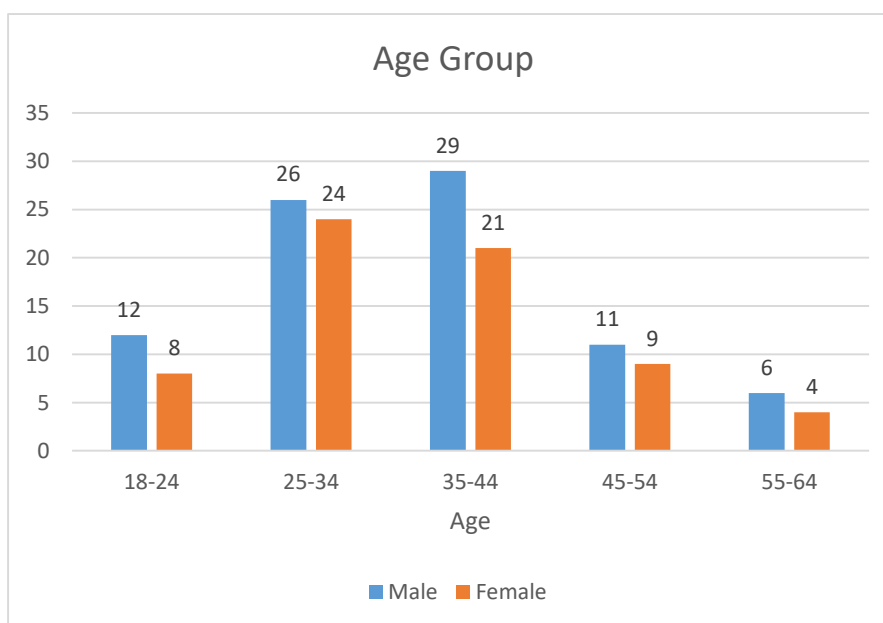
Result and Discussions:**Data Analysis**

Fig 1: Showing Age Group

The provided data from SPSS presents group statistics related to the distribution of Individuals based on gender. Respondents showed interest in answering all the questions we asked during the research.

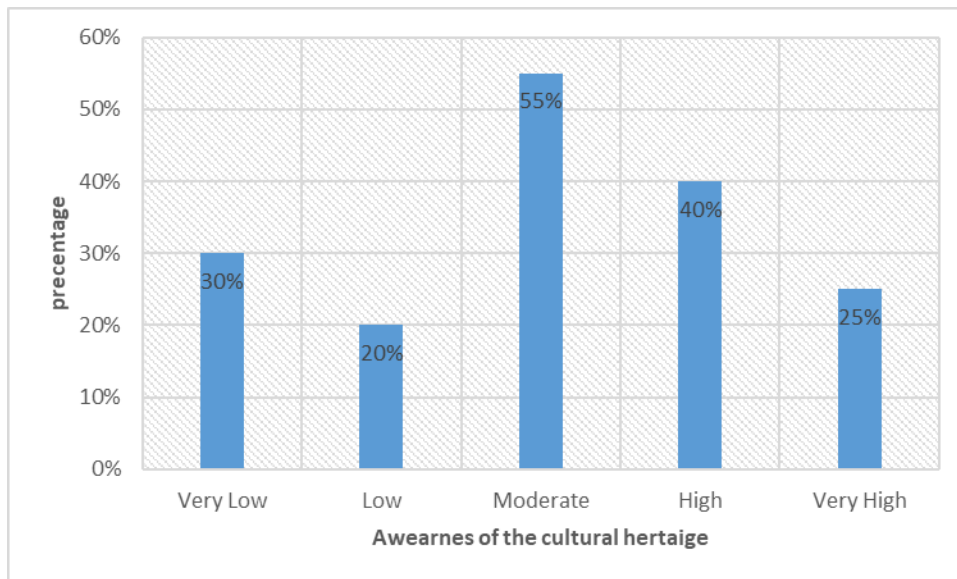


Fig 2: Showing a ratio of the population who have an awareness of the cultural Heritage

The above fig. shows the awareness percentage of respondents about cultural heritage. Thirty per cent of the population has low awareness compared to a high percentage. This figure shows that people are less interested in their society's cultural heritage.

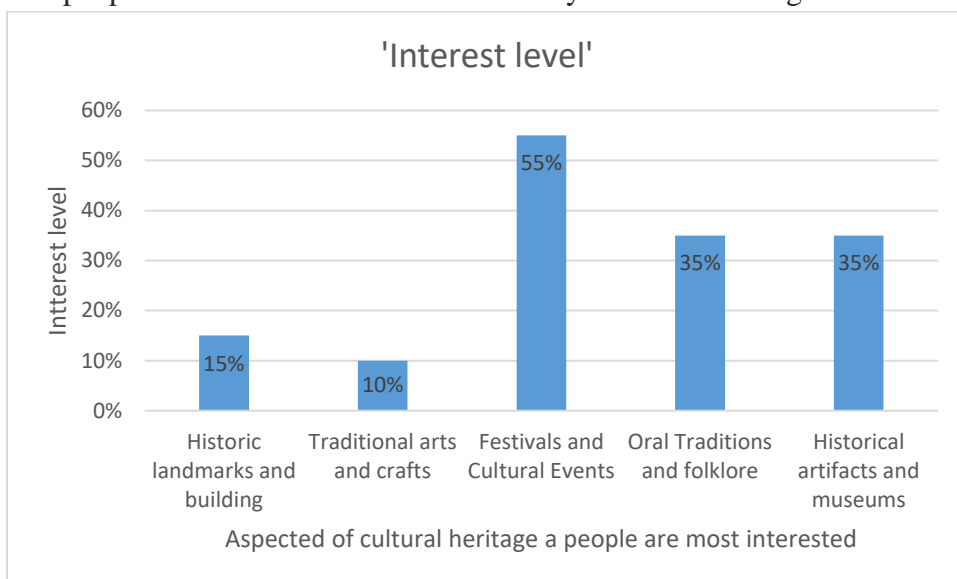


Fig 3: Showed the interest level of people in preserving cultural heritage

Research showed that educating people about preserving cultural heritage is an important project that may benefit society and communities. Although the consequences of these kinds of endeavors might differ, they typically involve the following:

Enhanced appreciation is one of the primary outcomes of people's tremendous respect for cultural heritage. Through community participation, educational initiatives, and awareness campaigns, individuals can better appreciate and comprehend the relevance of their cultural heritage.

Preservation of Traditions: Increasing public knowledge frequently sparks a resurgence of interest in long-standing traditions, rituals, and artistic creations. Communities can proactively protect and transmit their cultural customs to the next generations.

Benefits to the Local Economy and Tourism: A well-preserved cultural legacy can draw visitors, boosting the local economy. A greater understanding may create cultural tourism projects that support sustainable tourist practices while bringing in money for local communities.

Community Engagement and Pride: Public awareness initiatives frequently help people feel proud of and invested in their community. When they acknowledge the value of their cultural heritage, people are more inclined to actively participate in preservation efforts and take pride in their shared identity.

Conservation activities: Improved awareness may lead to a more substantial commitment. These involve maintaining and restoring monuments, relics, and historical places. Effective conservation plans may be implemented through collaboration between communities, governments, and organizations.

Advocacy for Policy: Raising public awareness through awareness campaigns frequently results in a rise in support for laws safeguarding cultural heritage. As the public grows increasingly aware of the value of preserving their legacy and speaks out about it, organizations and governments are compelled to establish and implement safeguards.

Educational Initiatives: To ensure that the next generation understands and values its cultural heritage, schools, museums, and other cultural organizations may include heritage education in their curricula. This may have long-term effects on cultural preservation initiatives.

International Cooperation: Awareness-raising efforts can promote cooperation between states, localities, and international organizations. A shared understanding of cultural heritage's significance may result in collaboration in research, information sharing, and protection.

Prevention of Cultural Erosion: Societies can better confront and stop cultural customs and practices eroding when awareness increases. By taking preventative measures, the likelihood of losing essential facets of cultural heritage throughout time is reduced.

Tolerance and Cultural Diversity: An appreciation for cultural history frequently results in a more varied and tolerant society. Understanding and respecting one another's cultural heritage may foster unity and peace among varied populations.

Government programs are essential for raising public awareness and preserving cultural resources. Government Programs aim to protect a country's artistic legacy, maintain its diversity, and encourage a sense of pride and national identity among its people. The following are some ways that government activities support these objectives:

Rules and Laws: Governments frequently pass laws and regulations to safeguard cultural assets, including historic sites, monuments, artefacts, and traditional knowledge. These legislative frameworks lay the groundwork for protecting and safeguarding cultural assets.

Grants & Funding: Governments give grants and contribute money to museums, cultural institutions, and historical groups. This financial support aids in preserving, maintaining, and restoring cultural treasures. Additionally, it makes research and educational initiatives easier to raise public awareness.

Cultural Education Programs: Governments may establish educational programs to encourage cultural appreciation and awareness. These programs involve planning cultural events, assisting with cultural exchange initiatives, and incorporating cultural education into the school curriculum.

Public Awareness Campaigns: Governments conduct public awareness campaigns to emphasize the value of cultural assets. These advertisements frequently highlight how crucial it is to protect cultural heritage for future generations and motivate people to participate in conservation activities.

Technology and Innovation: Governments invest in innovative security systems, digital archives, and databases to track and manage artefacts and safeguard cultural assets, promoting accessibility and preservation.

In conclusion, increasing public awareness of the need to protect cultural heritage has several beneficial effects, including heightened pride and appreciation, genuine conservation efforts, financial gains, and the advancement of cultural diversity. Ensuring the survival and vibrancy of cultural heritage for future generations is contingent upon this crucial step.

Recommendations:

Based on the study's findings, I offer recommendations for improving public awareness of cultural heritage preservation. Propose strategies for educational institutions, policymakers, and cultural organizations.

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