

Lahore is a symbol of centuries old customs and traditions, which have been practised by its inhabitants with strong adherence to the existent rule and religion. From the Mughals to Raja Ranjit Singh and the British, the present Pakistan is proud of this city. Considered as the heart of Pakistan and accredited with its distinctive cultural values, now this city stands witness to a significant change in its values. Divergent reasons can be attributed to this phenomenon.

Lahore was considered a peaceful city till some years ago, with people having different nationalities living harmoniously. There was a feeling of security, brotherhood and equality but now sectarian violence has deteriorated the entire situation. There is no security for life and wealth. This situation is becoming worse day by day and people are moving abroad to safer havens.

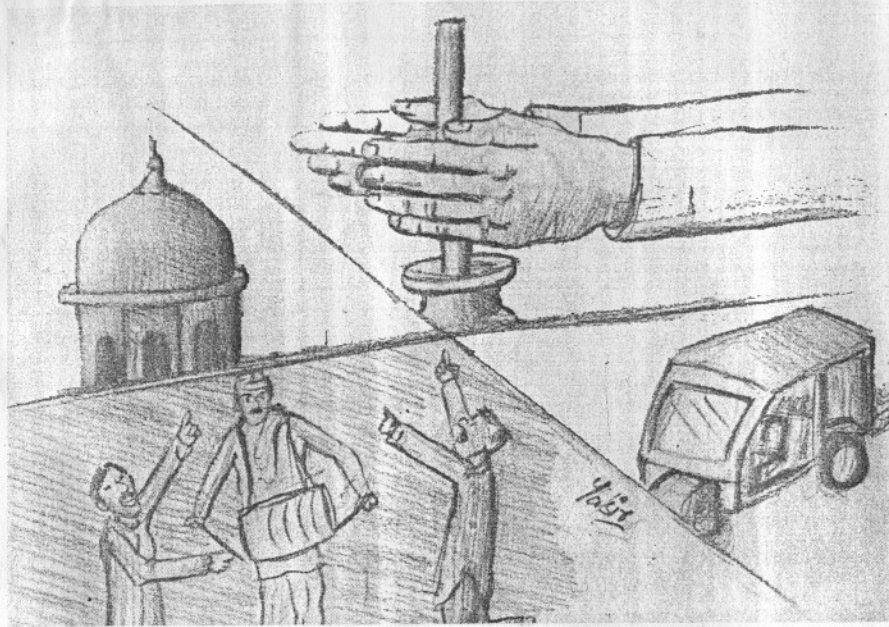
Lahore is famous for its historical monuments. The tourists visit this city to get first hand knowledge about these historical places. There was a time when these buildings told stories of the by gone era, but unfortunately no attention is being paid towards their preservation and their deplorable condition speaks volumes of the apathy of the concerned departments. Its not only the department but the masses have also become insensitive towards the preservation of these monuments. They are so busy in their lives that they hardly get time to think about it. Materialisation is another factor which has corrupted our social values. People have become materialistic and they do not have regard for anything else other than money. Cultural invasion is yet another factor which has harmed our values. It has changed the out look of our society.

Modernisation has also changed the lifestyle of Lahore. Simplicity, peace and unity that were the hall mark of people of Lahore have faded for good. People in old times were very hospitable, kind and honest, loyal to their country. But now there has been a significant decline in patriotism. Corruption and mal practices have become the part and parcel of every organisation. Life has become so fast that people prefer short cuts to achieve success rather than hard work. Joint family system was in practice

On the changing values

ZAINEB NISAR says that over the years Lahori'ites have forgotten their values and have become more materialistic in their approach towards life

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and people used to live together in one house with unity which showed love and affection for each other but now people prefer living in a separate home as it has become a status symbol. Ironically, people living in a neighbourhood don't even know about their next door neighbour. Such is the scenario with human relationships.

There was a time when writers, poets and intellectuals used to gather at a particular place to discuss various things, mostly on literature. This used to give amateurs an opportunity to polish their skills in writing. But with the passage of time, this trend has ostracised. We no longer witness such gatherings because people are busy in the pursuing their mundane chores.

The city of Lahore produced innumerable famous personalities who made examples for others through their works. The education institutions were outstanding. People used to come from far flung areas to get higher education. The

students were also serious in their approach towards studies and the standard of education was also excellent. These days, education has become a source of income which has affected the standard of education severely. The students just pass their time and are involved in such activities that are harmful for their career.

This provincial capital of Pakistan has beautiful roads, buildings, historical monuments; shrines of great personalities but unfortunately, it could not provide sanitary facilities to its citizens. Most of the places of Lahore are filthy. There are heaps of garbage but no one is bothered to clear it. In rainy season, the roads get drowned with water because the concerned authorities have not made proper drainage system. Also, people do not get clean drinking water and they lack provision of basic amenities. River Ravi has become a source of pollution because people throw all sort of garbage in it. The

surrounding area has foul smell which makes it life miserable for the passer bys.

There was a time when Anarkali (bazaar) was considered a source of entertainment for the people coming from other cities. They used to shop here without any fear of being robbed, mugged or harassed. The females preferred coming to this place for buying everyday things, clothes, shoes and jewellery. This bazaar was famous for the masterpieces of local crafts men, even it held tremendous attraction for the tourists. But these days, people hardly go to this bazaar anymore because it is crowded with boys who misbehave with females, which is indeed very shameful.

One can visit Royal fort, Badshahi mosque, Meenar-e-Pakistan, Golden Mosque, Shalimar Gardens, Shrine of Data Sahib, Allama Iqbal's tomb and Lahore Museum. These places are worth seeing and if

preserving them, then our provincial capital can become a paradise. The festivals like Mela Chiraghan, Basant, National horse and cattle show and Flora festival are celebrated with fervour and zeal throughout the metropolitan. The people wait for these occasions eagerly. But they are now celebrated from the business point of view. Big events are organised by the affluent classes and influential people from all over the country attend this function. The locals are forced to celebrate such festivities at a limited scale.

With increase in the population, the system of transportation is getting worse day by day. Road accidents take place off and on. As people are often in a hurry, they have no time to follow the traffic rules. Even if some one is fined for violating traffic rules, they bribe the policemen or use their contacts for avoiding the payment of the challan.

Lahore is situated at a very strategic place as it borders with India. Prior to the Indo-Pak tension, import and export used to take place on the border. Earlier the bus service, which was started for the convenience of people was also stopped because of the Indo-Pak differences. This situation is making the lives of the inhabitants miserable as frequently they have to leave their shelters for the fear of war.

If appropriate measures are taken, then the condition of this historical city can be improved. The high officials should take concrete measures for the maintenance of the city. The concerned authority should construct more parks maintain them. Trees and plants must be planted to make the city beautiful. Historical buildings should be well-maintained because they are the evidence of the glorious past. The need of the hour is that the public and private sector should join hands for the betterment of the city.