

**RESEARCH PAPER****Socio-Cultural Aspects of Identity Formation of Lahore City****¹Hajra Waheed¹ & ²Dr. Salma Naz***

1. M. Phil Scholar, School of History & Pakistan Studies, Minhaj University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Faculty of Social Science & Humanities, Minhaj University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

***Corresponding Author** salmanoorshahid@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

The fascinating Lahore has a marvelous past, gleaming present and marvelous future. It has seen several sovereigns with diverse beliefs and traditional backgrounds and still has different individualities globally. The walled city has thirteen ancient gates, famous mosques with historical backgrounds, astonishing fort, temples, mythical manor houses, and blossoming gardens. The objectives of the study is to explore the socio-cultural aspects of identity formation of the city of Lahore and to identify the historical impact of social and cultural traditions on the social behaviors of Lahore's people. The nature of the research is qualitative. The historical and ethnographic method is used and an analytical procedure is applied to analyze the data. Primary and secondary sources are used for data collection. The study concludes that Lahore with its rich culture, splendid architecture, the best food, and tremendous artwork identifies it as the cultural capital of Pakistan. Over the centuries, many cultural changes happened but it retained its genuine cultural values that can be observed even in a new generation of the city.

Keywords: Cultural, Identity Formation, Social, Traditions, Walled City**Introduction**

Lahore, often dubbed as the heart of Pakistan, encapsulates a rich tapestry of history, culture, and civilization. Within the labyrinthine streets of the walled city of Lahore, one can embark on a captivating journey through time (Talbot & Kamran, 2022). This ancient enclave, adorned with remnants from centuries past, exudes the essence of Lahore's cultural identity. Lahore exists in two dimensions—the old, steeped in the glorious echoes of its history, and the new, racing headlong into modernity. The Walled City of Lahore stands adorned with twelve majestic gates, each a testament to a unique facet of culture and ethnicity. Lahore, deeply rooted in history, has nurtured its cultural dimensions with the seeds of historical ethics and identities (Noe, 1980). This ancient city is decorated with heritage sites of major universal value amongst which are implanted two World Heritage sites (Arif, 2017). The city's residents exhibit distinctive social behaviors characterized by their generosity, joyousness, and open-heartedness. These are mere glimpses into the socio-cultural tapestry of Lahories.

Lahore, with its profound historical heritage and rich cultural fabric, extends its roots far into antiquity. Traditional food is improved with butter ingredients, vegetables, and meat flavors (Bhatti & Kharl 2018). The city's identity is interwoven with the remnants and monuments of diverse civilizations, rendering it a veritable repository of cultural legacy (Kapuria, 2020). The walled city of Lahore, the very heart of the city, originally conceived as a defensive stronghold during the Mughal era, traces its origins to the very birth of Lahore itself (Talbot, 2007) then Lahore around the ages has been a Jain city, a Buddhist city, a Hindu city, and then a Hindu-Muslim-Sikh city (Murphy, 2010), and a blend of faiths that made this an extremely tolerant place. The partition of 1947 stopped that. (Sheikh, 2019) So, the inhabitants of the walled city of Lahore are a mixture of many cultures, myths, and faiths.

Literature Review

Majid and Khan (2020) explore the identity of Lahore through its architecture and art. Lahore, a city that has seen diverse rulers with different beliefs and cultural backgrounds, has been described in various ways by historians and travellers. Some emphasize its artistic and craft heritage, while others highlight its role as a trade hub. These characteristics have collectively contributed to a rich architectural context.

Iftikhar (2019) delves into Mughal gardens and their association with paradise gardens. While Mughal gardens are often viewed as symbols of an Islamic paradise, the specific links between ancient gardens and spiritual significance remain ambiguous. This study connects garden descriptions in the Qur'an with historical sites in Lahore, known as the "Mughal City of Gardens." It investigates garden images in the Qur'an to uncover the religious and artistic features of paradise.

Sheikh (2019) presents a collection of columns written for a newspaper, offering observations on the walled city of Lahore. The author provides deep insights into the city's inhabitants, their culture, ethics, and more. The book also touches on the city's relationship with the river, interactions with old friends, and the legal profession. It shares the author's personal experiences with the people of Lahore.

Khalid (2018) focuses on the "muhallas," "kuchhas," and streets of the walled city of Lahore. Lahore has been a trading centre for centuries, attracting traders from around the world and contributing to the local art and craft heritage. Artists of various faiths used to live and work together in Lahore's neighbourhoods, fostering a diverse cultural environment.

Mirza (2017) discusses two renowned cities, Lahore, and Vancouver, both with historical significance. Lahore, known as the "City of Gardens" and the "City of Shrines," has embraced generations with its rich values and culture. The people of the walled city are spiritually rich and generous. Vancouver, on the other hand, is recognized for its cultural respect and the warmth of its people.

Material and Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach, allowing for a thorough exploration of the topic and an understanding of the social behaviors of the people within the walled city. Culture itself is a process of crudeness and refinement" (Nie, 2018). Ethnographic studies are employed to gain insights into the subject. The research aims to uncover the historical effects of socio-cultural traditions on the people of Lahore. After a comprehensive review of related literature, the researcher conducts interviews.

The study utilizes both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources data collection involves interviewing the residents of the walled city of Lahore. Interviews are conducted focusing on various cultural values, food, and social relations among the people. Secondary data is collected from published articles, news articles, books, reviews, research papers, electronic media (websites and e-books), and other sources to provide a comprehensive exploration of the topic.

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, is used for this research (Sharma 2017). Sampling is a technique (procedure or device) used by a researcher to scientifically select a relatively smaller number of illustrative items or individuals (a subset) from a pre-defined population to assist as subjects (data source) for observation or testing, as per objectives of his or her study (Neuman, 2011). Qualitative research designs involve multiple stages, each requiring different sampling techniques (Creswell, 2012).

This research presents the findings of an ethnographic study on the socio-cultural aspects of identity formation within the walled city of Lahore. The study aims to shed light on the unique activities and social life of its inhabitants. Data is collected from various sources, including direct and indirect observations, semi-structured interviews, discussions, and existing literature on the subject. Data analysis in qualitative research involves the systematic organization of data like interviews, observations, and other materials to enhance understanding of the subject. This research centers its focus on the walled city of Lahore, recognizing the city's vast and diverse landscape.

Identity formation

Identity formation is a complex and multifaceted process that encompasses an individual's self-concept, personality development, and ethical values. It not only reflects how individuals perceive themselves but also how they present themselves to society. In the walled city of Lahore, this intricate process is influenced by various factors, contributing to the construction of diverse identities.

Following are some kinds of Identity who take a part in Identity formation.

- I. **Cultural identity** is deeply rooted in Lahore's walled city, shaped by its rich history and diverse cultural influences. This identity encompasses learned beliefs, opinions, values, ethics, and behaviors, highlighting the multiculturalism of the city as different traditions have merged over time.
- II. **Professional identity** in the walled city often revolves around traditional family professions passed down through generations. Roles, responsibilities, ethics, and moral values associated with these professions contribute significantly to Lahore's unique cultural fabric.
- III. **Ethnic and national identity** are prominent aspects of identity in the walled city, with people identifying strongly with their ethnic groups and the broader state identity of being part of Punjab and Pakistan. This diversity leads to a tapestry of cultural, linguistic, and religious attributes within the community.
- IV. **Religious identity** holds great significance in Lahore's walled city, influencing social interactions and cultural practices. It encompasses an individual's beliefs, practices, and devotion to organized religions, adding to the city's religious diversity.
- V. **Gender identity** is shaped by cultural, religious, and familial factors within the walled city, affecting how individuals classify their gender and express it through social behaviours, clothing, and hairstyles.
- VI. **Disability identity** in the walled city is shaped by the unique challenges and experiences faced by individuals with disabilities, fostering a sense of community and cultural understanding among them.

Socio-Cultural Aspects of Identity Formation

The walled city of Lahore is renowned as a cultural hub, shaped by centuries of diverse influences (Anwar,1997). Rulers from various parts of the world have made Lahore their capital, resulting in a unique blend of civilizations and cultures(Suvorova, 2011). The city has witnessed repeated invasions, leading to both destruction and reconstruction, contributing to its rich cultural tapestry.

Topographies of the Walled City of Lahore

The walled city of Lahore is a repository of cultural, ethical, political, and social values. These elements make the city exceptionally significant. Its development is influenced not only by its structural and morphological characteristics but also by its socio-cultural, historical, and political structure.

Environmental Aspects of the City

The city's layout is designed to address its climate and weather. Features such as courtyards, terraces (jharoka), narrow covered streets, and plantations in every house reflect consideration for Lahore's hot and dry climate (Shahzad, 2011). The four-sided wall surrounding the city was originally constructed for security reasons.

Markets

The walled city houses numerous markets and bazaars, each catering to specific needs. These markets, such as Akbari Mandi, Azam Market, Shah Alim Market, Anarkali Bazar, and Urdu Bazar, play a vital role in the city's cultural and economic life. The food, fun, and career expertise of Old-city Lahore has exclusive taste and boundaries, which have developed over the centuries (Parvez 2017). The unique flavors, goods, and craftsmanship of the walled city have evolved over centuries.

Anar Kali Bazar

Lahore's Anarkali Bazar is split into old and new sections. The Old Anarkali is renowned for its traditional cuisine, while the New Anarkali houses diverse markets like Bano Bazaar, Dhoni Ram Lane, and Paan Gali. Shoppers can find high-quality, affordable clothing, including formal and casual wear, embellished with traditional tilla and dabka work. The New Anarkali also offers bridal dresses, stylish footwear, jewelry, sports equipment, and decorative items.

Socio-Cultural Aspects of Identity Formation through Gates

The walled city's thirteen gates have played a significant role in shaping its identity. Each gate has its unique history and name, often linked to the professions or castes of the inhabitants or famous personalities associated with them. Lahore's walled city is a tapestry of history, with its gates weaving tales of centuries past.

- **Bhatti Gate:** Named after the Bhatti Clan of Rajput, this gate stands near Data Darbar. Qureshi (2019) stated in her article "Bhatti Gate in the Walled City of Lahore was called the Chelsea of Lahore. Its design mirrors the Kashmiri Gate. Serving as the entry point to Lahore's vibrant Hakiman Bazaar, it is neighbored by the Fakir Khana Museum, a guardian of Lahore's cultural heritage.
- **Akbari Gate:** An ode to Mughal Emperor Akbar, this gate once overlooked Akbari Mandi, Asia's largest spice market. An intriguing fact is that it was here that the East India Company initiated the spice trade, establishing Akbari Mandi as Pakistan's central spice hub.
- **Shah Alim Gate:** Formerly known as Bherwala Gate, it pays homage to Mughal Emperor Shah Alim. Despite bearing scars from the 1947 partition, its name endures. Shah Alim Market, or Shahalmi Market, thrives within, housing over twenty-five bazaars, including Pappar Mandi, Rang Mahal, Bottle Bazar, and Sarafa Bazaar. Additionally, it is home to Lal Masjid and masjid Maryam Zamani.
- **Lohari Gate:** Known as the city's oldest gate, it retains its original location. Its name, derived from the Urdu word "Lohar" for blacksmith, reflects the occupation of its inhabitants. Lohari Mandi, an ancient market dating back to the Mughal era, flourished here, serving as Lahore's primary entry point during that time.
- **Delhi Gate:** Integral to the Mughal Empire, this gate was oriented towards Delhi. It houses bustling markets such as Delhi Bazar, Kashmiri Bazar, and Rung Mahal, celebrated for textiles. Historic treasures like the Wazir Khan Mosque, Shahi Hammam, and havelis grace its vicinity.

- **Roshnai Gate:** Known as the "Gate of Lights," it illuminated the way during the Mughal and Sikh eras when the Ravi River flowed nearby. Its name, "Roshnai Darwaza," resonates with its luminous history. Remarkably, it stands in its original form, a testament to Lahore's enduring legacy.
- **Masti Gate:** Cloaked in mystery, its name is steeped in history. Some believe it was named after Masti Baloch, a devoted royal guard who faithfully served the gate. His unwavering dedication earned him this honor.
- **Mochi Gate:** Built during Emperor Akbar's reign, this gate derives its name from Moti Ram, the gatekeeper renowned for his kindness. Over time, "Moti" morphed into "Mochi," signifying the market's focus on shoemaking and cobblers. This area also hosts Mohalla 'Shian,' numerous Imam Bargahs in Haveli-style structures, and the famed Mochi Baagh, a political gathering spot.
- **Yakki Gate:** Honoring martyr saint "Pir Zakki," this gate houses two graves that pay tribute to his valor. Pir Zakki and his followers valiantly resisted Mongol invaders, even after his beheading. The gate, originally "Zakki Gate," evolved into "Yakki Gate" over time. Notably, it features 17th-century landmarks like the Shahi Hammam and Wazir Khan Mosque amid its narrow, winding streets.
- **Taxali Gate:** Another Mughal-era gem, Taxali Gate, once the royal mint, is renowned for diverse markets offering shoes and a myriad of Lahori culinary delights. Notable establishments include Sri Pai of Fazal Din, known as Phajja, and Shahabuddin Halwai, popular sweet shops. The gate is near Heera Mandi, a historic red-light district.
- **Mori Gate:** Controversy surrounds Mori Gate's classification as a 'gate.' While some consider it Lahore's 13th gate, others see it as a 'hole.' Sheikh (2014) Many do not contemplate Mori Gate as a 'gate' in the first place. That is why old society in the walled city considered that the city has 12 gates and a 'mori' – a hole.

These gates collectively narrate Lahore's rich history, culture, and diversity and offer the inhabitants of Lahore true identity.

Mosques of the Walled City of Lahore

The walled city of Lahore, with its enchanting mosques and historic havelis, is a pearl embedded within the heart of Pakistan's cultural capital (Kabir, et., al, 2017).

Following are some famous mosques of the Walled City of Lahore.

Badshahi Mosque

The Badshahi Mosque, also known as the Imperial Mosque, is a splendid testament to Mughal architecture. Constructed by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1671, this majestic mosque, located to the west of Lahore Fort, took two years to complete. Its grandeur lies in its intricate red brickwork and marble exteriors. As the largest mosque from the Mughal era and the second largest in Pakistan.

Wazir Khan Mosque

Built during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan, the Wazir Khan Mosque is a masterpiece of Mughal-era architecture. Construction began in 1634 and concluded in 1641 under the supervision of Nawab Wazir Khan, the former Governor of Lahore. This mosque stands out for its exquisite kashi-kari tile work. It's not only a cultural treasure but also a UNESCO World Heritage site, adding to Lahore's cultural richness.

Sunehri Mosque

In 1753, at a time when the Mughal Empire was waning, the Sunehri Mosque was erected as a symbol of the Mughal emperors' devotion to their religion. Nawab Bukhari Khan, the deputy governor of Lahore during Muhammad Shah's rule, designed the mosque. Its construction faced local opposition due to overcrowding, but with the support of religious leaders, it was built and stands as a testament to the Mughal faith.

Moti Mosque

This mosque located within the Lahore Fort, is a small, elegant marble structure commissioned by Mughal Emperor Jahangir and enhanced by Shah Jahan's architects. (Qureshi 2018) The shimmering front wall of the Moti Masjid is split into five chambers with the middle one marginally expanded into the courtyard.

Maryam Zamani Mosque

Built-in the early 17th century, the Maryam Zamani Mosque, also known as the Begum Shahi Mosque, is a historic gem. Situated at Masti Gate in the walled city of Lahore, it is considered the oldest enduring monument from the Mughal era. Masti Gate itself is named after this mosque, initially known as Masjidi Gate, earning it the title "mother of all mosques."

Identity Formation of the city by Havelis

Haveli Nau Nihal Singh

Constructed in 1840 by Maharaja Nau Nehal Singh, this haveli is a rare, preserved example of Sikh-era architecture (Gulzar, 2017). It showcases a blend of Islamic, Hindu, and Sikh influences, with four floors and a basement. Presently, it serves as Victoria School, preserving its rich heritage.

Haveli Wajid Ali Shah

Located at Mochi Gate, this haveli once hosted traders of the East India Company. Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, known for his cultural appreciation, invited artists from across India to entertain his guests. This haveli stands as a testament to his love for poetry, music, dance, and painting.

Haveli Alif Shah

Over 300 years old, this haveli was transformed into an Imam Bargah in 1861. During Muharram, it became a place of deep religious significance. Qureshi (2018) "The haveli and Imam Bargah's interior has the symbols of coffins, Tazia and Zuljanah. This tradition has been maintained for generations.

Haveli Barood Khana

This historical monument is Situated between Pani Wala Talab and Kocha Langay Mandi, this haveli dates to the 17th century. Initially built for the Sikh army's general, it housed both the general and army offices, doubling as an ammunition storage. Hence, its name, "Haveli Barood Khana."

Haveli Mian Sultan

Opposite Dina Nath Haveli within Delhi Gate, the Haveli Mian Sultan offers a glimpse into the past. With three floors and a stunning Sheesh Mahal on the fourth floor, it resembles the Sheesh Mahal at Lahore Fort, showcasing the opulence of Mughal architecture.

Streets and Identity Formation

The narrow streets of the walled city are not just passageways but integral parts of its social fabric (Weiss, 1998). Each street has its unique identity, values, and historical significance. These streets, lanes, and alleys are a repository of memories for those who grew up in their midst. With approximately twenty-five hundred streets and alleys within the walled city, these pathways form a complex maze, featuring Katras, Mohallahs, and Kochas. These streets bear fascinating names that reflect the professions of their inhabitants, various sects, castes, and even famous personalities from different periods. For instance, streets with names like Koocha Qasaban, Koch Telian, and Kocha Darzian highlight the professions of those who lived there, while streets like Gali Raja Narindar Nath and Koocha Aurangzaib are named after famous personalities.

Lahore Fort

The Lahore Fort, a grand edifice within the walled city, has endured centuries of construction, destruction, and reconstruction. Its current form, attributed to Emperor Akbar in 1566, remains a testament to the city's historical resilience. The fort, situated near the Badshahi Mosque, is a focal point of the walled city. Its imposing Alamgiri Gate, constructed by Aurangzeb in 1674, serves as the main entrance to the royal residences.

Shish Mahal

Within the Lahore Fort complex lies the Shish Mahal, built by Shah Jahan in 1631. (Kabir & Hayat 2016) Shish mahal embellished with glass mirrors put into the stucco interior, was built for the queen and her court and mounted with panels to hide them from peering eyes. Although the walls underwent reconstruction during the Sikh period, the original marble decorations, screens, and inlay work have been remarkably preserved. The Shish Mahal offers breathtaking views of the fort and the Badshahi Mosque.

Hazoori Bagh

In front of the main entrance to the Badshahi Mosque, there lies Hazoori Bagh, a garden constructed by Ranjit Singh. Originally, it was the site where Emperor Aurangzeb reviewed his troops. Inspired by this historical significance, Ranjit Singh ordered the construction of a marble pavilion, known as Baradari, in the center of Lahore Fort and Badshahi Masjid.

Minar-e-Pakistan

Minar-e-Pakistan, the towering monument in Iqbal Park, Lahore, holds immense historical significance. It is here, on 23rd March 1940, that the All-India Muslim League passed the Lahore Resolution, officially calling for a separate homeland for Muslims. This monument, often referred to as the "Tower of Pakistan," is an architectural marvel, blending Mughal, Islamic, and contemporary design elements.

Effects of Socio-Cultural Values on Social Behaviour of Inhabitants of Lahore

The city of Lahore is renowned for its warm and welcoming inhabitants, earning it the title "Zinda Dilan-e-Lahore" or "the heart of lively people." This reputation is deeply rooted in the city's socio-cultural values, which influence the social behaviors of its residents in profound ways. Lahore is not just a city; it's a vibrant tapestry of culture, history, and festivals that shape the character of its people.

Socio-Cultural Identity Formation through Festivals of Walled City Lahore

Basant Festival

Basant means yellow, and the fair is held during the blossoming of the mustard plants and people embellish yellow-colored attire". which traces its roots to the Sikh era

under Ranjit Singh(Naz,2018). Basant welcomes the spring season with colorful kites dotting the sky. It transcends class boundaries and holds a special place in the hearts of Lahories.

Jashn-e-Baharan

celebration of spring is a riot of colors and festivities. Many historical festivals, including the fabulous Jashn-e-Baharan, take place at the beginning of March. This month-long celebration in Jilani Park heralds the arrival of spring with cultural events, music, and vibrant displays of traditional crafts.

Urs of Data Ali Hajveri

Hazrat Ali Hujwairi, affectionately known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, was an 11th-century Sufi saint whose legacy continues to shape the cultural identity of Lahore's walled city. Born in Ghazni, Afghanistan, and later residing in Lahore, Pakistan, Data Ganj Bakhsh dedicated his life to Islam, leaving an indelible mark on the hearts of thousands of devoted followers who converge upon his Urs (annual commemoration) from all corners of the country.

Religious Festivals: A Tapestry of Culture

Lahore is a city where festivals, both religious and cultural, breathe life into its streets regularly. These celebrations are deeply ingrained in the daily lives of its inhabitants, who embrace each festival with enthusiasm and meticulous preparations.

Shab-e-Barat: The Night of Power

“Shab e barat” also named as the “Night of Power”, holds immense significance in the Islamic calendar (Raza 2015). Occurring on the 15th night of Shaban, it is a night when Muslims believe that the fate and destiny of every living being are decided by the Creator. Muslims observe this night through prayer, supplication, recitation of the Quran, and seeking forgiveness for their sins. During the daytime, many Muslims fast as an act of devotion.

Eid Milad un-Nabi

Eid Milad un-Nabi, known as Eid-e-Milad-Un-Nabi, is celebrated with grandeur in Lahore. This special day commemorates the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), falling on the 12th of Rabi'ul-Awwal in the Islamic calendar. Lahore adorns itself with festive decorations in anticipation of this event. On the morning of Eid Milad un-Nabi, Muslims across the city gather for communal and engage in holy activities such as Milad (recitations of the Prophet's life), Naat khawani (hymns in praise of the Prophet), and Quran khawani (recitation of the Quran).

Eid-ul-Adha: The Festival of Sacrifice

Eid-ul-Adha, known as the Festival of Sacrifice, takes place on the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, Zil-Hijjah.(Maliha & Sarrif 2016) Muslims worldwide celebrate this occasion with great fervor, honoring the courage and sacrifice of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail. Those who can afford it sacrifice animals, such as goats, sheep, cows, or camels, to symbolize this historic event. The meat is then distributed among relatives and the less fortunate, fostering a sense of community and charity.

Eid-ul-Fitr

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated on the 1st day of Shawwal, marks the end of Ramadan and a month of fasting. The festivities extend for three days, beginning with communal prayers followed by joyous gatherings with family and friends. It is customary for the Muslim

community to offer charity, known as 'fitrana,' to the less fortunate. The walled city of Lahore comes alive during Eid-ul-Fitr, beautifully decorated, and filled with the sounds of joy. Children eagerly anticipate receiving 'Eidi' (cash gifts) from their elders, and everyone relishes traditional dishes like sivayyan (vermicelli).

Lahories as "Zinda Dilan-e-Lahore"

The people of Lahore, often referred to as "Zinda Dilan-e-Lahore" or "the heart of lively people," epitomizes the city's vibrant culture. Their warm-heartedness, hospitality, and deep-rooted cultural values create a unique identity that transcends time.

Lahore: The Cultural Capital

Lahore has long been recognized as the cultural capital of Pakistan. Its rich cultural heritage is a blend of historical architecture, delectable cuisine, and artistic endeavors. Whiles (2018) "The breakthrough of this first Biennale 'Shehr-O-Funn' (City of Culture), contrary to earlier misgivings, must surely shift the perspective". Visitors to Lahore are captivated by its diverse culture, beautiful architecture, and the kindness of its inhabitants.

Lahore: The City of Love

Lahore holds a special place in the hearts of its people. Its social, cultural, and political history has shaped its unique identity. Festivals in Lahore play a pivotal role in celebrating this identity and serve as a vibrant testament to the city's rich heritage(Qureshi 2018) "In a poll by the New York Times, Lahore was listed among the 52 unique cities to love in 2021, and that is a credit to every Lahori" Lahore is a city where people deeply cherish their cultural values and celebrate life's moments with zest and zeal.

Lahore: A City of Literature

The cultural richness of Lahore is mirrored in its literature. Renowned writers, poets, and scholars have hailed from this city. Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Sir Ganga Ram, Shah Hussain, and many others have left an indelible mark on Urdu and Punjabi literature. Ahmad (2021) "LAHORE: Lahore has been declared the "city of literature" – the first place in the country to have been conferred the title by UNESCO". Lahore's literary legacy is further enriched by its famous Bhatti Gate, which has been a hub for artists, writers, poets, and academics for generations.

The Legacy of Lahori Legends

Lahore has produced numerous legends who have contributed to its cultural identity. Mustansar Hussain Tarrar, Ustad Daman, Hakeem Ahmed Shuja, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, and Muhammad Rafi are just a few of the luminaries who have left an enduring impact on the city. "Muhammad Rafi was a famous singer of his time; he lived in Noor Mahalla in Bhatti gate. Pheeko, was his nickname"(Alig ,2014). Sheikh(2019) wrote in his book, he recalls his first encounter with Daman in Tibbi Bazar, where Daman lived in what was said to be Shah Hussain's former abode. The room was filled with books stacked almost to the ceiling, with crumbs at one end, which Daman humorously explained as a bribe to rats to protect his books.

The Cuisine of Old Lahore

Lahore's love for food knows no bounds. The city is renowned for its diverse and mouthwatering cuisine. From the bustling food streets to the hidden gems tucked away in its narrow alleys, Lahore offers a culinary adventure like no other. (Usman et al, 2020) "Pakistan is one of the country's leading food hubs offering a variety of food to its domestic customers and international tourists. Local delicacies like Nan Chaney, Nan Haleem, Siri-Paye, Pathoorey, Halwa Puri, and Hareesa are served by locals and visitors alike.

“Gawalmandi in Lahore is famous for its Food Street, while Luxurni Chowk and Shahi Mohallah are also located in older parts of Lahore” (Hasan et., al, 2016).

Walled City: A Neighbourhood of Unity

The walled city of Lahore is a testament to the unity and strong sense of neighborhood among its residents. Inhabitants share their joys and sorrows, breaking down barriers of caste and religion. Sajjad (2020) “The Walled City is the oldest part of Lahore that is still surviving despite having changed much over time The streets come alive with children playing, men engaging in late-night conversations, and women bonding over their daily routines.

Lahore's Language Tapestry

Lahore is a city where multiple languages coexist, including Urdu, Punjabi, and English. Sullivan (2007). “Even though most people can use more than one of the languages. Each language represents a unique facet of the city's identity, with Urdu holding a special place as the national language.

Preserving Tradition: Puppet Shows

Puppetry, a traditional art form, has been a source of entertainment and expression in Lahore. Puppet shows, or "Putlitamasha," showcase the city's artistic spirit. Mahmood (2018) “The word puppet means “doll”. The name of Puppets is “Putli” in the local language and the performance is termed “Putlitamasha”. These shows, performed with string puppets, have been a unique way of storytelling for generations.

Conclusion

Lahore's walled city stands as a living testament to its rich cultural identity. Its festivals, religious and cultural, encapsulate the spirit of this city. The people of Lahore, known for their warmth and affection, preserve their cultural values while celebrating life's moments with great enthusiasm. The legacy of Lahori legends, the city's literary heritage, its culinary delights, and its vibrant neighborhoods all contribute to Lahore's unique cultural tapestry. This city continues to be celebrated not only by its residents but also by people from around the world, making it a cultural gem that deserves its place in history.

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