

ABSTRACT

Karachi being a metropolitan city of population, more than 13 million, is usually seen and known to many of its inhabitants and visitors as a modern mega polis, which lacks an identity and a culturally rich historic background. Many who do not know the city too well would often exclaim “Does Karachi have a historic core?”; “Does Karachi have a history worth preserving?”. Surprising answers to these questions emerge when one tries to look into the historic background of the city and discover that there were times when Karachi scintillated with its richness of tradition and culture. Karachi certainly does not have a very long history to boast about, but its short colonial history does not lack anything that can be desired, thus making it comparable to many other colonized cities of the world that are today celebrated for their glory and richness.

Much has been written about Karachi and its rapidly vanishing historic fabric. Several reasons have been identified as the cause for the ruthless destruction of its historic core. Piecemeal efforts are made from time to time to give the city’s historic fabric a protective cover. Yet the disturbing questions still lurk in the minds of those who really care for the city, “Why is our historic core constantly on the decline? Why are we losing old buildings every day? Why are the existing masterpieces of architecture so badly maintained and mutilated? In spite of the existing legislation, how can people get away with the implacable destruction of heritage property?”. This paper aims at looking into some facts related with the listed heritage of Karachi, attempting at an analysis of the existing ground realities and their implication on the whole process of heritage conservation and issues related to it.