

INFORMAL & FORMAL DEVELOPMENTS ON THE PREMISES OF SUFI SHRINES IN PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

Built environment of Muslim shrines in the province of Punjab, Pakistan is incessantly changing. This phenomenon is gone faster from the year 1980 onward with the re-construction of Data Darbar Complex¹ in Lahore. It has set new trends for extension of Sufi shrines and their attached buildings, under administrative control of the Auqaf & Religious Affairs Department, Government of Punjab². This paper focuses the process of development works taken up on the premises of Muslim shrines in Punjab. For convenience, the developments in the built environment of Sufi shrines have been categorized into two main heads i.e. Informal & Formal. Informal developments are contributions of the both; devotees and the gaddi nashins, whereas Formal developments are carried out by the administrative department i.e. Auqaf, after going through the process of proper designing and construction. The impetus and motives behind such interventions and additions vary in nature depending upon the Sufi, location and scale of shrine, number of visitation, income received, political standing etc. Studying these Informal and Formal developments, a modus operandi was devised based on the data available with the Punjab Auqaf Department and the mutawallies. After identifying such shrines in Punjab, studies were carried out to reach the conclusions. Transformation of such sacred spaces was sensitively evaluated to trace out the changed ambience of newly constructed shrines. Finally, the impact of these informal and formal developments on the socio-religious and built environment of shrines has been delved.

Keywords: Shrine, environment, interventions, heritage, restoration, sacred space, mosque, waqf properties.