



Role and Importance of Identified Historic Bazar of Sultanate Period toward Tourism and Economic uplifting in the Region of Southern Punjab, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Internationally, historic bazars are being regenerated to maintain and sustain the ambience of heritage core of the city. In Pakistan, this concept is also being followed in historic cities like Lahore, which have meaningful results by saving endangered heritage of specific time period as well creating economic, recreational and tourism activities having direct impact on uplifting of the community. There is need to apply this concept of regeneration in the other historic cities of Pakistan especially the remote areas like Southern Punjab where the heritage is being deteriorating due to lack of maintenance and encroachment and need to protect on priority basis. Southern Punjab is a cradle of many civilizations and full of historic monuments with a most important era of Sultanate Period in which numbers of shrines were built spiritually in the memory of Sufi saints who played a vital role in spread of Islam in the region. Regular visits by their followers, especially during URS, led to the establishment of commercial and recreational activities in the form of bazars and mela grounds around these shrines. However, as city centers evolved over time, these bazars have deteriorated, necessitating regeneration for the revival of the historic core's ambience This research focuses on the regeneration of historic bazars during the Sultanate Period in one of the historic settlements of Southern Punjab. The methodology involves a comprehensive survey and interviews with experts, contributing valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge. Emphasizing compliance with SDG-11.4, which underscores the importance of ensuring the safety of indigenous heritage, the study aims to provide practical recommendations for the sustainable regeneration of these historic bazars, safeguarding Southern Punjab's rich cultural legacy.



Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines heritage as "our legacy from the past, what we live with now, and what we carry on to future generations." (Valagussa et al., 2021). In 1972, UNESCO developed the two main categories for the world's heritage in which the first explain that the heritage can be touched and seen, such as buildings, monuments, and sites and the second category explained that the intangible heritage as well as the knowledge and skills in which instruments, objects, artefacts, and cultural spaces are included (Yang & Greenop, 2020) . So that the conservation of heritage means all of the steps taken to look after a tangible and intangible heritage so as to retain its cultural

significance, and also to keep them safe from destroying or being damaged as well as to keep them safe from destroying or being damaged as well (Udeaja et al., 2020).

Similarly in Pakistan, historical areas have values as well as cultural, religious, social, economic, and physical concepts (Hamid Akbar et al., 2020). Examining heritage restoration concepts and traditional urban planning in addition to conserving these values and honoring the principles and elements of urban planning is not only be of great assistance to the new urban infrastructures, but can also result in the principles of urban sustainable development in the historic areas (Korkmaz & Balaban, 2020). Despite this, in Southern Punjab, there are three divisional headquarters: Bahawalpur Division, Multan Division, and Dera Ghazi Khan Division, each of which has the following district headquarters: (Environments, 2021).

- Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan and Bahawalnagar
- Multan, Lodhran, Vehari and Khanewal
- DG Khan, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh and Layyah

Moreover, these districts in Southern Punjab are home to many of the region's most storied cities and towns, including Uch Sharif, Seetpur, Jalapur Pirwala, Khairpur tamiwali, the walled city of Bahawalpur, Dera Nawab Sahib, Jamaldin wala, Allahbad, Sakhi Sarwar, Khanpur, liaqatpur, Jampur, Rojhan, and many more (Mahmood et al., 2022).

In addition to that the pilgrims made their trip to the site on a continuous basis in order to offer gratitude for the work that Sufi saints had done in the area, which resulted in the formation of a recurring religious practice known as URS (Kubra et al., 2021). So during their stay, these pilgrims had a requirement for certain economic as well as recreational activities, which resulted in the formation of bazaars and mele grounds, which later became the landmarks of the towns and the commerce route for import and export (Singh & Ahmad, 2021).

Historical Bazars in Southern Punjab

Historic bazaars that arose during the Sultanate Period were dispersed throughout the settlements of Southern Punjab in accordance with the needs of the locals in the vicinity of Shrines (Usman et al., 2021). These bazaars are currently partially responsible for meeting the needs of the locals as well as those of the surrounding areas, which can be made more functional after their regeneration in accordance with the current use and revival of the old trade pattern (Usman et al., 2021). There are various bazaars some of them ancient bazaars are in Multan as Hussain Agahi Bazar, Craft Bazar, Chowk Bazar, Arts and Crafts Bazar, Cantt or Saddar Bazar, Saddar bazar Bohar gate bazar, Hassan Parwana Market (Touseef & Papas, 2019). Chowk Bazaar, Rangila Bazaar, Ahmedpuri Bazaar, Baksh Market, Shehzad Market, and many others are located in same fashion in Bahawalpur City (Shah et al., 2022).

Cultural qualities and economic prospects and benefits can be synthesized through the restoration and revival of historic centers, which has gained widespread recognition as an effective instrument for urban development in recent decades. Each historic structure and community are valuable not just for the aesthetic appeal of its various parts, but also because it represents a time and place with its own distinct building techniques and aesthetic (Mensah, 2022).

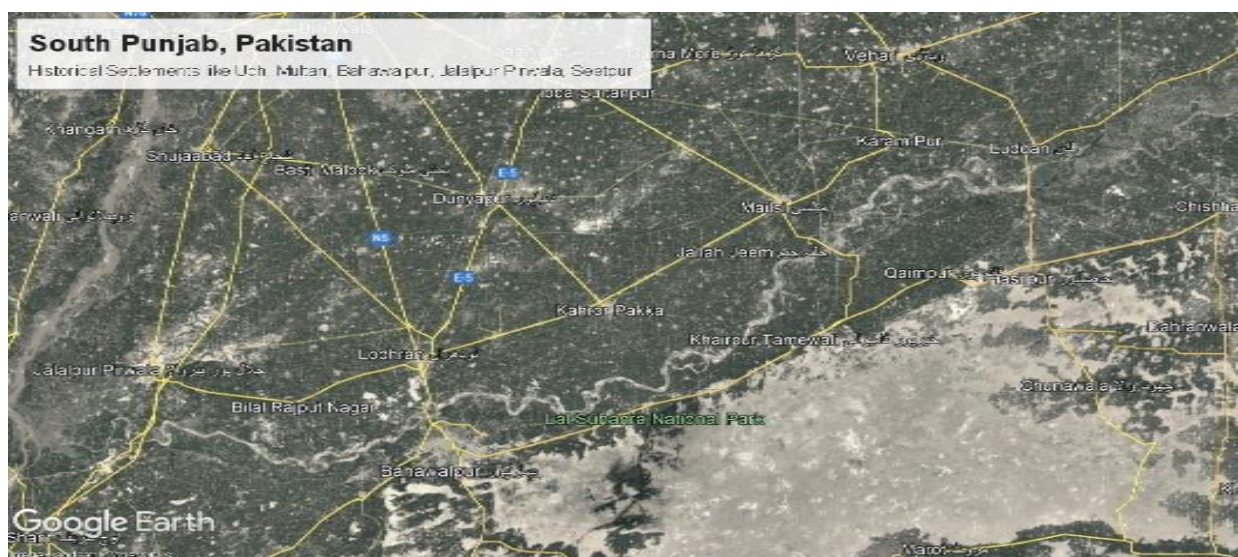


Figure-1: Google Earth Image of Southern Punjab (Source: www.googlemap.com)

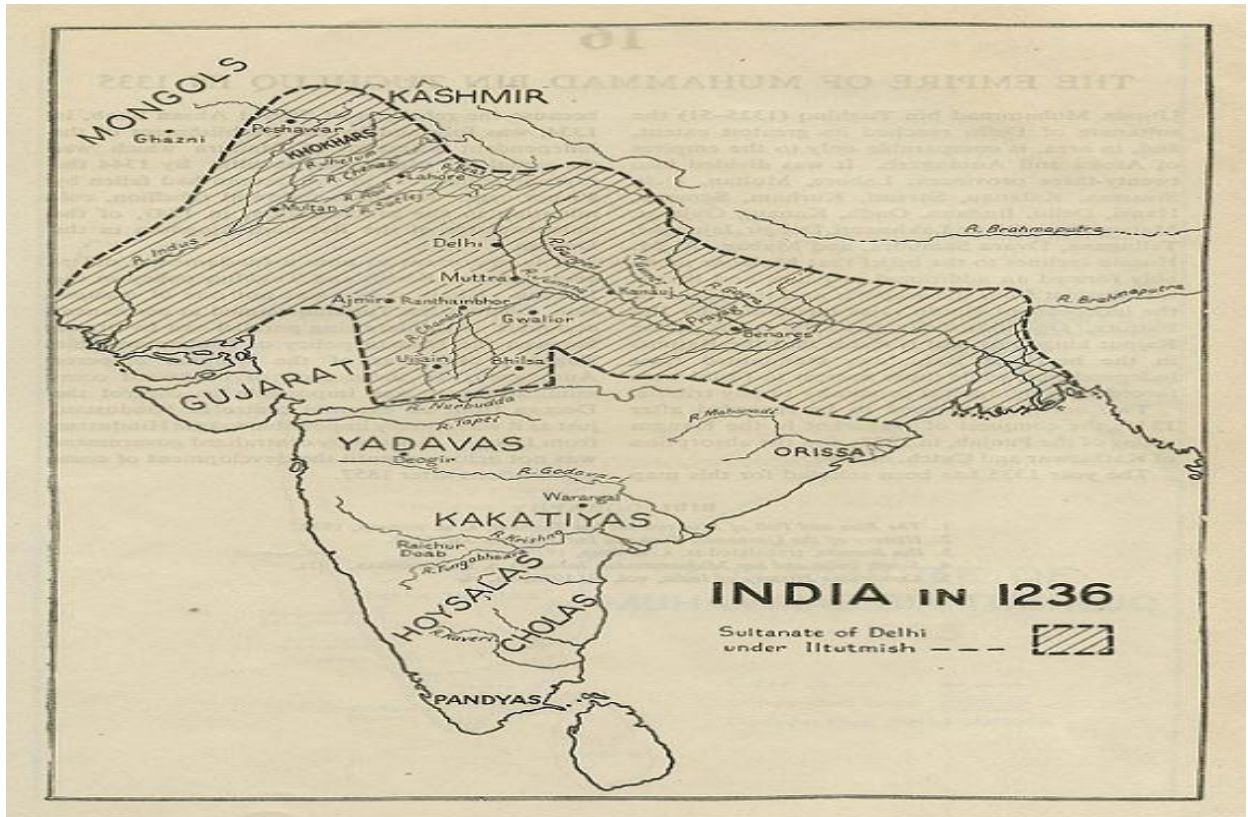


Figure-2: Map of Sultanate Period (Source: Published in Medieval History on Tuesday 8 May 2018)

Several historical events and monuments are preserved in the old cities and towns of Southern Punjab (Tajibaev, 2022). The Slave Dynasty, Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Syeds, and even regional dynasties like the Qureshis and the Langahs have all risen and fallen here, making it a pivotal location in the subcontinent's history (Kathayat et al., 2022). During the time of the Sultans, Southern Punjab was a pivotal region in the region's history (Bhagat, 2023). While Nasiruddin Qabacha ruled over Sindh and Multan, he made this city his capital (Bilal & Dar, 2020). The zenith of the cultural and economic development of the c occurred during this time of increased trade (Udeagha & Ngepah, 2021). However, with Shamsuddin Altutmish's victory over Nasiruddin Qabacha, it fell under the control of the Delhi Sultanate.

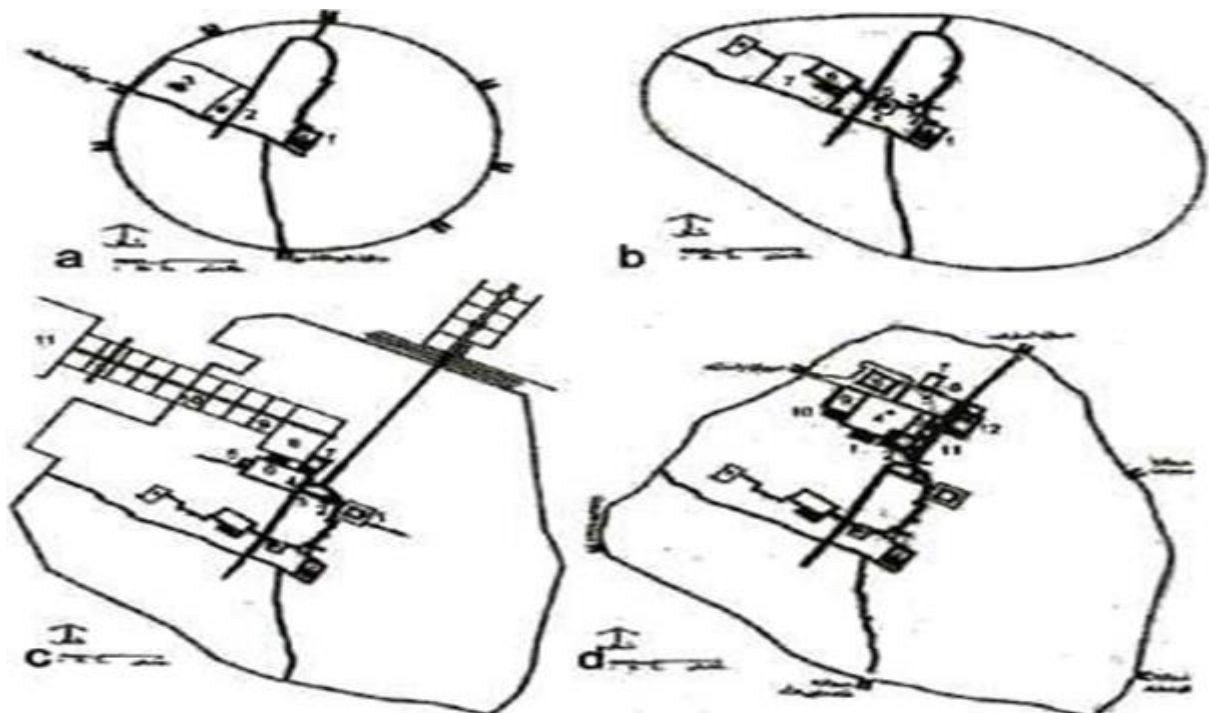


Figure-3: Morphological Analysis of Bazar Typologies (Source: free hand sketch by the author)

Since the beginning of Turkish rule in India in the 12th century, the region of Southern Punjab in Pakistan has played an important historical role as a metropolitan and religious center, drawing in both foreign invaders and visitors from afar (Shell, 2016). This has been particularly true since the beginning of Turkish rule in India. Previous to that time, local histories provide only a sketchy outline of the region. However, it is speculated that the many towns may have originated as early as the Harappan civilization (3000-1500 BCE), which spanned a large portion of the country (Sighn, 2019). According to Ali (2022), "significant antiquity, dating initially to pre-Islamic periods at least" exists in Southern Punjab.

On the same note urban areas have a lot of old things that can be used for data collection, technological changes in infrastructure, economic growth, and social change. In that case, the developing world is made by changing the links between homes, cities, green areas, and trade centers (Bazars) based on what they need (Bozdağ et al., 2022). Yet, bazaars, once the most significant cultural feature of urban areas, have declined in importance in recent decades.

Being a central hub serving economic, physical, cultural, and social purposes in Islamic urban planning, bazaars play an essential role in the development of modern Islamic cities (Case et al., 2021). The present research highlights the fact that the bazaar can give an orderly structure generating either a mega form by uniting essential aspects of the city and its neighborhoods at the macro scale while connecting public buildings at the medium scale.

The current strategy for revitalizing Pakistan's cities and urban regions entails introducing new shape and infill development in the historic locations, while the areas within the historic districts are either let to fall into disrepair or are eliminated to make space for new construction (Aziz et al., 2022). Instead of focusing on preservation, restoration, and beautification of historic surroundings, many communities opt to offer brand new buildings in the form of flagship complexes.

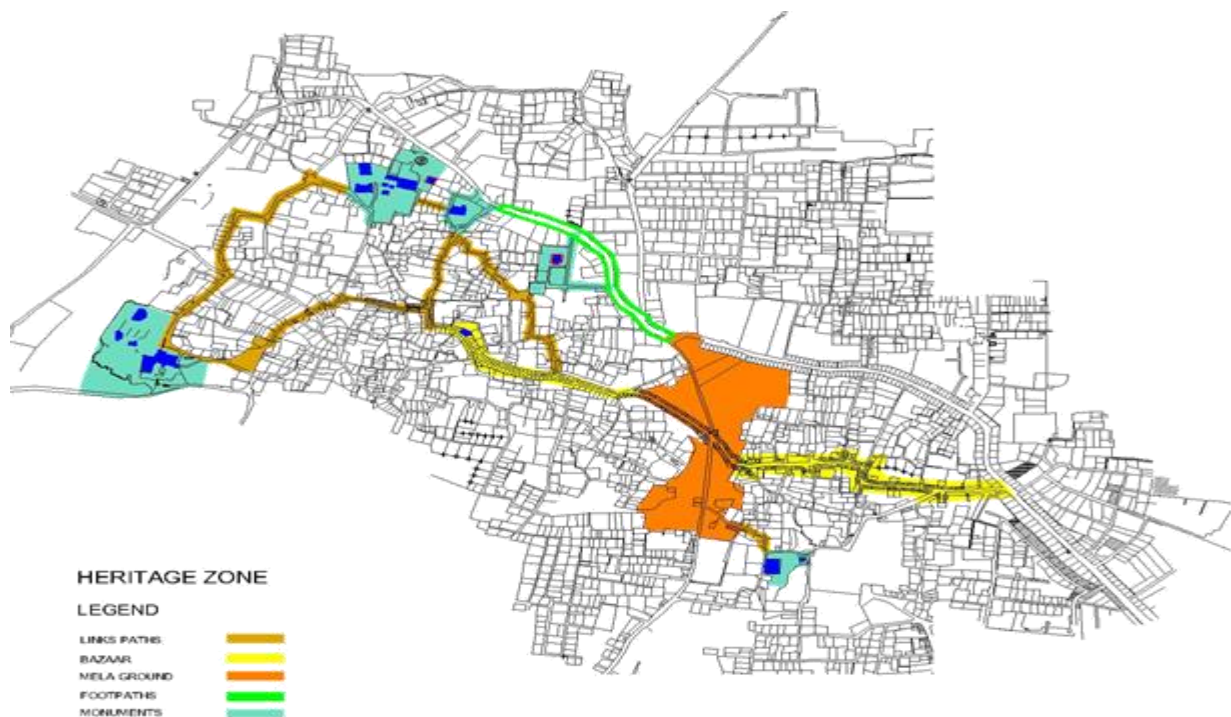


Figure-4: Master Plan of Uch City with Historical Bazars (Conservation & Rehabilitation Centre)

Historically in Pakistan, the Bazaar served as more than simply a commercial hub; it was also an entire urban district with a wide range of residential, commercial, and recreational establishments. Culture, commerce, and politics were all intertwined in the Bazaar, making it the city's epicenter (Orsini, 2020). It was one of the city's most public places, where anyone could mingle and enjoy daily life. However, the bazaar was not limited to commercial and public functions; its spatial structure integrated hierarchy from the public and the private by incorporating large avenues where trade activities and communal interactions would take place and narrow alleys that were predominantly clusters of residential units (Ghimire et al., 2023).

This physical layout of the Bazaar, which included both public and private areas, was vital for satisfying overt and covert cultural needs. In this manner, the spatial organization and development of the Bazaar were

not formally enacted by a certain authority, but rather negotiated locally amongst individuals (Ghimire et al., 2023). Bazaars and the residential neighborhoods that surround them have been there for millennia. Typically, they were built and kept up through various forms of social and cultural mediation (Cheng & Chen, 2022). But over the last few decades, Southern Punjab cities have become more and more commercial. This has upset the regeneration process that has historically shaped the Bazaar's physical and social structure, including the balance between residential and commercial land use. This has led to warehouses and let strangers work in residential neighborhoods.

There are many important architectural heritage structures from the Sultanate Period (1000–1526) in Southern Punjab, and especially from the time of Nasiruddin Qabacha (1203), when Multan was the capital (Singh & Kumar, 2023). This region is rich in monuments, particularly Shrines and bazaars, but they have not been well examined at the settlement level yet, and as a result, there is a dearth of literature that is suitable for inclusion in the current body of knowledge (Farhan et al., 2020). Due to rapid urbanization and population growth in these historic settlements, city centers have shifted and the ambiance of city centers has changed, obliterating the old look of towns and creating new bazaars that are not associated with shrines and detracting from the landmarks and vistas of the heritage (Shaikh, 2022).

Architectural heritage in the settlements of Southern Punjab particularly in the form of Bazars along with their surroundings such as URS and mela grounds, were responsible for religious, recreational, commercial, and communal activities for the society, which are in a vanishing stage with the need to protect and regenerate them for revival of culturally as well as recreational and economic activities to improve the living conditions of the people of Southern Punjab as well as heritage protection.

There is limited literature available specifically about historic bazar of Sultanate Period in Southern Punjab (Mahmud, 2022). This study adds up to literature in the existing body of knowledge and plays a leading role toward regeneration of historic bazaars during Sultanate Period in Southern Punjab as well as plays a significant role regarding policy making about revival of economic, recreational activities after restoring urban heritage in the historic settlements of Southern Punjab and will also increase tourism in these remote areas to boost up the economy (Version, 2021).

The worth of the historic bazaars, which support religious and pilgrimage tourism and cultural renewal in the area, is affirmed as contemporary discourses highlights the distinctive traits and legacy value of the Sultanate Period in Southern Punjab. Moreover, this contributes to a greater global understanding of the tangible heritage of Southern Punjab, as well as the promotion of SDG-11.4, which focuses on the Protection of Cultural Heritage at the Settlement Level. However, this study is limited to only one historic settlement of Southern Punjab.

Research Methods

The research methodology employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques. Documentation, a crucial precursor to conservation intervention, includes a manual survey and instrumental survey tools like QGIS, complemented by methods such as manual drawings, AutoCAD drawings, and rectifying photography. The process extends to historical sites within the Bazars, capturing visual data on weathering forms and damage categories for subsequent laboratory analysis. Material mapping discerns compatibility. Investigations encompass historical studies using archives, historic maps, original drawings, literature, and comparisons with other bazaars in Southern Punjab, focusing on plan type, architectural features, and building processes across different periods. Typology and morphology studies, including former restoration efforts, are conducted. Laboratory investigations delved into the causes of decay and damage. Evaluation, based on historic investigation, determined cultural significance, considering historical, architectural, artistic, and commemorative values.

The approach for regeneration and adaptive reuse is crafted based on the evaluation of investigations. Interventions are aligned with the formulated approach and investigation findings. The research targets all historic settlements with Bazars during the Sultanate period in Southern Punjab. The research procedure systematically executed the outlined design, employing various methods to comprehensively explore and evaluate the historical Bazars for their cultural significance and potential regeneration. This streamlined process aims to contribute precise insights to heritage conservation.

Results and Discussion

In order to design a plan for revitalization, this study investigated a sample of Historic Bazaar in Settlement of Southern Punjab during the Sultanate Era. Via survey, interview, and site visits, one bazaar in the ancient village was identified based on historical significance, unique value, representative value, scientific value, architectural relative artistic value, memorial value, and use.

SPSS is used to undertake a comparative analysis of bazaars based on user feedback, and existing plans were analyzed diagrammatically, as illustrated below.

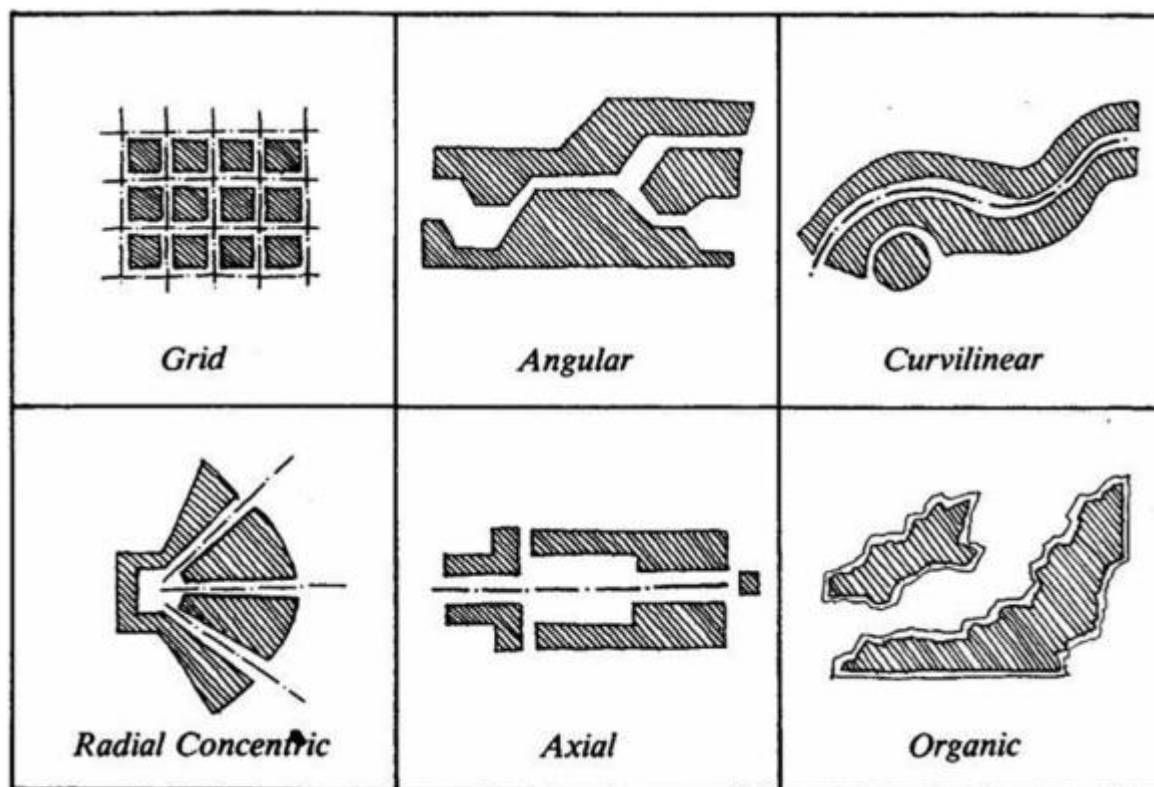


Figure-5: Typologies of Bazars in Southern Punjab w.r.t their functionality (Source: Free Hand Drawings by the Author)

Typology of Street Patterns of Bazars

The existing arrangements of the street pattern of bazars in Southern Punjab can be illustrated as follows based on their functionality and typology:

Primary

It's the key thoroughfare connecting the neighborhood to the rest of the city, where are more opportunities for living, learning, playing, working, and shopping. The street's width is adequate for the passage of large vehicles.

Secondary

It is a secondary roadway that is narrower than the one that came before it. Its primary purpose is to provide access to houses and streets that are smaller. Because the people who live in each Mohalla spend a lot of time together and act like one big family, these streets are the first unit of community in the neighborhood.

Tertiary

The main street and the minor street are connected by this type of roadway, which acts as a connector. Because it was intended to serve people in addition to carrying light and these are significantly narrower than the secondary road.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Architectural heritage in the cities of Southern Punjab, especially in the form of bazars along their ambience like URS and Mela grounds, was responsible for religious, recreational, commercial, and tourism activities, which are now in vanishing stages, and there is a need to regenerate them for the revival of the above activities, which can uplift the standard of the region's economy as well as cultural heritage protection. In this regard around hindered bazars were identified through initial survey in historical settlements of Southern Punjab on the basis of their time period, Location, bazar condition, available services, architectural importance and material used in indigenous construction techniques.

These identified bazars being heritage of the region should be regenerated to revive economic activities which will uplift the living conditions of the community as well as protection of rich cultural heritage in Southern Punjab Pakistan.

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