

DESTRUCTION OF PROTECTED ARCHAEOLOGY SITES IN SINDH

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There is systematic and continuous destruction of protected archaeological sites in Sindh, going unnoticed during past 20 years, due to disinterest and negligence. Following are a few glaring examples:

- Thul Mir Rukan Stupa site is encroached upon by the village of the same name and houses have been built on the very edge of that monument. Children play with its structure. The elders remove its bricks for construction of barns and etc.
- Kahu Daro land has been lost by Archaeological Department in a court case, to the local land owner. He has already started leveling, one of the finest Buddhist Stupa in the South-Asia, excavated by Henry Cousens at the end of the last and beginning of this century. It was a fine example of art and local workmanship reported in most prestigious books, journals and reports.
- Debar Ghangro Daro has been encroached by village Jhol and houses have been built on its structural remains.
- Brahmanabad/Mansura was destroyed in the last century for use of bricks as ballast material for North Western Railway tracks. Some 10 other sites around it are also lost due to cultivation.
- Only last week I witnessed Alore fort area, being occupied by unauthorized houses in process of building, on its high ground, by two Brohi stone material contractors, who are removing stones from Eocene Series of hills near by and need housing for themselves and their labor.
- Two fine tombs called Suhagan and Dhuhagan, of 13th or 14th century near Alore are threatened to destruction due to dynamiting of surrounding hills by the above two Brohi contractors from day to day. With exception of Jam Nizamuddin's tomb at Makli, no other Samma period tomb has the beauty of these two tombs, having very fine decorative patterns in local bricks and probably Kufic scripts in brick designs. They still are in sufficient safe state, to study their art, workmanship and etc., if early action to save is taken.
- Dhamraho Daro is being excavated right in its centre to borrow earth for mud houses of local village of same name. An Italian team wanted to excavate this mound but was refused only 3 years back.

- The land of Dhamraho Daro site is being brought under cultivation and some 75% of mound area is already under agricultural crops.
- The total area under Mohenjo Daro has not been mapped, but more than half is already cropped.
- Lohan-jo-Daro is occupied by a village built after establishment Dadu Sugar Mill in 1976.
- Khudabad city remains in Dadu Taluka, are being converted into agricultural fields.
- A 32 acre Middle Stone Age factory dating back to 500,000 years ago near Rohri found by Allchins in 1976 and reported in Geographical Journal of Royal Geographical Society London is being destroyed by contractors for supplying stone to local cement factory.

The above are just a few examples of how the past history and culture is being destroyed in front of our own eyes, in a short space of past 20 years.

Archaeological Survey of India and also of the Western Circle (under which Sindh came), declared many archaeological sites as protected. This does not mean their legal ownership by the Archaeological Department of Pakistan. The land belongs to Government of Sindh and through its Board of Revenue; it is sold, transferred or allotted to various users. The Archaeological Department has to get survey numbers of such sites from Directors of Survey and Settlement at Hyderabad or Sukkur, apply to the Sindh Board of Revenue, who in turn will ask respective Revenue Officers of 3 Barrages at Hyderabad and Sukkur, to allot the land to the Archaeological Department. The Archaeological Department then, has to have prepare entries made in Revenue Registers, in various Mukhtiarkars offices. Once the ownership is established the encroachments can legally be vacated. Mere letters to Governor, Chief Minister and commissioners can not help.

This is an appeal to all concerned to save our national heritage and the past.