

CENTRE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

The cultural heritage that exists today in physical form and in historical records, is the common heritage of us all, giving us an awareness of our common history and common future, as well as being an essential part of our cultural identity. Being custodians of this common heritage, we are responsible for its preservation and continuation for the benefit of our present as well as future generations. This responsibility is to be shared jointly and scrupulously by the society so that its continuity is ensured in the full richness of its authenticity in the times to come.

The preservation and conservation of archaeological sites and historical monuments is a challenging task. Public sector, responsible for it is handicapped by the problems of ludicrously inadequate funds, dearth of building materials as well as skilled labor, and unavailability of trained personnel.

Thus the need of contribution from citizen organizations/groups for preservation of heritage is greatly felt.

The Center for Archaeological and Environmental Research is multidisciplinary research institution, focusing on analytical studies of art and archaeological material, improving existing, and developing new conservation methods, for different mediums and objects. It is emphasizing the need of documentation of material culture and developing international liaison in related activities.

Through its collaborative activities the *Center* aims at developing wider base for assistance, to the similar public sector or privately owned institutions and organizations in related fields.

The national legislations have required and put almost unmanageable burden of protecting and preserving physical heritage, on the public sector management,

which has been further hit by financial cuts, as well as lack of human resource development means/program.

The Center for Archaeological and Environmental Research is meant to help in fulfilling some of the pressing needs in management of our rich but often neglected cultural heritage, through its programs in research, conservations, trainings, seminars, exhibitions and publications.

The Center is supported mainly by SEAS, a volunteer citizen organization, which is working since 1989, aiming at and with a motto of 'preserve heritage', a much applauded slogan, but very complicated when it comes to practice. As is known to every one, conservation is technical activity involving huge expenditures.

The Center has a *Regents Committee*, that offers advices for its plans and projects, and it is run by the *Board of Directors*, two of which are *Permanent*, responsible for its management and activities.

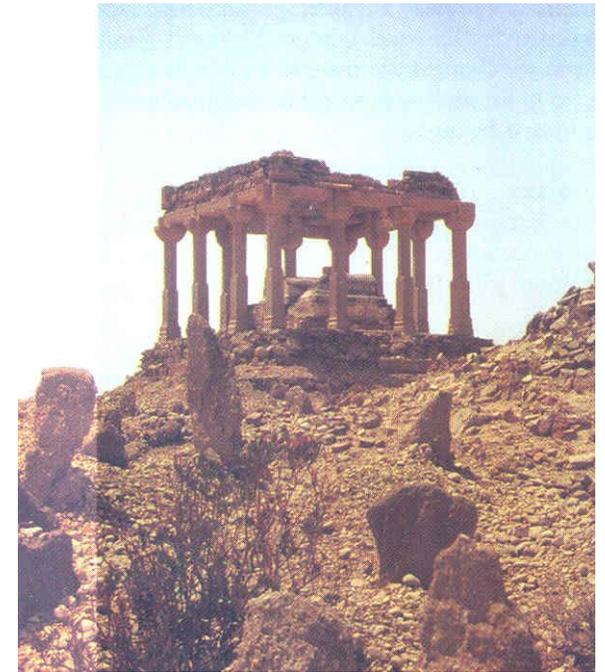
It is housed in a permanent Campus of its own, not far from the centre of city, offering many occasions of interaction and activity.

Conservation

Pakistan is exceptionally rich in its archaeological and architectural heritage possessing innumerable sites and monuments spread all over the length and breadth of the country, highly civilized activities cover a period of more than 9000 years.

This heritage had been built with a variety of material, such as mud, bricks and stones. Many augmented and decorated with glazed bricks, terracotta, marble, wood, metal, glass etc., each of these materials, in turn, varies widely in form and mechanical, chemical and thermal properties.

The preservation and conservation of archaeological sites and historical monuments is a challenging task.



The stone carved graves are part of our rich past greatly threatened, the Centre has conserved one such 17th century graveyard.

As referred to earlier for the public sector, responsible for its upkeep handicapped as it is, the task seems near impossible.

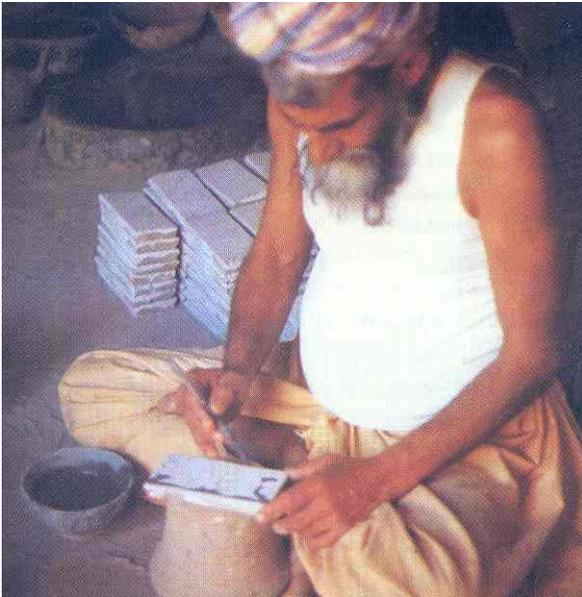
The Center is committed to preservation of physical heritage, and long term care of collections. It is nucleus, which takes care to promote co-operation among the practitioners in the diverse fields, such as building material, environmental studies, deterioration, conservation techniques, salvage practices, forensic methods in architecture and archaeology etc.

Resultantly the better methods, addressing the need of various issues, rising in conservation work come up for application.

The Center seeks technical advise, and assistance in its conservation plans and execution from similar organizations, at home and abroad.

The conservation research is supported by the Laboratory of the *Center*, which is developing its technical sections for diverse research work.

The *Center* did conservation of a 17th century stone carved graveyard quite recently, and also has done preservation of nineteenth century rare political letters, correspondence between rulers of native states and the British Governor of Sindh.



The Ceramics is a living art, the Centre is conducting research on use of ceramics for conservation projects.

Trainings

In furtherance of its objectives the *Center* organizes extensive program of trainings independently and in collaboration with other institutions, in the field of archaeological exploration & excavations, conservation of architectural heritage, paper treatment, reprographical means, displays and curatorial responsibilities, archives management etc. etc.

It also offers chances of on project practical training to promising individuals and also to the people working in the related fields, thus affording greater interaction,

promising application of international conventions and helping in avoiding general pitfalls of conservation.

Workshops too are organized for the benefit of general public, school students, as well as those desiring more detailed exposure to the issues relative to physical culture and its preservation and promotion of heritage as well as eco tourism.

Starting with single day activity to two week intensified involvement, these courses primarily aim at enabling individual to understand issues of cultural heritage. The objectives are to inculcate analytical approach to management and technical issues in maintaining and conservation on site.

Publication

The *Center* supports an extensive activity, through its sister organizations, these working at District level involve its members as well as invite intelligentsia to participate in contributing to the research on assigned areas. The collected papers are published normally through these organizations.

Old manuscripts, best complimented with the translations. Form part of the publications, alongwith the monographs in result of given assignments.

The Archaeological Review is a regular publication, reporting generally the activities of the members of SEAS, work of the *Center* and Archaeological projects related to the region.

Exhibitions

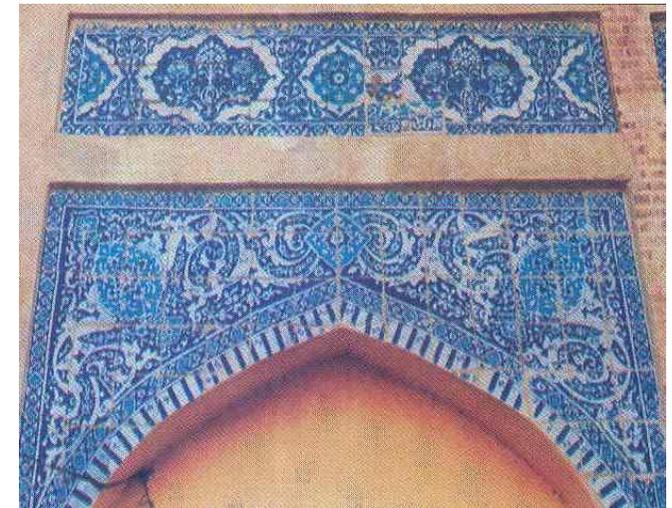
The *Center* organizes small scale focused exhibitions, at its campus, as well as outside it, to address the targeted audience. The exhibitions are meant to broaden the public awareness of heritage and help educate in understanding the issues to its preservation. Organizing these events the *Center* draws material for its collections, but also borrows the exhibits from public sector collections as well as from individuals.

Seminars

The Seminars are considered an instrument to bring about occasions of formal interaction, among the more learned individuals, working in the same field.

This interaction generates a dialogue that helps in identifications of possible avenues of projected target. Resultant debate & identification of certain areas of consensus, though not desired to be incorporated in charter, help nevertheless in clarifying long standing misgivings in the academic or specialized circles. Resolutions thus passed can work as guidelines, for related sectors.

Thus the *Center* in accordance with its wide program help in bringing about Seminars and publish proceedings. These are often collaborated events, where like-minded organizations are coming forward, in order to have wider base.



Resource starved conservation mechanism is compromising authenticity, this emphasizes need of professionalism, Mian Yar Mohammad's Tomb at Khudebad.