

Social Sustainability in the Streets of Walled City, Lahore

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Abstract: Over the last two decades, sustainability has become a key consideration for city governments. However, many projects have been dogged and overlooked the important component of sustainability i.e. social sustainability. The Walled City Lahore Authority (WCLA) has initiated the project with Agha Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) in the nucleus of Lahore, Pakistan with the name of Royal Trade. Walled City is the home of numerous monuments and iconic buildings built in the Mughal Era and has not only a wealthy cultural heritage but also has a strong relationship between living cultural heritage (folklore, traditional values, and related items) and urban ensembles. The life is still sustaining in the heart of Lahore city. The word sustainability surrounds the human state of wellbeing. This paper is an attempt to see the consequence of the Royal trade concerning the Social life of WCL which was the famous entity of this area. This research explores how the restoration of façade has affected the social wellbeing of people who are residents of this area from decades.

Keywords: Walled City Lahore, Social Sustainability, Cultural Heritage, Royal Trail.

I. INTRODUCTION

The urban sprawl has forced life to spread out of the fortified walled cities. The preservations of these nucleus of metropolises is vital as these walled cities are the real back-up data of socioeconomic of urban-living of both society and individual. Nowadays, national and local authorities together with multilateral agencies are focusing on conservation of historic cities in sustainable way. The more one read about the word sustainability the more one gets puzzled by what it reveals and what it hides. Keeping all in view, Agha Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) had signed MOU, along with other partners, with Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) in 2007, to assist technically in the execution of Shahi Guzargah (Royal Trail) Project. Both organizations developed the Strategic plan of the project accompanied by physical and socio-economic baseline [1]. Royal Trail route was selected as first phase to start with the conservation of Walled City of Lahore. The process led to urban development that integrated the environmental, social and cultural concerns into planning, design and implementation of management programs and projects. AKTCH and WCLA has done the This route starts from Delhi Gate to Lahore Fort and remained under the usage of Mughal Kings. Monuments like Shahi Hamam and Wazir Khan Mosque are first time exposed after the removal of all encroachments. These two monuments act as anchors which are holding the track's history, way back decades ago.

Walled city is known for its cultural values and social life. Over the past three decades, the Walled City has gone through a transformation of its urban and social fabric, and a widespread decay of its building stock.

II. MATERIALS & METHODS

Sustainability term does not only seek to minimize the negative environmental impact of buildings but also has two other

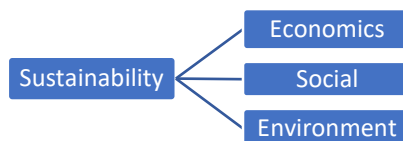


Figure 1 Dimensions of Sustainability Source: Author

dimensions i.e.; economics and social. Social Sustainability and historic cities has a very close relationship.

2.1. Human as Social Animal

Humans are regarded as Social Animals as they interact highly with each other which makes them a recognizable and distinct society among the other all living species. Humans are living in the form of groups/ societies since they came on this mother land earth. Man has to live in society for his existence and welfare [2]. Biologically and psychologically he is compelled to live in

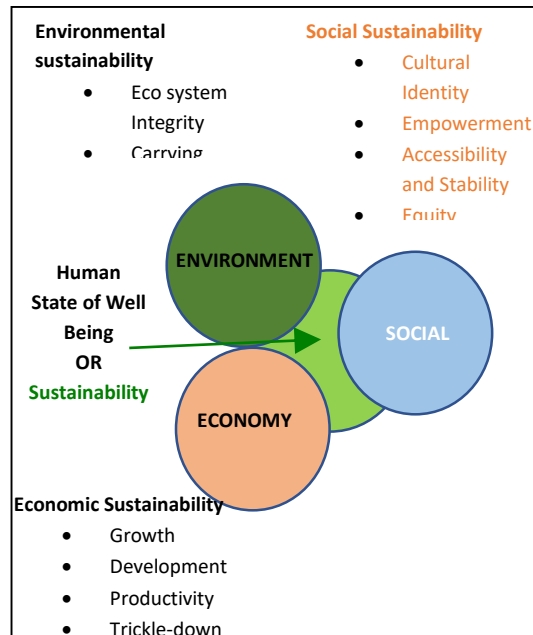


Figure 2 Structure of Sustainability Source: Author

society. Because a complete isolated life is unbearable for him and he can't develop into a normal individual in isolation.

A Legendary Greek Philosopher Aristotle said:

“Man is by nature a social animal. He who lives without society is either a beast or a God”

Man is society by nature. It is because he depends on social heritage which is a mixture of customs beliefs and ideals etc [3]. Society preserves social heritage and transmits it from one generation to another. Social heritage molds man's attitudes, beliefs, morals and ideals.

It is said that *“Man only becomes man among Men”*.

Man is born with some abilities which flourished only and only in society. Emotional development, intellectual maturity is not

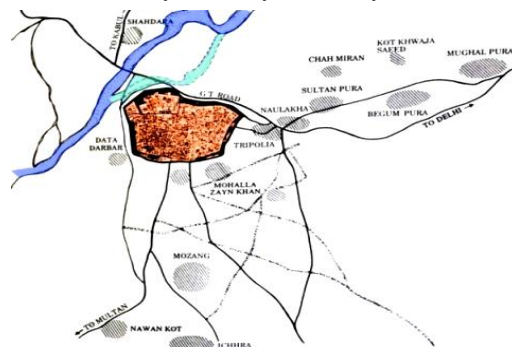


Figure 3. The old city, the principal routes leading to it and Mughal-period (1525-1707) Mohallas outside it.

possible without society. Therefore, society determines our mental equipment's. It shapes our identity, our thought and our emotions.

2.2. Social Sustainability

Sustainable architecture uses a conscious approach to energy and ecological conservation in the design of the built environment. The urban fabric of a Society enhances the social sustainability as it provides opportunities for balance and connectivity.

Socially sustainable architecture:

- is a balance between the individual and the collective and between the present and the future.
 - is a connections between individuals within the building and between occupants and the surrounding community.
- There is a lot talk about the economic and environment sustainability. However, the third sphere in trio, social sustainability is also getting attention in the mainstream discussions.

2.3. Walled City & Social Sustainability

The Walled City of Lahore, also known as the “Old City” or “Androon Shehr”, entails the Lahore that was fortified during the Mughal Era. The Walled City of Lahore has evolved over time and, as is evident from the urban fabric, it didn’t emerge as a planned development nor was created by one ruler or during one era. The Walled City has obviously been influenced by various eras of time, different determinants working at the same time to bring the Walled City to its current form. It is situated on the left bank of River Ravi, the Walled City is a monument in itself and has various layers laden with tangible and intangible heritage. Today, the greater Walled City area is characterized by the evident symptoms of ‘decay’ such as dilapidating infrastructure, deteriorating building stock, traffic congestion, noise and air pollution, visual clutter, and management-related issues. All these issues are rooted in the organization and management of different land uses.



Katrah in Walled City Source: Author

this fortified City with the Muslim immigrants from India, who had to live in Hindu Havelis. Due to this inter-communal strife, destruction of urban fabric occurred which was restored in 1954 under the Act of Punjab Development of Damaged Areas. The lower land values resulted in the concentration of low income groups and wealthier people residing outside the City. Lahore Improvement Trust instated a commercial plan in between 1970’s and 80’s, with 29% population moving outside the City [4]. The space left by the immigrants was mostly filled by commercial concentration, stalk holders and small scale manufacturers, mainly due due to availability of low price labor.

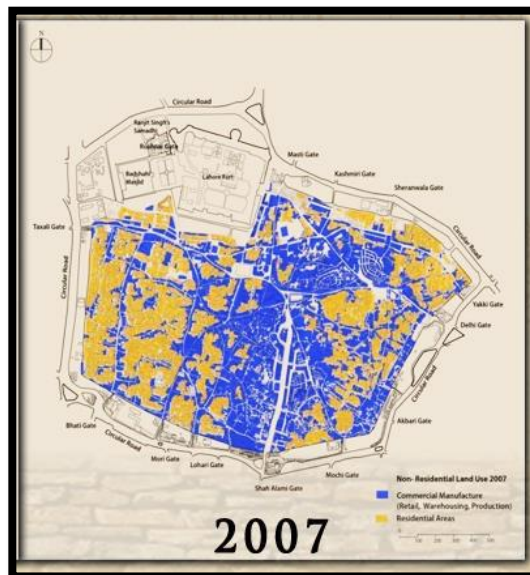


Figure 4 Blue color shows density of commercialization in Walled City in 2007 [9]

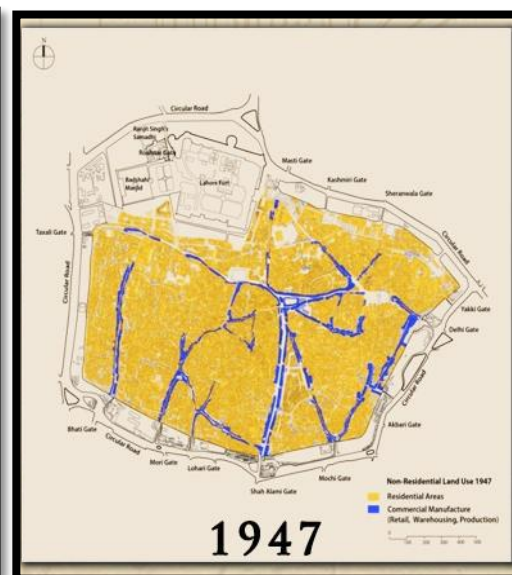


Figure 5 Blue color shows density of commercialization in Walled City in 1947 [9]

This encroachment of commercialization in residential area of Walled City kept on increasing era after era. These entire circumstances over the years led to the abuse of buildings with the use of the buildings in terms of small scale industry and residential purposes, and as well as replacement of old heritage with new construction. Now, famous Bazars of Lahore are located in the Walled City, such as Shah Almi Bazar, Kahsmiri Bazar, Soha Bazar, Sarafa Bazar, Khusa Bazar etc.

Lahore witnessed turbulence, peace and tranquility, cultural festivity, conqueror devastations and destructions in different periods of history. Walled City is, itself, a fortified City which was fortified with a city wall during the Mughal Period. This Castle like city was once guarded by 13 entering gates, which remained intact till the British Rule. Fort, known as Shahi Qilla, is situated on the northwestern side of the Walled City. The Fort, built by Mughal Emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar, remained the hub of political movements of the Emperors.

The Walled City streets act as a space which provides settings to the users according to their cultural and natural context. Women in streets often stand in doorways, or sit on steps of the doorways and chat informally with each other as the physical formation of the streets not only provides shade from scorching sun but also provides privacy, thus conforming to the “eye on street”

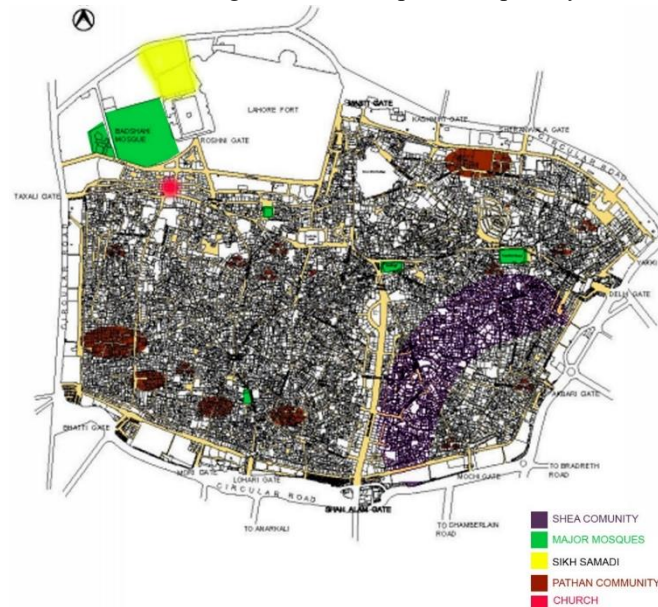


Figure 6. Concentration of different ethnic Groups in the Walled City

concept by Jane Jacob [5]. Katrah, an outdoor room among the residences, provides a greater measure of privacy due to the blind ends of the streets. In its social activities, children’s play, neighborly interaction and an occasional fights enhance the sense of ownership and natural surveillance as described by Oscar Newman, according to whom “windows and doorways, when facing streets, extend the zone of resident’s territorial commitments” [6]. Cul-de-Sac (band gali) gives an attenuated privacy as no stranger can come through. Social Class segregation has had an evident effect on the overall form of the cities and their visual appearance of their residential districts. In the Walled City, we can observe that the roads are comparatively wider and less crowded in front of bigger Havelis. Though one can find a cluster of smaller houses surrounding the bigger Havelis, they aren’t as congested as the usual streets.

In the Walled City, we see different areas like Koocha Jamadaran or the Heera Mandi restricted for the ‘Dancing Girls of Lahore’. Such groupings give the area a specific character which could be related to the residents of the area e.g. a musical instrument market has been established in the Heera Mandi owing to the activities in the area. One could find a separate Muhallah for the Shia Community, surrounding the famous Nisar Haveli, known as the originating place for a grand Ashura procession. Such grouping also promotes a bonding between the residents, encouraging a homely atmosphere in the neighborhood.



Figure 7 Imam Bargah for Shias and Nisar Haveli famous for Shia Processions Source: Author



Figure 8 Musical Street of Heera Mandi Source: Author

In the Walled City, we can see places like cinemas, snooker areas etc. Abruptly, at the end of a narrow street, one can also find open spaces used by the children in the area for playing, and also rented for social gathering or functions e.g. wedding ceremonies. In the Walled City of Lahore, the streets aren't just used to facilitate movement, but are also a place for leisure activities. It is where the children play or the women stand in doorway or sit in the sets to socialize with each other because the social design provides privacy and shade from scorching summer sunlight.

In the Walled City, we also find structures like Shahi Hamam built for leisure and social activities of the residents or specific class of the society. Shahi Hamam has been decorated with beautiful detail work, and the techniques used for steam chambers, now visible due to digging done for restoration purposes, was innovative and unique for its time. Such places provided a good



Figure 9. City Cinema near Yousaf Salahudin's Haveli Source: Author



Figure 10. Open Space used as a playground or Bigger Gatherings Source: Author



Figure 11 Snooker areas in the walled city Source: Author

space for leisure activities and social gatherings.

2.4. Methodology

The research is purely qualitative in nature. The data has been collected from relevant books, websites, already published research papers and survey from the general public. The research is based on ethnographical studies, narrative analysis and surveys to get a better understanding of the topic under discussion.

In order to get the first hand information and knowledge of the subject under study, a survey has been conducted with the general public living in the walled city in the Royal trail route.

2.5. Royal Trail

WCL has a wealth of cultural heritage and vernacular architecture. The Government of Punjab has started the project for maintaining cultural heritage and maintainable tourism of WCL. In 2007 Agha Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) was added in partnership for Technical Assistance.

The pilot project is divided into 4 phases:

- I. From Delhi Gate to Chowk Purani Kotwali
- II. From Chowk Purani Kotwali to Akbari Gate Lahore Fort through Chowk Chuna Mandi and Moti Bazaar Walled City Lahore
- III. Source development for water supply system for Phase-1
- IV. From Chowk Purani Kotwali to Sonehri Masjid via Dabbi Bazaar

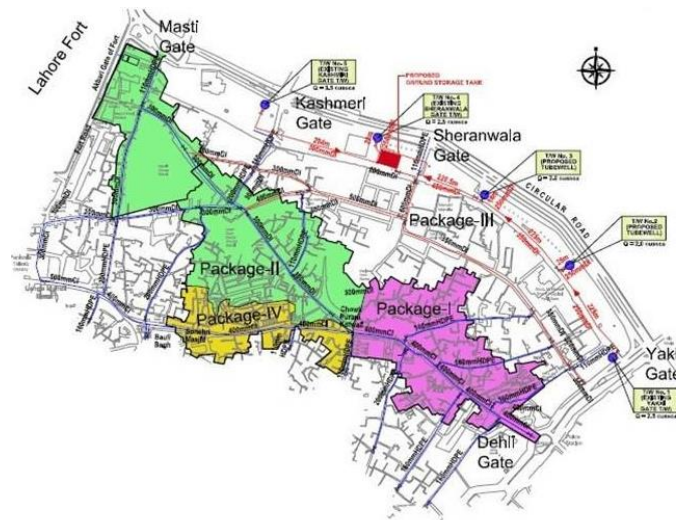


Figure 12 Royal Trail Renovation Plan in phases [9]

The project was launched back in 2012. The aim of this project was to improve the living condition of the current inhabitants of walled city of Lahore along with improved and up-to-date facilities of infrastructure without damaging the historical fabric. [7]

2.6. Interventions & Aftereffects

Beginning from Delhi Gate, WCLA has restored a 1.6 km long stretch of the heritage trail leading up to Chowk Kotwali. The trail comprises 99 streets, 700 Houses and 509 shops [7]. The infrastructure facilities has been laid underground such as high voltage cables. In order to have better drainage system the sewerage system has been laid separately from storm water drainage system. The project also included removal of shops and other properties that had encroached into the public right of way, and the provision of street pavement and urban furniture. The removal of all encroachments was based on a Resettlement Action Plan



Figure 13 Galli SourJan Singh before & after respectively. Source: Author



Figure 14 Configuration of a typical Street
Source: Author

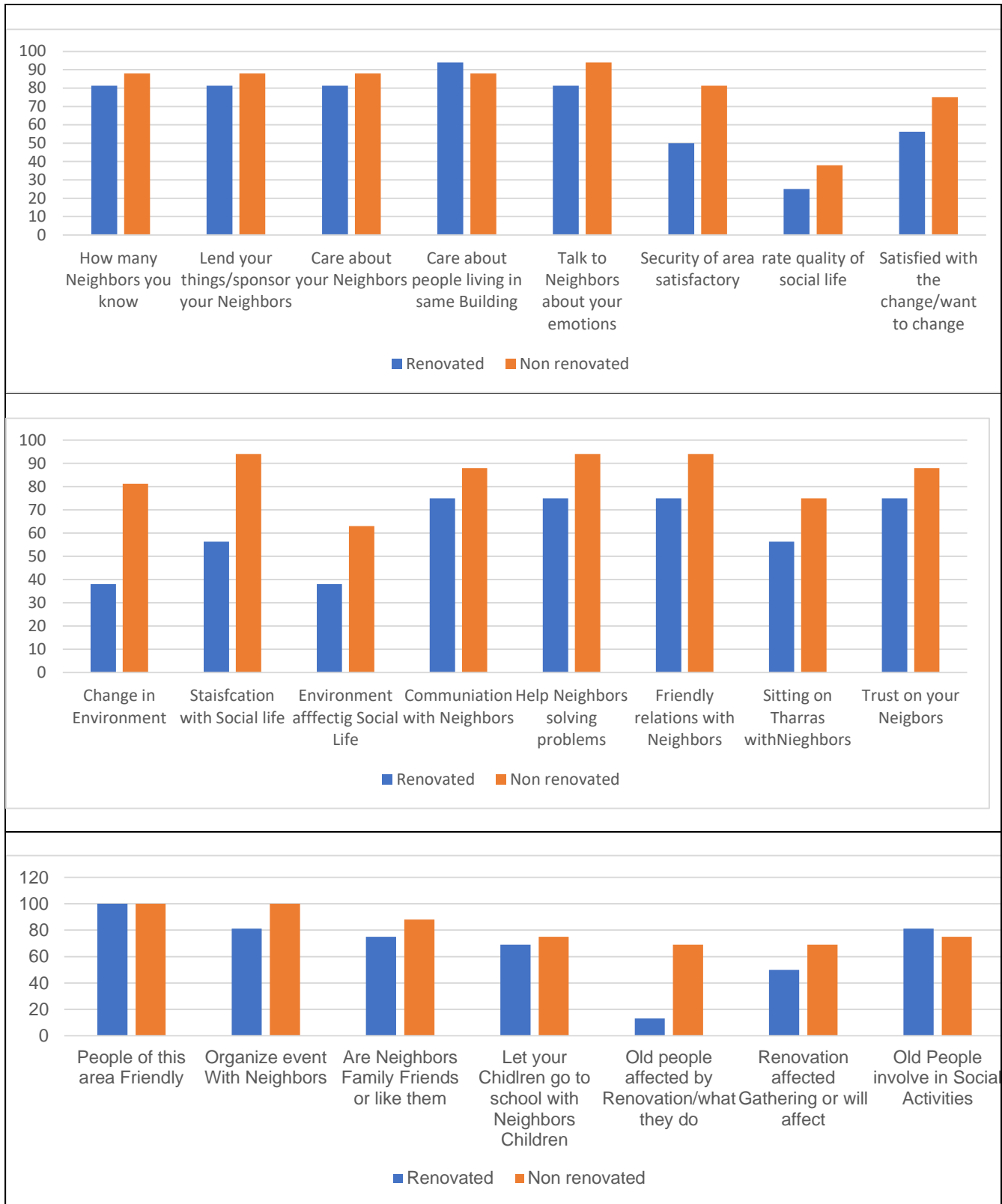
(RAP) according to the guidelines of the World Bank. The RAP was devised to compensate the encroachers financially and relocate them. The purpose of the RAP was to bring the encroached monuments and streets back to their original magnificence. [7].

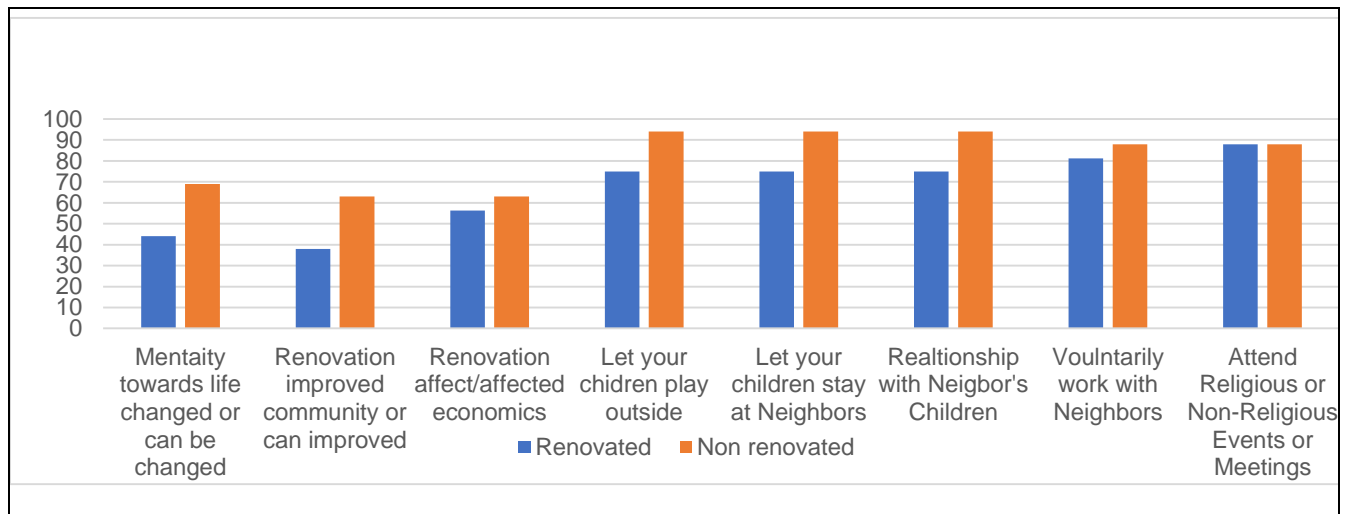
2.7. Survey

This project has been subjected to criticism at hands of various experts. I have conducted a survey consisting of a questionnaire. This questionnaire is distributed in two areas of walled city one is the part of this Sustainable Walled City Project, Phase-1 from Delhi Gate to Chowk Purani Kotwali. The other part is non renovated part which includes area outside of this project and other gates of Walled City.

III. RESULT

Following is the analysis of comparison of each question of questionnaire.





The Sustainable Walled City Project Completed the phase 1 (i.e; Dehli Gate to Chowk Kotwali) which is now totally commercialized. People have left this space due to insecurity as for them stranger come over here for shopping. Thailas used to be very important feature of walled city chowks and streets. Under this project people who were sitting under dehli gate from last 60 years are forced to leave that space. Now they are unemployed and municipal committee does not allow them to sit on the Guzar Gah as well. According to them there is no room for them in this project. People are very much disturbed. They were told that they will be get paid but they were not. Commercial area people says that their business are going down as vehicle are not allowed anymore due to this number of costumer is getting less.

IV. CONCLUSION

Social structure has been identified as

- The relationship of definite entities or groups to each other,
- Enduring patterns of behavior by participants in a social system in relation to each other, and
- Institutionalized norms or cognitive frameworks that structure the actions of actors in the social system. (Wikipedia, n.d.)

Most cities of the world have an older nucleus, from where the city has originated and grown spatially. In Lahore this older area is its 11th century Walled city, surrounded by the areas that developed around it in the 19th and early 20th century, and forming today the Inner City core. The Lahore Inner city is Lahore's historic and commercial heart, comprising not only historic heritage but also Punjab's largest market of wholesale, small-scale manufacturing, and many related activities and land-uses. Although in a physically dilapidated state today, it is a bustling hub for the city economically, culturally, and socially.

According to surveys population of walled city in 2005 was 2.5 lakh but it was decreased to 1.5 lakh in 2007. People are selling their lands on commercialization bases. Today the greater Walled city-Circular road area is typified by the manifest symptoms of 'decay' such as dilapidating infrastructure, deteriorating building stock, traffic congestion, noise and air pollution, visual clutter, and management-related issues. All these issues are rooted in the organization and management of different land uses. Legislations and laws have always had a great impact on the urban morphology of any area, may it be the building laws or other social/economic laws. The Walled City is the prime example of the lack of building laws in an area. Due to this encroachment social life is very much disturbed. Part of Shahi-Guzargah (i.e; Dehli Gate to Chowk Kotwali) is all commercialized. This can easily be seen in the analysis shown in charts that social life in non-renovated is much better then renovated area. This project has undoubtedly revive that architectural ambiance of that old time but it hasn't able to give the life to them. Area behind them is totally abandoned by the people. This project has taken area from peoples territory has it has affected their privacy as on every Sunday on Saturday mob of tourist came to visit this renovation. This has been done in "Sabeel Wali Gali". In Mahboob's neighborhood, demolished the second floor of his residence approximately five months ago — and subsequently appears to have forgotten all about it. They haven't returned even to retrieve the construction equipment deployed at the house, he says. "Now I am forced to sleep on the street and my family has to make do in a 7×8 foot room on the ground floor of our house in hot weather," he tells the Herald as he points to the ruinous living conditions inside his residence, where debris and construction material lies strewn all around." [8].

People are moving outside the walled city because of poor infra-structure and commercial encroachment. People are losing trust level due to this encroachment. Due to this social life of walled is dying and this project couldn't able to revive the social sustainability of the Nucleus of Lahore City which can easily be seen in the charts. Infect it has given air to the expiry of social life.

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