

Historic Bridges of Pakistan – Endorsing Communities

Tania Ali Soomro - Karachi - Pakistan

Lecturer, DAP - Dawood University of Engineering & Technology

B. Arch (MUET), MSc Conservation/ Restoration (RLICC - KULeuven)

mPCATP, mIAP, mICOMOS

Abstract:

Bridges have always been a purpose of providing passageway over the physical obstacles. The construction style of bridges has always varied over the time with the advancement of technology. Some of the primitive bridges were built of wooden logs or planks or the stones as simple platforms to connect the two end points.

The other often overseen characteristic of the bridges is that they not only offer a substantial connection between the two ends of the lands but also bestow a link between communities that dwell at those two ends. It would be best understood by the 16th century Italian architect and engineer, Andrea Palladio as he said "...bridges should befit the spirit of the community by exhibiting commodiousness, firmness, and delight..."

This paper collects information on the historic bridges of Pakistan in its various regions and focuses on their role as a catalyst to the community interconnection and the development. Despite of their locations in entirely different districts from each other, they exert same effects on the lives of the inhabitants of those areas. Business endorsement to the external exposure these bridges are credited to lift the barriers in their way. The selection of bridges for research is through two decisive factors; the grounds which inspired their construction and their association with any historic occurrence. The shortlisted bridges offer a wide variety of materials and approaches from RCC to Stone and from thick piers to rope suspension fashion. The paper also stresses upon the repercussions of declaring most of the historic bridges protected on national list of reserved heritage.

The research methodology followed in this paper starts with the available archival analysis, physical observation, photographic documentation to the statistics review and the interviews with the local inhabitants. The findings of this research portray about the present conservation status of the bridges. It also converses about the significance of their role as being catalyst in the community interlinking whether their significance is treated same as it was meant to or have changed over time.

Key words: physical obstacles, catalyst to the community, inhabitants