

RELIGIOUS TOURISM IN PAKISTAN & Increasing Pollution

The Case Study of the Shrine
of Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hujwiri



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper will study, as a case study, the unmanaged solid waste adding to the pollution of the city of Lahore in Pakistan, which is collected from the surroundings of the most famous religious Shrine (attraction) ‘Darbar of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hujwiri (RA)’. This paper will also attempt to analyse the city’s existing waste management system in general and Shrine specifically to provide a sustainable solution for the unmanaged waste problem of the Shrine.

While looking at the religious tourism in Pakistan, we observed that in 2014, Pakistan earned 283 million US dollars from the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2015) as Pakistan is a crucible of four populous religions of the world, which are Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Sikhism. Hundreds of holy shrines and places are located in Pakistan related to these four religions, which attract millions of religious tourists annually. Along with the monetary contributions to Pakistan’s economy, they also contribute to the increasing pollution and unmanaged waste in the country.

The study has employed the mixed approach to measure the unmanaged solid waste contributing to the pollution of the city of Lahore, collected from the shrine of Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hujwiri’s surroundings (R.A.). The questionnaires were developed and distributed among the shopkeepers (restaurant and catering companies) around the Shrine, to collect from that exercise the information about the whole cooked food for the people at the Shrine and the total generated solid waste. The administrator of the shrine, TMO (town management officer who manages the waste of that town), and the representative of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC), which officially

manages the total waste of the city of Lahore in Pakistan, were interviewed in person to assess the quantum of complete unmanaged waste and the existing system of waste management to reduce the increasing pollution of the city. While collecting the information from the shopkeepers around the Shrine, the sample size selected was the total population of the shopkeepers. The secondary data related to the solid waste generated, the amount of unmanaged waste, the existing standard procedure of disposing of that waste, and the pollution situation in the city of Lahore were gathered from various books, recent research papers, and the database of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC). In the conclusion and the recommendation section of the present paper, a solution to deal with the unmanaged waste produced from religious tourism is provided.

The estimation suggested that the aggregate unmanaged waste from all the major shrines of Lahore, which is around 27,000 tons annually, is emitting 4.3 million cf of landfill gas (LFG) annually, including 48.5 thousand tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and 59.5 thousand tons of methane (CH₄). This is equivalent to carbon dioxide emission after burning 136.88 million gallons of diesel.

It is concluded that unmanaged waste collected from all the shrines of the city of Lahore, which fall under one government department called Auqaf, can be recycled instead of just dumping it at the landfilling site in Lahore. The authority of Auqaf can head that project itself without asking for any loan, grant, or subsidy from Pakistan's government. An aggregate of 27 thousand tons of unmanaged waste is collected from all the shrines of Lahore annually. Moreover, this waste is highly organic, as major commercial activities around these shrines are related to food preparation and serving. The initial cost of buying a compost bioreactor would be Rs. 12.8 million (\$80 thousand). This can be covered by the exogenous income of the shrine, which is Rs. 300 million (\$1.875 million) annually. More than 13 thousand tons of compost can be generated, which would create revenue of Rs. 136.87 million (\$855.4 thousand)

annually, whereas the estimated variable cost of operating is Rs. 2.5 million only (\$15 thousand approx.).



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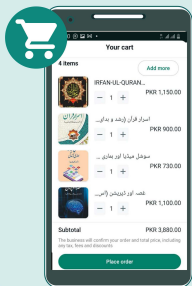
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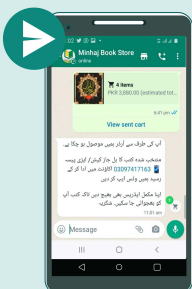


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