

# **Towards Achieving a Balance between Real Estate Development Potentials and Issues of Heritage Conservation in the City Centre, with the Backdrop of Karachi**

**Ms. Masooma Mohib Shakir\***

## **Abstract**

In view of trends, practices and issues related to heritage preservation and regulatory building laws in Karachi city, the following paper aims to devise a few ideas from an economic and urban planning point of view for possible practical solutions. Due to the absence of government's focus on the socio-economic viability of conservation and to incorporate conservation as a planning function, a conflict of interest exists between those seeking preservation of heritage and those wanting to maximize the real estate potential in the city center due to higher land values. The two prominent stakeholders at opposite ends of the spectrum are the conservationists and developers respectively, both with a different vision and objectives. In reality, the conflict of interest between the issue of heritage preservation and real estate potentials in the city center makes for a complex problem. A clear simplified problem statement or vision for the matter can be the starting point for the resolving of an important issue.

The hypothesis of the following paper is: *Amidst a situation of rising economic pressures of real estate development, conservation of the built cultural heritage in the mega city of Karachi requires directional policies and incentives to achieve a certain balance through channeling real estate development demands and requirements as well as cater to conservation of heritage making conservation more meaningful for the city.*

The research framework used for this has been a review of relevant international scientific research papers, along with a series of interviews and discussions with some prominent stakeholders. The literature review also included study of examples of developing cities or recently developed cities that have dealt with similar issues. The examples looked at in this reference, where by-laws and policies have undergone change over the past few decades and have enormously influenced the general attitudes towards built heritage that include developing or recently developed cities of Singapore, Shanghai and Seoul. The reasons for selecting these cases is because they are recently developed or developing contexts who have tried to achieve similar goals, or through their executed cases, illustrate lessons learnt, providing some food for thought for the direction that can be taken in this measure.

The research methodology has several limitations as the paper and its scope evolved through discussions and debate. It lacks a structured literature review.

The paper is structured to highlight initially the importance of a vision for conservation of heritage in city planning. Introducing a spectrum of approaches to conservation in developing contexts, the paper highlights the need for a multi disciplinary approach to conservation planning. The last section of the paper outlines the major issues in practice and the direction for possible approaches relating to the former section of the paper.