THE LOST FESTIVALS OF THE BRITISH LAHORE: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

This study is primarily concerned with the lost and forgotten fairs and carnivals of the pre-partition Lahore. For a long time, Lahore has been a place of different festivals for Indian subcontinent residents and visitors. Prior to the partition of the British India, three major communities (Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus) coexisted peacefully in old Lahore. However, the partition of the Punjab (1947) resulted in a large population shift, and the city had to deal with the relocation of three communities. Sikhs and Hindus were forced to relocate from Lahore to Charda (eastern) Punjab in India, while Muslims were forced to relocate from various parts of Eastern Punjab to Lahore and other areas of Lehnda (western) Punjab. This shift of the population drastically affected the cultural landscape of Lahore. Lahore in next decades faced a great loss in festivals. the festivals had a facet of the old city since Hindu Shahi era (perhaps beyond this era) to Muslim Rule and then to Sikh and British periods. Festivals like Bhadar Kali fair, Jorr da Mela, Paar da Mela etc. were sparkling features of the city, now elapsed. The modern Lahore is a Muslim metropolitan and non-Muslim (especially the Hindu and Sikh with some exceptional cases) festivals have buried in debris of history. Some fairs and festivals lost due to partition of the Indian sub-continent while other elapsed in the name of modernization.

Keywords: Old Lahore, Lahore festivals, lost culture, lost festivals, forgotten fairs.

The development of festivals and their effects on people are referred to as festivalisation. The festivalisation is integrally linked to human culture. Festivals have always been an important part of human culture and have been linked to religion. Festivals are examples of intangible culture because they showcase art and community symbols (Cundy, 2016, 11-13).

Lahore is (and was) the Indian subcontinent's most festive city. For over a millennium, Lahore has been a religious melting pot. Lahore was a Hindu-dominated town prior to Islam. Since the Ghaznavid era until the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar, Lahore has been a mingling of two large communities: Hindus and Muslims, and since Akbar's

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reign, a new religious community, the Sikhs, has been added to the socio-religious mosaic of ancient Lahore. The British Lahore experienced another western group (English), all communities contributed to Lahore's cultural life and left their marks on the cultural landscape of Lahore. Festivals or fairs were one of them; fairs were many and varied in nature; social and religious. For a long time, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs coexisted peacefully until political instability erupted as a result of the freedom movement, which was at its peak at the mid of the 20th century. Eventually, the Indian subcontinent gained independence, and the (combined) Punjab was partitioned into Muslim and Sikh Punjab. As a result of the partition, there was a huge migration; the Sikhs and Hindus had to leave their beloved Lahore for India, while Muslims from other parts of India fled to seek safety in the newly formed state of Pakistan. New settlers filled the void in Lahore, transforming it from a pluralistic to a Muslim city. It had an impact on the town's cultural life; non-Muslim festivities faced extinction. Here is a quick historical overview of those festivals that have died or are disappearing slowly but steadily. Only one mela (Ram Thamman) is taken from outside contemporary Lahore; during the partition, Tehsil Kasur was part of District Lahore.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This is a qualitative study for which the historical descriptive method was adopted. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted, personal observations of the fairs (post-partition period) were also incorporated. There are very few scattered studies on the fairs and festivals of the British Lahore. Though the book of John Campbell deals with ethno-history of the British India but he discusses three fairs of Lahore; Bhadar Kali, Mela Chiraghan and Kadmon Ka mela. The *Colonial Lahore* is one of the finest works (Talbot & Kamran) on the British Lahore but least it deals with fairs and festivals of the British Lahore. Naqoosh Lahore Number is a basic source to study Lahore from ancient times to 1960s and one essay deals with fairs and festivals of Lahore till 1960s. The Lahore Gazetteer was published in the nineteenth century and some old Lahore fairs are briefly discussed in this compilation. Syed Ali Raza has submitted his MPhil dissertation (Raza, 2008) on religious and non-religious festivals of Lahore, though he gives a detailed study of current fairs and festivals but some old festivals are missing as his major focus was the post partition period or current fairs and festivals.

BAISAKHI: THE SPRING HARVEST FESTIVAL

Baisakhi (sometimes written Vaisakhi) is primarily a Sikh religious festival held in April each year; Hindus also mark it religiously, although Muslims in Punjab have traditionally celebrated it as a harvest fair. Baisakh, also known as Vaisakh in Punjabi, is the first month of the Punjabi calendar. The Baisakhi is the most respected religious fair of the Sikh community, and it is observed to honour or remember the Khalsa (warrior *panth*) that was formed by the tenth Guru of Sikhism, Guru Gobind Singh (Jacobsen, 2008, 192).

The Baisakhi *mela* was a vibrant trait of cultural landscape of Lahore; partition of the Punjab and modernization of Lahore has swallowed its real flavour. This *mela* was used to be held on the river Ravi in Lahore. All three communities, mentioned above already, were used to attend with enthusiasm. All participants were used to take bath in the river Ravi and dance on the beats of drums. However later, when Hindu-Muslim relations were at tightrope due to political affiliation before the partition of India, the Muslims abandoned the Baisakhi *mela* and until the partition of mass migration of 1947 the Baisakhi *mela* had been observed by the Sikhs and the Hindus (Nizami, 1962, 766). Another venue of the Baisakhi *mela* was Gurdwara Chota Nanakiana at Manga in Lahore, now *mela* on this gurdwara has been elapsed while the gurdwara is in pathetic condition, victim of negligence of concerned quarters (Qaiser, 1998, 76). In modern Lahore, still it is being observed however with no comparison to pre-partition fair. The Government of Pakistan runs special trains for Sikhs to attend the Baisakhi at Lahore (Raza, 2008, 78). The Sikh *yatris* visit Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Lahore, Janam Asthan in Nankana and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur during Baisakhi.

KITE-FLYING THE BASANT MELA

From older time to the present, the Basant has been Lahore's most joyous event. It had been the most celebrated fair by all populations in Lahore, regardless of faith, throughout history, and even the partition of the Punjab had little effect on it. The Basant is mostly associated with the spring season that is seen in February, when spring arrives after the winter season. The Basant celebration involving kite-flying has two centres in the Indian subcontinent: Lahore and Kasur (Waheed & Nayer, 1988, 6). According to history old Basant *mela* was held at shrine of Hazrat Madho Lal Hussain (RA) while the Hindus were used to visit the *samdhi* of Haqeeqat Rai (Latif, 1892/2010, 373) near the shrine of Madho Lal Hussain. Because Haqeeqat Rai was put to death for blasphemy (Lal, 1884/2012, 211-12) during the reign of Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah, he is considered a Hindu hero. However, both historians Latif and Kanniayah Lal did not mention any kite-flying during the Basant festival at the closing of the 19th century. An English explorer and diplomat, Alexander Burnes, give an account of the Basant festival during the reign of Ranjit Singh in 1832. In the first week of February 1832, he took part in the Basant festival. Ranjit Singh invited him as a diplomat, and he was mounted on an elephant. Burnes gives an account of the Basant that there were two parallel rows of Punjab's troops, in Lahore, having length of two miles, all were dressed in yellow uniform the dress code of the festival, at the end of rows royal tents were pitched where Ranjit Singh heard Grant Sahib and later the king was offered fruits, yellow flowers and gifts (Burnes, 1834, 26-28). Burnes also did not mention any kite-flying during the festival, perhaps it was not an important trait of the festival at that time.

The Basant had been held in Lahore till recent past, even it got the international fame and had attracted thousands of international tourists every year. However, by the end

of the twentieth century, this vibrant festival had begun to fade from Pakistan's cultural mosaic. In our boyhood, the Basant meant largely kite-flying over the roofs and parks. Lahore's sky had been offering a glimpse of a massive colourful canvas, full of kites of different sizes, shapes, and colours. However, in later days' innovations were added to Basant; now it was not merely a kite-flying event rather than get-to-gather, treats, musical shows, dance parties, drum-beating and fireworks. One more flavour was added to the Basant was night celebrations and now the kite lovers had extra fun time. For kite-flying at night special white coloured kites (*patang* and *gudday*) and flood lights with noisy music had been arranged over the rooftops. It had been phenomenal night event of the history of Lahore; almost sleepless Lahore for one day and one night.

Later, at eve of the twenty-first century, the *patang-baz*[2] and *guddi firosh*[3] added a dangerous innovation in material of kite-flying. The string usually was coated with grinded glass and was a little harmful to cut fingers of *patang-baz* and sometimes other peoples as well. But it was the chemical string that delivered the fair's true horror. It was extremely sharp and lethal, and it killed many innocent Lahoris. Reading newspaper reports about through-cutting with strings caused alarm. Dr. Syed Ali Raza recalls another reason for the prohibition in his academic research that a lawyer from Lahore challenged the Basant in the Lahore High Court on the grounds of religion. To persuade the court, the lawyer asserted that Basant was a solely Hindu celebration, and he also mentioned the loss of life and electronic goods as a result of the Basant. As a result, the Basant was outlawed in the town in 2005. (Raza, 2008, 93-94).

BHADAR KALI DEVI MELA

The fair of Bhadar Kali Devi (بھدر کالی دیوی) was an important and major festive and ritual activity of the old Lahore, the centric venue of the fair was Mandir Bhadar Kali Devi at, then, outskirt of Lahore; Niaz Beg. According to Syed Muhammad Latif, who compiled his classical history book on Lahore in the 1890s, the Kali Devi or Mandir Bhadar fair was one of the largest festivals in Lahore, even though it was celebrated in the hottest month of June, he reported that at least 30,000 devotees used to participate in the fair at temple (Latif, 1892/2010, 273 and 2276). The Gazetteer of Lahore District (1883-84) (henceforth GLD) was compiled in 1880s and number of participants is given 30, 000 to 60,000, double to Syed Muhammad Latif (Punjab Government, 1896/2006, 78). Kanniyha Lal was contemporary of Syed Muhammad Latif, Kanniyha Lal recorded in his work that the duration of the fair was one day and one night in the month of *Jeth* (a month of the Punjabi calendar) (Lal, 1884/2012, 230). Both writers give an account of the fair that a sizeable temporary bazar was established for sweets, toys, bangles etc. water, *sharbat*[4] or *bhang*[5]

[2] Kite-flying experts
[3] Sellers of kites, stings and related material
[4] Sweeten water, normally herbs' extract is added
[5] A drink made of hashish and sometimes milk and almonds are added to enrich the flavour

was distributed to beat the heat. There were least arrangements of shadow so the devotees had to arrange their own canopies or tents. The fair was attended by Hindus and the Muslims as well from Lahore, Amritsar and surrounding areas (Latif, 1892/2010, 273 & 276 and Lal, 184/2012, 230). Kanniyha recorded that in the temple there was no statue of any deity (Lal, 184/2012, 229). Further he writes that one (a small) temple attributed to Kali Devi was in Lahore (in *mohalla* Lakhpat Rai) where those devotees visited during the festival who could not have ability to attend the fair at outskirt of Lahore at Niaz Beg (Ibid., 135-36). John Campbell Oman sketches the view of devotees towards the temple that the main road he was driving on was crowded with visitors to the fair. Visitors rode in bull carts, dog carts, and *ekkas*[6] to Bhadarkali, while others rode in hired hackney carriages (Oman, 1908, 203). It was the most passionate festival of the town however in 1960s Masood Nizami recorded that then the temple of Bhadar Kali was deserted and the fair had been elapsed (Nizami, 1962, 766).

CHERRIYOUN KA MELA: THE BAMBOOS' FAIR

Cherriyoun ka Mela (literally fair of sticks/poles چھڑیوں کا میلہ) is another lost fair of the old Lahore. Lahore is one of the towns of South Asia with great number of shrines of saints. The 'shrine culture' is unique attribution of Lahore and fairs and festivals can be labelled as by-product of this shrine culture.

In Lahore outside of Masti Gate is a shrine of Shah Madar which was once famous for *Cherriyoun ka mela*. Every summer, the festival was celebrated at Shah Madar's shrine, and devotees would come with their bamboos to perform certain stunts. Latif recorded the *mela* in 1890s and he elucidates that the participants came with their extra-long bamboo to perfume tricks, the bamboo was erected on palm, one finger, on teeth or on the head (Latif, 1892/2010, 374). Masood Nizami explains that some bamboos had height of three stories house. The main objective of the game was to erect the bamboo straight in the air. Masood Nizami claims that the fair halted to celebrate due to fighting and stabbing the knives (Nizami, 1962, 764-65).

DUSSEHRA: THE REMEMBRANCE FAIR OF RAMA CHANDRA

The Dussehra was an unparalleled festival of old pluralistic Lahore. It was one of the longest festivals of old days; a festival of a week long. The Dussehra is attributed to great Hindu epic Ramayan. The festival commemorates the Hindu avatar Rama Chandra's exile, during which his wife Sita was kidnapped by Ravan, the king of Ceylon or Lanka (modern Sri Lanka). Rama, with the assistance of his brother Lakshmana and a mighty devotee named Hanuman, battled Ravana, killed him, and freed Devi Sita. According to Talbot and Kamran It drew a large crowd to witness the spectacle of the effigies being burned at dusk (Talbot & Kamran, 2016, 136).

[6] One-horse carriage

The festival had been celebrated with great enthusiasm by the local Hindus. S.M. Latif records, in 1890s, that the festival was celebrated in Lahore in the month of October every year for eight days in the parade ground (now Iqbal Park) in north of Lahore Fort (Latif, 1892/2010, 376). Every night, during the festivities the young from the town were used to perform Ramlila or drama depicting the exile with different characters of Rama Chandra, Devi Sita, Lakshmana, Hanuman and Ravana (Nizami, 1962, 766). On the final day of the festival, the giant-sized effigies of Rama and Ravan were brought to parade ground with a great procession (from Heera Mandi (red light area of Lahore) to parade ground) (Ibid.) and as the last celebration the gigantic effigy of Ravan was put on fire with the great noise of fire crackers (Punjab Government, 1896/2006, 80 and Latif, 1892/2010, 376). However, Masood Nizami (1962, 766) adds one more event that before to set fire on Ravana's effigy, Hanuman was privileged to put Lanka (made of paper and bamboos) on fire. Latif and GLD both records that the festival was patronized by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he was used to receive *nazar* (tribute/gift) form his followers and in return the faithful followers were presented *khilat* (dress of honour) (Latif, 1892/2010, 376 & Punjab Government, 1896/2006, 61). Therefore, the festival has importance in different perspectives of culture, religion and economy. The festival has also been buried in depth of past, new Lahorites are not witness of the colourful festivities.

DIWALI: THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Diwali is one of Hinduism's most important religious festivals which is celebrated in Ashvina and Karttika months. The festival's name derives from the Sanskrit term Dipavali, which means "row of lights" and refers to the lights that are lit on the new moon to welcome Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth (Raza, 2008, 75). In Lahore the Diwali *mela* was used to be held after some days of Dussehra in October. One of the reasons for the celebration was to commemorate Rama Chandra's return to Ayodhya after a fourteen-year exile. The devotees were used to decorate their house with *diayas*[7] and Anarkali Bazar was also be used to decorate with lights or *diayas* (Nizami, 1962, 767). It is worthy to keep in mind that, before the partition, most traders or shopkeepers of Anarkali were the Hindus or Sikhs and now the situation is entirely changed, religious landscape is changed so the festival light has been blurred in Lahore. Dr. Raza, a young historian, recorded in 2008 the Diwali celebrations in Lahore. He writes that the deputy administrator of the Evacuee Trust Property Board, led the celebration in Lahore. Baghat Lal Khokhar read a Ramayan *katha* (verse) and performed *aarati*, a ritual in which the Lord's form is symbolically illuminated. Fireworks meant the end of the ceremony. The Diwali celebrations in 2008 were attended by Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Christians, and Muslims (Raza, 2008, 76). Interestingly the Diwali is primarily a Hindu festival but it seems that not even a single Hindu attended the festival, loss of the pluralism in the modern Lahore.

[7] Earthenware or terra cotta lamps

HOLI: THE FAIR OF VIBRANT COLOURS

The most vibrant and colourful festival of the old Lahore was Holi festival associated to Hindu community chiefly, however other local communities were also be used to celebrate at some extent. Dr. Raza writes that Holi is a Hindu spring festival celebrated between February and March on the full moon of Phalguna. This ancient festival has several saturnalia characteristics (Raza, 2015, 233-34). He adds further that the festival is mainly celebrated by followers of Krishna, who take joy in the recreation of his playful interactions with *gopis*. Hindus mark the occasion by throwing coloured powders, and during this particular day, distinctions based on age, gender, social status, and caste are disregarded, promoting a sense of collective celebration (Ibid., 234).

Like Dewali the Hoil festival is still celebrate in the modern Lahore however grandeur of past is no more to witness. The major celebration of Holi is held at Krishana Mandir at Ravi Road, Lahore. A number of traits are observed like *puja paat*,[8] praying, throwing coloured water, fresh garlands are offered to statutes of Radha and Krishna and *parsad* is distributed. The festival, in Lahore, is celebrated jointly by the Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and the Muslims (Raza, 2008, 74-74).

JORR DA MELA OR GURU ARJAN FAIR

Jorr da Mela (جوڑ دا میلہ) or the fair of Guru Arjan is attributed to remembrance of the fifth guru of Sikh faith; Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606) who is considered the first martyr of the Sikh faith (Singh, 2016, 16). His *samadhi*[9] is located in the inner city, outside the Roshnai gate, near the Badshahi Mosque, and is known as Gurdwara Dera Sahib. Legends say that Guru Arjen was disappeared in the river Ravi and was not cremated therefore the *samadhi* is just to embody the Guru Arjan (Goulding, 1924, 68-69). In fact, Guru Arjan was a political captive during Jahangir's period (Fauq, 1927, 12), the Russian orientalist Suvorova writes, "Guru Arjun Dev was accused of supporting the rebellious prince Khosrow" (Suvorova, 2011, 71). In May or June, every year, a *shaheedi mela* (martyrdom fair) is held at the Gurdwara Dera Sahib. Now, in post-partition scenario, very few hundred Sikh from Pakistan and from India participated *Jorr da Mela*, another name of the fair. Nizami recalls the days of pre-partition that, *jorr da mela* was attended by many Sikhs and Hindus, later Hindus disassociated themselves. He also recalls that during the *mela* a temporary bazar was established from Heera Mandi to Gurdwara (Nizami, 1962, 766).

KADMON KA MELA

Another very unique a four days fair *Kadmon ka Mela* (literally fair of feet قدموں کا میلہ) has been elapsed from the cultural landscape of old Lahore. The duration of the fair in Naqoosh Lahore Number (henceforth NLN) is mentioned four days (Nizami, 1962, 764) while only few hours are mentioned in GLD (Punjab Government, 1896/2006, 79) Latif

[8] Worship and to bow down.

[9] memorial commemorating the dead

(1892/2010, 373) also endorsed it, it seems Latif relied upon GLD. Latif writes that the fair was held on the shrine of Hazrat Sakhi Sarwar (RA) in the first week of February (Ibid.) while Nizami claims that it was four days fair from April 10 to April 13 and it is held in Anarkali (Nizami, 1962, 764), GLD specifies that at mosque of Sakhi Sarwar in Anarkali (Punjab Government, 1896/2006, 79). Hazrat Sakhi Sarwar's shrine is located in Dera Ghazi Khan, not Anarkali, Lahore. This *mela* was attributed to of Sakhi Sarwar (RA) and his love for children. During the fair Sheikhs or Dholis, devotees of Sakhi Sarwar (RA), were used to perform *dhamal*[10] (ecstatic dance) and during *dhamal* it was common to pick the kids from visiting mothers. Nizami asserts that the same *mela* was also held outside the Mori and Delhi gates. He also records in 1960s that the fame of the *mela* was decreasing compare to past (Nizami, 1962, 764). In NLN Muhammad Ud Din Fauq claims that before Sikh Era the *mela* was held at Baradari Wazir Khan[11] later it was shifted to Anarkali when Baradari was captured by Sikhs to establish the Sikh cantonment (Fauq, 1962, 327). Anjum Rehmani endorsed Fauq that before Sikh period *Sang ka Mela* (another name of *Kadmon ka Mela*) was held at Baradari Wazir Khan (Rehmani, 2016, 342) and presently this is managed by the Punjab Public Library.

MELA BHAIRON KA ASTHAN

Legends record that the Bhairon's (also spelled as Bherev) Asthan (also spelled as Bhairon ka Than بھیروں کا استھان) or temple of Bhairon was established by Godar a resident of Banaras city in the era of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan at Ichchra, then outskirts of Lahore or walled Lahore (Aseer, 1962, 676). The temple was attributed to goddess Bhairon and Shiva. The Hindus of Ichchra and from walled city of Lahore were used to visit the Asthan on every Sunday for *puja paat* for blessings. The current complex of the temple was reconstructed in Sikh era when Rani Moran, queen of Ranjit Singh, patronized it. The grandeur architecture was built on the old sites; many rooms were added for visitors and for clerics, a *langar kahana*[12] was also built to facilitate the devotees (Latif, 1892/2010, 273-74). Apart from every Sunday congregation a great annual *mela* had been held at Bhairon ka Asthan on first Sunday of *Bhadon*, every year (Lal, 1884/2012, 232 and Latif, 1892/2010, 274).

Recently, the present author visited Bhairon ka Asthan, the condition of the complex is not different form other neglected Sikh and Hindu architectural heritage of pre-partition. The complex completely has been encroached by new settlers, most of those are newer generations of refugees who were settled here after mass migration of 1947. The name of locality has been Islamized from Bhairon ka Asthan to Madina Colony and to keep

[10] Dhamal is defines as "It nevertheless mainly refers to a ritual which is the performance of an ecstatic dance." For detail see Michel Boivin (2015), 129.

[11] Its original name was Nakha-i-Wazir Khan, for details see Anjum Rehmani, (2016), 341-42.

[12] "A free kitchen open to public at many Sufi shrines, especially during major commemorative events." For detail see Michel Boivin, (2015), 196.

vote bank intact in his constituency former Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq helped the occupants of the complex to get rights of the land.

PAAR DA MELA: THE FESTIVAL OF JAHANGIR'S TOMB

Paar da Mela (literally fair across the river پار دا میلہ) or Mela Shahadra in fact is memorial of Mughal Emperor Nur-ud-Din Jahangir which was held with cultural enthusiasm at the tomb of Jahangir. The tomb of Jahangir is in Shahadra town, on the bank of the Ravi River and it was at the outskirts of old Lahore so the *mela* was called *paar da mela*.

Latif asserts that it was one day *mela* and was attended by around 10,000 participants in every summer (in 1890s) (Latif, 1892/2010, 374) while Nizami recorded it's defamed after partition and he also gives some features of the fair as *chiragah* (lighting the lamps) on the tomb, sweetmeat stalls, free-wrestling, singing, dancing, parody and gambling. He also accused gambling for defaming the fair (Nizami, 1962, 765), now *paar da mela* has also been vanquished.

RAM THAMMAN MELA

Ram Thamman is a village between Raiwind and Kasur near Raja Jang railway station. The fair was named after the village which was a blend of three communities (Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus) before the partition. The village is named after Baba Ram Thamman, Baba Guru Nanank's cousin. The *mela* at shrine of Baba Ram Thamman was used to be held jointly by villagers irrespective their faith (Qaiser, 1998, 84). The *mela* was called Ram Thamman Mela (رام تھمن میلہ) however it was celebrations of Bisakhi, held in April for two days and as reported in GLD in 1880s that it was attended by about 60,000 devotees or participants from different quarters of the (united) Punjab (Punjab Government, 1896/2006, 60). The *mela* has lost its flavour of zeal in dust of history. Partition of the Punjab in not solely responsible for decay of festivalization, the means of communications can be added. The railway network in 1890s started to defame the Ram Thamman mela as the devotees had better choice to attend Baisakhi at Amritsar (Ibid.). The festival still is being held in Ram Thmman and less numbers of Sikh participated the *mela*. Iqbal Qiaser claims at the closing of 20th century, "Now the Muslims organised this fair and the Hindus, Jains, Christians, Buddhists and Sikhs from Lahore enthusiastically participate." (Qaiser, 1998, 84) The village was considered base of Bairagi *faqirs*[13] therefore during the fair all Bairagi *faqirs* were used to attend the *mela* and gather their share from devotees (Punjab Government, 1896/2006, 60).

[13] Sadhu or saint

CONCLUSION

A Punjabi poetic proverb well explains the fairs of Lahore:

سجنو! ایہہ لاہور اے

ست دن تے اٹھ میلے

گھر جاواں کیہڑے ویلے

Free translation:

Oh Friends! This is Lahore

There are eight fairs in seven days of a week

No tome to go home

However, a number of Lahore fairs have been overshadowed; some have been vanquished, while others have lost their true spirit of being a *mela*. Only few major fairs (mainly *urses*[14]) are intact as past. There are several causes behind the fall of festivalization in Lahore. The partition of Punjab in 1947 proved disastrous for non-Muslim fairs; Sikhs and Hindus had to migrate from Lahore, and *melas* linked with them were abandoned. Other explanations include modernization and town expansion; prior to the partition, residents of the town had plenty of time to spend with one another, they had *baithak* culture, *tharra* culture, and they had ample time to organize and participate in fairs. Gradually, the city expanded relentlessly, and newcomers from other towns/villages of the Punjab (following the partition of Punjab) arrived in Lahore with little relationship or topophilia[15] with local customs and fairs, resulting in the extinction of several fairs. New technologies, electronics, and the internet have all had an impact on the town's social life. In modern Lahore, the handset (mobile) itself is a celebration for an individual if it has a good internet connection. Every individual (usually speaking, the younger generation) has his or her own universe in their hands, which is transforming Lahore once which was abode of the fairs and festivals. The society having many *melas* and fairs was extrovert society; sharing and caring was one of the core values. Now, *urses* on different shrines are major fairs of Lahore and these *urses* are under threat of extremism. Aziz-ud-Din Ahmad believes that policies of hypocrisy of rulers from Zia-ul-Haq to Pakistan Muslim League (N) (Ahmad, 2015) have been one of the major reasons behind decline of some *melas* (especially Basant).

[14] Urs is an annual fair held on a shrine of saint

[15] "The term *topophlia*, which literally means 'love for place'," for detail see Suvorova, (2011), 1-3.

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