

Promoting public awareness and education about archaeology for sustainable futures

Abdul Qadoos

Pakistan, a land rich in history and cultural heritage, is home to a plethora of archaeological wonders. From the ancient Indus Valley civilisation to the majestic Mughal architecture, Pakistan's archaeological treasures are a testament to its vibrant past. However, the absence of archaeology as a subject in the national curriculum and limited public awareness pose significant challenges. This article explores the limitations and consequences of the lack of formal education about archaeology in Pakistan. By addressing these issues and advocating for public awareness and education, we can unlock the immense potential of Pakistan's archaeological heritage and pave the way for a sustainable future.

Archaeology is not taught in the national curriculum and this hampers public understanding and appreciation of Pakistan's archaeological heritage. Without formal education, the general populace remains unaware of the significance and value of lesser-known sites beyond the prominent Mohenjo Daro. This limited awareness prevents the preservation and exploration of hidden archaeological gems that hold important historical and cultural information.

The limited public awareness of archaeology in Pakistan has severe consequences. Firstly, the preservation and protection of archaeological sites suffer because of the lack of public understanding and involvement. Local communities may not appreciate the cultural and economic potential of these sites, leading to neglect, encroachment and illegal excavation. Additionally, limited awareness means tourism opportunities are missed, as tourists are often unaware of the vast archaeological wealth Pakistan possesses. This results in a lost chance to boost cultural tourism, generate revenue and create employment opportunities.

The absence of formal education in archaeology restricts career prospects for aspiring archaeologists. Without proper training and education, individuals passionate about the field struggle to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. This lack of qualified professionals affects research, excavation, conservation and interpretation efforts. It also impedes the development of innovative approaches to cultural heritage management and prevents Pakistan from benefiting from advancements in archaeological methodologies.

Overcoming these limitations and consequences and unlocking archaeology's potential through education and raising awareness is essential. Here are key steps to consider:

Integrating archaeology into the National Curriculum

Advocacy for including archaeology as a subject in the national curriculum is vital. By introducing archaeology as an academic discipline in schools and colleges, we can cultivate interest in and knowledge and appreciation of Pakistan's rich heritage from an early age. This will foster a deeper understanding of our cultural roots and promote a sense of pride and ownership.

Creating learning opportunities

Beyond formal education, initiatives should be taken to provide learning opportunities about archaeology. Museums, exhibitions and public events can serve as platforms to disseminate information, showcasing the diversity and significance of archaeological sites throughout Pakistan. These interactive experiences can engage the public, leaving a lasting impact on their understanding and appreciation of archaeological heritage.

Transforming perceptions

Efforts must be made to challenge the prevailing misconception that archaeologists solely dig in the ground. Awareness campaigns and educational programmes should emphasise the multidimensional nature of archaeology, including research, conservation, interpretation and community engagement. Sharing success stories of Pakistani archaeologists and their contributions to knowledge, cultural preservation and community development can help change perceptions and inspire future generations.

Strengthening career opportunities

Creating sustainable career opportunities in archaeology is crucial. Collaborative efforts between educational institutions, government agencies and archaeological professionals are necessary to establish positions within research institutions, cultural organisations and government bodies. Public-private partnerships can help generate job opportunities in

archaeological tourism, heritage management and research sectors, ensuring the growth and sustainability of the profession.

Community engagement

Involving local communities in archaeological projects is essential. Their active participation promotes a sense of ownership and responsibility, leading to sustainable preservation efforts. By organising site visits, workshops and heritage awareness campaigns, we can foster community engagement and empower individuals to become advocates for the protection and promotion of Pakistan’s archaeological heritage.

In recent years, some positive changes have been observed in Pakistan’s approach to promoting public awareness and education about archaeology. For instance, the government, in collaboration with archaeologists and heritage experts, has initiated preservation work in certain regions – for example, the ongoing preservation, restoration and development of Bhamala Stupa, an archaeological site in KPK. Ongoing conservation and preservation projects at Makli Necropolis and different forts in Sindh are also really valued.

The absence of education about archaeology in Pakistan poses significant challenges to the preservation, appreciation and sustainable development of our archaeological heritage. By addressing the limitations and consequences of this gap, we can unlock the immense potential of Pakistan’s archaeological wealth. Introducing archaeology in the national curriculum, creating learning opportunities, transforming public perceptions and strengthening career prospects are crucial steps towards fostering public awareness and education. Let us work together to ensure that future generations are equipped with the knowledge and appreciation necessary to protect and celebrate Pakistan’s rich archaeological heritage, paving the way for a sustainable future.



Makli Necropolis, Thatta Pakistan. Credit: Abdul Qadoos

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Mohenjo Daro ruins close to the Indus river in Larkana district, Sindh, Pakistan. Credit: Sergey-73 (Shutterstock)



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Abdul is an archaeology graduate from the University of Sindh, Pakistan. He has actively participated in several archaeological excavation projects, including invaluable work with the esteemed Italian mission in Pakistan. His unwavering passion for unearthing history’s mysteries and preserving cultural heritage continues to make a lasting impact in the field of archaeology.

