



- Vol. VII, No. I (Winter 2022)      ▪ p- ISSN: 2708-2091      ▪ e-ISSN: 2708-3586      ▪ L-ISSN: 2708-2091
- Pages: 134-158      ▪ DOI: 10.31703/gsr.2022(VII-I).14      ▪ URL: [http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2022\(VII-I\).14](http://dx.doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2022(VII-I).14)
- Citation: Hameed, A., Arif, A, M., & Anwar, A. (2022). Potential of Islamic Tourism in District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan: A Case Study of Naukot Monument Attributed to Sayyid Ali Hamadani. *Global Sociological Review*, VII(I), 134-158. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2022\(VII-I\).14](https://doi.org/10.31703/gsr.2022(VII-I).14)

**Potential of Islamic Tourism in District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan: A Case Study of Naukot Monument Attributed to Sayyid Ali Hamadani**

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**Abstract:** *Mansehra, one of the most important districts of Hazara Division, is generally known for its natural landscape and pleasant weather that attract thousands of visitors from across the country and abroad every year. Its geographic location adds more value to its potential as a tourist destination. Located on the ancient and modern trade routes, Mansehra has been receiving and transmitting cultural flow from multi directions since early historical times. With the results, the region has witnessed the emergence, development and fall of various religious moments, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity. Material evidence of these religious practices can still be noticed in the form of stupas, temples, mosques, shrines, Gurudu waras and churches. The present paper is an attempt to highlight the historical and religious significance of the Muslim period sites with special reference to the Naukot monument and its potential for pilgrimage tourism.*

**Key Words:** Islamic Heritage, Mansehra, Central Asia, Tourism, Pilgrimage

### Introduction

The concept of religious and spiritual tourism is regarded as one of the earliest forms of tourism, and it grew rapidly after the crucifixion of Christ (Andrews 2007). In religious tourism, visitors are motivated either in part or entirely for religious reasons (Shinde 2008). It is also known as faith and spiritual tourism. It refers to the travel for spiritual ends such as pilgrimaging and visits to the places associated with religious beliefs or personalities (gods & goddesses, prophets, and saints). In this type of tourism, people usually travel in groups to perform their spiritual rituals and traditions. Pakistan is one richest country in the world in terms of religious diversity. The country has remained a cradle of religious practices since the Neolithic era.

Cemeteries accommodating ritual objects placed with the corpses and the terracotta female figurine of the mother goddess reported from Mehrgarh, Baluchistan, are the earliest material pieces of evidence of religious practices in Pakistan. These religious practices, with slight modifications and additions, continued during the Bronze and Iron Ages. The burial remains from 'Cemetery H' at Harappa, and the Iron Age Graves from Chitral, Dir, Peshawar, Swat, Mansehra, as well as from Taxila and Gilgit Baltistan regions, clearly show the continuation of this religious ritual generally associated with *Sanathana Dharma* (Hinduism). But since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE, we find a more diversified religious stratum in the region in the form of Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.

Like other parts of the country, district Mansehra also encompasses hundreds of places which are sacred to the flowers of various religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity, which have great potential for pilgrimage Tourism. And the present paper focuses

on one of the Muslim period monuments with special reference to the monument at Naukot attributed to Sayyid Ali Hamadani. A list of the Islamic heritage of district Mansehra is presented here, followed by a detailed discussion on the history and potential of the Naukot Monument.

**Table 1.** Islamic Sites/Monuments

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
1.	Bela Mosque	A small mosque comprises only a prayer chamber located in Bela village Naran valley on the right bank of the Kunhar River (Fig.2 given below in appendix). The prayer chamber measures 2.8x2.3 metres. This mosque was constructed in the latter half of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century CE after demolishing an earlier mosque which is said to have been built in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century CE. Materials of the old mosque, like door frames and pillars elaborately decorated with floral motifs, have been reused. This is the oldest living mosque in Naran Valley ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> ).	34 53.832' N 73 38.137' E Elevation: 2407m above the sea level (hereafter ASL)	Well preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
2	Batla Mosque	A newly constructed mosque (Fig. 3 given below in appendix) is located on the left bank of Kunhar River in the village of Batla Naran valley. The Sanctuary of the mosque measures 3.1x2.6 metres. Materials of the old mosque, including pillars and capitals, have been reused. The old wooden pillars and Ionic capitals are decorated with geometrical and floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 52.078' N 73 37.428' E Elevation: 2367m ASL	Well preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
3	Paludaran Mosque	A small mosque (Fig. 4 given below in appendix) constructed of stone and wood is located on the right bank of the Paludaran village in Naran Valley. The mosque measures 5x4 metres. Materials (wooden pillars and capitals) of earlier mosques of the	34 50.901' N 73 34.375' E Elevation: 2259m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
4	Paludaran Houses	<p>19<sup>th</sup> century have been reused. Both these wooden elements are elegantly decorated with floral and geometrical motifs (Hameed 2012; ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a>)</p> <p>Traditional wooden houses (Fig. 5 given below in appendix) are located on the right bank of River Kunhar in the village of Paludaran Naran valley. It is perhaps the oldest traditional living house in the entire Mansehra district built of stone and wood; mud plaster used as mortar and plaster; there are two old houses adjacent to each other; the larger one measuring 13.6x6.6 metres is dated back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century CE while the smaller one is about 130 years old.</p> <p>The superstructures of both these houses are mainly supported by thick and rough wooden pillars (Hameed 2012; ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a>)</p>	<p>34 50.901' N 73 34.375' E Elevation: 2259m ASL</p>	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
5	Paludaran Cemetery	<p>An old Muslim cemetery (Fig.6 given below in appendix) is located on the right side of Kunhar River in the village of Paludaran, Naran valley. The site measures 33.3x 17.3m.</p> <p>Headstones of the old graves are decorated with ducks' designs. According to the locals, these graves belong to the Turks and are dated from the century CE. The headstones used in this cemetery are heavier, larger and very rough as compared to those reported from other cemeteries in and outside the Mansehra region (Hameed 2012; ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a>)</p>	<p>34 50.901' N 73 34.375' E Elevation: 2259m ASL</p>	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
6	Pona Cemetery	<p>A Muslim cemetery is located on the right bank of River Kunar in village Rajwal, Kaghan valley. The old cemetery measures 50x4</p>	<p>34 50.132' N 73 32.179' E Elevation: 2173m ASL</p>	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
7	Rawal Kot Cemetery	metres. The cemetery accommodates old as well as modern Muslim graves. Headstones of the old graves are carved with ducks design and are assigned to the 14th -18th century CE. Headstones of the earlier graves are massive and rough like those of Paludaran cemetery (Hameed 2012; ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> ) Muslim cemetery located in village Rajwal, Kaghan valley. The cemetery measures 33.3 square metres. Headstones of the old graves are decorated with ducks and floral motifs. According to the locals, the earliest graves in this cemetery are dated to the 14th -18th century CE (Hameed 2012; ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 49.269' N 73 32.995' E Elevation: 2133m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
8	Rawal Kot Cemetery	Muslim cemetery accommodating both old and modern graves is located in Rawal Kot village of Kaghan valley. This cemetery measures 71x56.6m. Headstones of the earlier graves are carved with ducks, while those of later graves are decorated with floral (leaf) motifs. According to the locals, this graveyard is dated to the 14th -18th century ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012; Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 47.314' N 73 30.764' E Elevation: 2233m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
9	Kaghan Cemetery	One of the largest Muslim cemeteries in the valley (Fig.7 given below in appendix) is located on the right side of Kaghan-Naran road in main Kaghan town. Headstones of the old graves are carved with different motifs, including zoomorphic (horse), floral (leaf) as well ducks and owls. The earliest graves in this cemetery are assigned to the 14th-18 <sup>th</sup>	34 96.688' N 73 31.496' E Elevation: 2075m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
10	Agla Graan Cemetery	century CE ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> ) One of the largest Muslim cemeteries of Kaghan valley (Fig.8 given below in appendix) is located in Agla Graan village of Kaghan valley. The cemetery accommodates graves of different periods. Headstones of these graves are depicted with different motifs, including ducks, leaves and wheel. The oldest graves in this cemetery are assigned to the 14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century CE ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 46.160' N 73 31.799' E Elevation: 2093m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
11	Pehli Lari Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located to the right side of Mahandri-Kaghan road in Pehli Lari village, Kaghan valley. Headstones of the graves are very similar to those of Agla Graan Cemetery ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ) Period: 14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century CE.	34 45.476' N 73 32.006' E Elevation: 2197m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
12	Mahandri Cemetery	One of the largest Muslim cemeteries in Kaghan valley is located in Mahandri village. Headstones of the old graves are depicted with a variety of motifs, including ducks, wheels, and leaves ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ). Period: 14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 41.805' N 73 34.781' E Elevation: 1520m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
13	Sehri Manoor Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in Sehri Manoor village, Manoor valley headstones of the old graves depict ducks and wheel designs (Fig. 9 given below in appendix) ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> ) Period: 14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century CE.	34 46.637' N 73 38.242' E Elevation: 2221m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of Tourism
14	Jarid Cemetery-I	Located in the village of Jarid, headstones of the graves depict wheel designs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> ). Period: 14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> century CE.	34 40.637' N 73 33.464' E Elevation: 1470m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism
15	Jarid Cemetery-II	A Muslim cemetery is located in the village of Jarid. The site measures 6.6x5m. Headstones are decorated with geometrical	34 40.525' N 73 33.490' E Elevation: 1494m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
16	Jarid Cemetery-III	designs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> ) A Muslim cemetery is located on the right side of River Kunhar in Jarid village. The site measures 5x4m. Headstones of the graves depict ducks and geometrical designs. The earliest graves are assigned to the 14th-18 <sup>th</sup> century CE ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 40.610' N 73 33.504' E Elevation: 1519m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism
17	Kapi Gali Cemetery	A Muslim cemetery site is located on the left side of River Kunhar in the village of Kapi Gali, Ghanul. Headstones of the graves depict geometrical and floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> ). These graves are assigned to the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.	34 35.378' N 73 22.309' E Elevation: 1494m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism
18	Darwaishabad Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in village Darwaishabad, Kewai. The site measures 4.6x4m. Headstones of the graves depict geometrical designs. The graves are assigned to the 20 <sup>th</sup> century ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 36.737' N 73 23.508' E Elevation: 1494m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism
19	Pumbhara artificial pond	An artificial pond located in Pumbhara, Angrai constructed for the storage of rainwater for animals. The pond is constructed of undressed stones, while mud mortar is used as binding material ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 35.508' N 73 21.179' E Elevation: 1598m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism
20	Sever Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in Sever village, Angrai. Headstones of the graves depict floral designs. The graves are assigned to the 20 <sup>th</sup> century ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 38.026' N 73 21.957' E Elevation: 1788m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism
21	Satban Cemetery	A Muslim cemetery is located on the right side of Balakot-Satban road. Only one of the old graves is now preserved. The headstone of this grave depicts multiple motifs, including zoomorphic, floral, and faunal( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 33.855' N 73 18.919' E Elevation: 1435m ASL	Severely damaged and not feasible for promotion

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
22	Bandian Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in village Bandian, Sathban, Balakot. Headstone of some of the graves depict floral and geometrical motifs. While other graves are provided with wooden heads decorated with zoomorphic, floral as well as geometrical designs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 33.825' N 73 18.919' E Elevation: 1435m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for the promotion of tourism
23	Batangni Cemetery –I	Muslim cemetery located in village Sever, Angrai (Fig. 10 given below in appendix). This is the largest cemetery in the entire accommodating graves of different periods. The oldest graves in this cemetery may be assigned to the 14 <sup>th</sup> century CE based on their headstones that depict only zoomorphic and birds designs and are rough, and the headstones are rough and massive. At the same time, headstones of the later graves depict floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 36.664' N 73 21.184'E Elevation: 1724m ASL	The best site with a lot of potential for pilgrimage and cultural tourism.
24	Batangni Cemetery –II	Muslim cemetery located in Sever village, Angrai. Headstone of the graves depicts zoomorphic, geometrical and floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 36.654'N 73 21.229' E Elevation: 1775m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotion
25	Mati Kot Cemetery	Muslim cemetery is located in Mato Kot, village of Balakot. Headstones of the graves depict multiple designs (i.e., zoomorphic, floral and geometrical) ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Ali et al. 2011</a> )	34 24.266' N 73 22.176'E Elevation: 1230m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotion
26	Tomb of Syed Sultan Muhammad Shah	Octagonal tomb located in village Pairan, Khairabad attributed to Syed Sultan Muhammad Shah, a local Muslim ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> )	34 19.897' N 73 17.869' E Elevation: 1354m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of pilgrimage tourism
27	Tomb of Kabir Ali Shah	Square tomb located in village Pairan, Khairabad, attributed to	34 19.827' N 73 18.32'E	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
		Kabir Ali Shah, a local Muslim saint ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	Elevation: 1435m ASL	pilgrimage tourism
28	Shah Khail Garhi Cemetery	Muslim cemetery is located in Pairan, Khairabad. The oldest cemetery in the village. Headstones of the graves depict floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 21.040' N 73 16.262' E Elevation: 1263m ASL	Preserved and feasible for the promotion of pilgrimage tourism
29	Kangra Wala Baba Ziarat	A Muslim cemetery accommodates a grave attributed to Kangra Wala Baba, a local saint located in village Pairan, Khairabad. The cemetery is partially occupied by modern graves, while the remaining is used for agricultural purposes ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 19.885' N 73 17.215' E Elevation: 1263m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotion
30	Doraha Cemetery	Muslim cemetery is located in Pairan, Khairabad. Some of the graves depict floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 19.742' N 73 17.631' E Elevation: 1249m ASL	Preserved disturbed but feasible for promotion
031	Malkal Cemetery Dhodial	Muslim cemetery is located on the right side of Karakoram Highway in Dhodial town. The cemetery measures 200x18m. Headstones of some of the graves depict floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 15.878' N 73 15.287' E Elevation: 985m ASL	Preserved disturbed but feasible for promotion
32	Naukot Monument	The oldest Muslim monument located to the left bank of Siran River in village Naukot. A roofless square fortress attributed Sayyid Ali Hamadani, one of the greatest Muslim personalities of 14 <sup>th</sup> century CE. The monument is constructed of large size tiles strengthened by bastions at cardinal side; the southeastern and northeastern bastions are hollow and are said to have been used by the Muslim saint for meditation purpose ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ; <a href="#">Shah and Hameed, 12</a> ).	34 25.532' N 73 10.602' E Elevation: 915m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotion



S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
33	Naukot Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in Naukot. The ancient and modern graves. Headstones of the old graves depict floral motif. The cemetery also accommodates shrine of Syed Azam constructed in 1974 CE ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 25.259' N 73 10.532' E Elevation: 911m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotion
34	Sakhi Baba Ziarat	A fortification structure measuring 17.6x15.6m is located in Blag Paien (Fig. 11 given below in appendix). The structure accommodates the grave of Sakhi Baba, one of the local Muslim saints. The cemetery covers an archaeological mound that reveals potsherds ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 17.176' N 73 06.299' E Elevation: 929m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotion
35	Mor Baffa Kalan Cemetery	Muslim cemetery is located in Mor Baffa Kalan. The cemetery is still used by the locals for burial purposes. Headstones of the ancient graves can be distinguished with their headstone depicting floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 15.158' N 73 04.628' E Elevation: 1080m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
36	Shah Baba Cemetery	Muslim cemetery is known as Shah Baba Cemetery, located in Lissan Thakral. Headstones of the ancient graves depict floral and geometrical motifs. It is still used by the community for burial purposes ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 16.086' N 73 04.380' E Elevation: 905m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotion
37	Guli Bagh Monuments	Muslim (Turkish) period monuments (Fig. 12-13 given below in appendix). located in village Guli Bagh. Only two of the ancient monuments dated to late the 17 <sup>th</sup> or early 18 <sup>th</sup> century CE still exist. Of these, one has a square plan measuring 9.6.9m. It is constructed con sliced bricks, and lime mortar is used as a major binding material. At the same time, the second one is the resting place of Sayyid Jalal Baba ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ). <a href="#">Rehman 1989</a> ).	34 26.780' N 73 10.929' E Elevation: 898m ASL	Both monuments are in a very bad state of preservation. Both are feasible for the promotion of faith tourism.

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
38	Takiya Blag Paeen Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in village Blag Payin. The cemetery is still used for burial purposes. The ancient graves can be differentiated from their headstones depicting floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.780' N 73 10.929' E Elevation: 898m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
39	Butgran Takiya cemetery	Muslim cemetery is located in Baffa. Headstones of the graves are decorated with zoomorphic, floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.831' N 73 09.197' E Elevation: 1071m ASL	Partially disturbed but feasible for promotions
40	Jami Masjid, Gidarpur	The congregational mosque (Fig. 14 given below in appendix) is located in the village of Gidarpur, Shaukatabad. It measures 56.6x10m. The interior walls and ceilings are elaborately decorated with floral paintings ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 27.845' N 73 08.126' E Elevation: 920m ASL	Partially damaged by the devastating earthquake in 2005.
41	Sat Darwazay wali Ziarat	Muslim cemetery located in village Guli Bagh. The square enclosure measuring 8.3x8.3m accommodates the grave of an anonymous Sayyid (Fig. 15 given below in appendix). The enclosure is made of sliced burnt bricks very similar to those used in the Guli Bagh monuments; stucco mortar is used as binding material; some of the arched openings are damaged and filled with stones ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 27.105' N 73 11.215' E Elevation: 956m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion
42	Anonymous Grave Baffa	An anonymous grave is located in village Baffa (Fig. 16). The grave measures 10.6x6m and is provided with a raised platform. The grave is opened and disturbed by the antiquarian ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 27.342' N 73 12.263' E Elevation: 1215m ASL	The grave is severely damaged and not feasible for promotion
43	Masood Abad Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in village Baffa. Headstones of the ancient graves depict floral motifs (Hameed 2012).	34 26.396' N 73 13.340' E Elevation: 939m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion
44	Baffa Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in village Baffa. Headstones of the	34 26.472' N 73 13.514' E	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
45	Gul Bahar Colony Cemetery	ancient graves depict floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	Elevation: 948m ASL 34 26.264' N 73 12.801' E Elevation: 940m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
46	Bejori Bala Cemetery	Muslim cemetery is located in Bejori Bala. Headstones of the ancient graves depict floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.381' N 73 13.072' E Elevation: 931m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
47	Shah Hussain Ghazi Ziarat	The Shrine of Shah Hussain Ghazi, a local saint, is located in the village Tarangri Bala next to Govt. High School for Boys. The grave is located inside a stone enclosure that measures 8.8x8.8m ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.548' N 73 10.255' E Elevation: 900m ASL	Fortification wall Severely damaged
48	Ajakhel Cemetery	Muslim cemetery, locally known as Ajakhel Ziarat (Fig. 17 given below in appendix) located in the village of Dhodial. Headstones of the graves have floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.298' N 73 15.377' E Elevation: 992m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
49	Chakhchuri Baba Ziarat	The Shrine of Chakhchuri Baba is located in Tarangri Sabir Shah (Fig. 18 given below in appendix). The grave is provided with a stone platform measuring 3.6x2.5m ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.636' N 73 09.681' E Elevation: 956m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion
50	Jaray Ziarat	Muslim cemetery is located in Trangri Sabir Shah. One of the old graves has survived with a headstone depicting a zoomorphic horse design ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.372' N 73 09.630' E Elevation: 892m ASL	Severely damaged and not feasible for promotion
51	Shaikh ji Cemetery	Muslim Cemetery is located in Tarangri Sabir Shah. The cemetery accommodates both ancient and modern graves. Of the ancient graves, only three are preserved, which can be distinguished from their headstones depicted with horses and floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.430' N 73 09.413' E Elevation: 916m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
52	Chito Cemetery	Muslim cemetery is located in Baffa Khurd. The oldest grave in this cemetery is attributed to an unknown. The particular grave is provided with a stone platform measuring 22x21m, while the grave itself measures 1.01x11m. According to the local community, it contains double burial ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.358' N 73 12.514' E Elevation: 916m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
53	Baffa Cemetery-II	Muslim cemetery located in Baffa; Headstones of the old graves depict floral motifs. The cemetery is still used for burial purposes ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.372' N 73 12.629' E Elevation: 914m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion
54	Tira Malu Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in Afzalabad (Shaukatabad). Headstones of the ancient graves depict floral motifs.	34 28.185' N 73 08.440' E Elevation: 910m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
55	Afzalabad Cemetery	Located in Afzalabad (Shaukatabad), The site is presently covered with the modern building of Govt. Primary School; only seven of the old graves are in a better state of preservation; headstones of five of the old graves depict floral motifs; while headstones of the remaining two graves depict ducks ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 27.130' N 73 08.158' E Elevation: 882m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion
56	Baffa Cemetery-III	Muslim cemetery located in Afzalabad (Shaukatabad). Headstones of the graves depict floral motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 26.328' N 73 12.972' E Elevation: 926m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
57	Ladda Cemetery	Muslim cemetery located in Afzalabad (Shaukatabad); headstones of the old existing old graves depict floral and geometrical motifs ( <a href="#">Hameed 2012</a> ).	34 28.205' N 73 09.064' E Elevation: 991m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion
58	Sheikh Baba Ziarat	The Shrine of a local saint (Fig. 19 given below in appendix) of the early 19 <sup>th</sup> century known as Sheikh Baba is located in Khawajgan (Malikpur); the grave measures 3.8x2.9m and is provided with an enclosure wall	34 25.495' N 73 08.199' E Elevation: 866m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion

S. No	Site Name	Location/Description	GPS Coordinates	Remarks
59	Ban Koti Cemetery	measuring 12x8.3m (Hameed 2012). Mslim cemetery located in Khawajgan (Shaukatabad. Headstones of the graves depict geometrical motifs (Hameed 2012).	34 28.198' N 73 07.980' E Elevation: 1071m ASL	Preserved and feasible for promotion
60	Ban Koti Ziarat	Shrine of an unknown person (Fig. 20 given below in appendix). located in Khawajgan (Shaukatabad); the grave measures 4.3x2m remnants of the fortification wall is still visible (Hameed 2012).	34 28.263' N 73 07.652' E Elevation: 1071m ASL	Partially damaged but feasible for the promotion

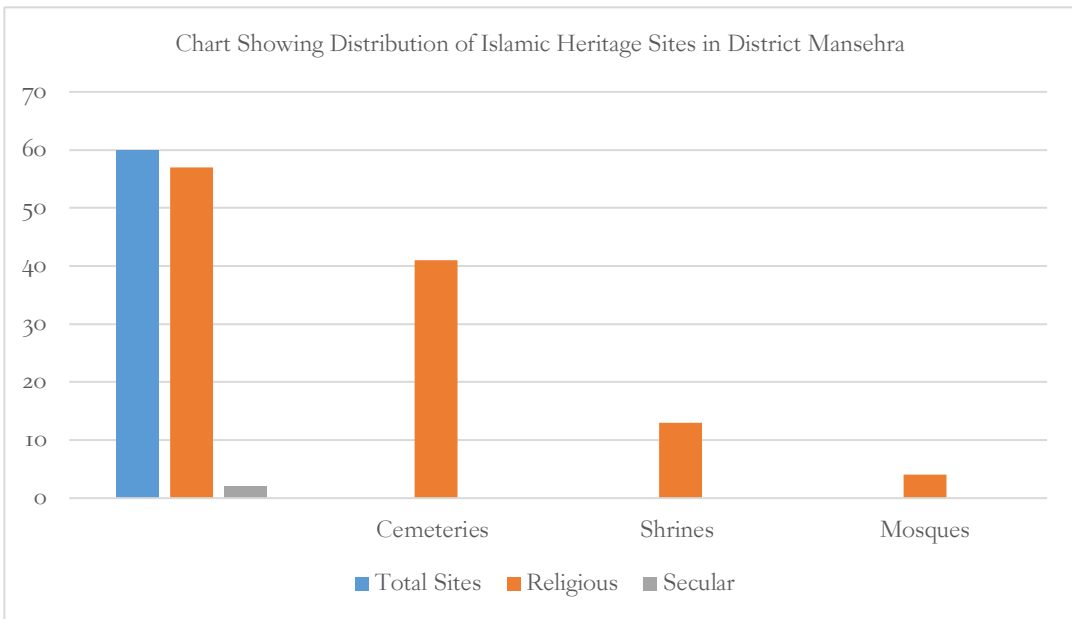


Figure 1:

### Analysis of Muslim Period Sites and Monuments

The present research focuses on the data collected by the senior author for his MPhil thesis. A total of 60 Islamic sites and monuments were selected for analysis. Of these, 57 are religious in nature, while the remaining three sites are secular. The former category comprises 41 cemeteries, 13 shrines and 04 mosques. At the same time, the late one comprises wooden houses and an artificial water pond.

The cemetery sites accommodate ancient graves with a unique headstones. Headstones of the oldest graves are carved with mostly zoomorphic (Horse), birds (owl/duck) and occasionally anthropomorphic designs. According to the locals, these earliest graves are assigned to the 14th -18th century. Headstones of the earliest graves can also be distinguished based on their massive size and heavy weight, rough surface and faunal representation.

Graves of constructed during the second phase may also be differentiated on the same basis (i.e., headstones). Headstones of the graves fall in the second phase are decorated carved with floral and geometrical motifs and are smaller, lighter, and finer as compared to the earlier category. While in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final phase we find the headstones carved/inscribed with the name of the diseased, his/her date of birth/death. In addition, some of the headstones also depict verses from the Holy Quran or Persian/Urdu couplets. Along with inscriptions, most of the headstones of this category also depict floral and geometrical motifs.

Analysis of the headstones thus shows that the Muslim cemeteries were constructed during three different phases. Of these, the earliest phase is assigned to the 14<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> century. Graves constructed during this phase can be differentiated based on their unique headstones depicting zoomorphic birds as well as anthropomorphic motifs. According to the locals, every tribe used to have its own motif based on which their graves could easily be identified. The zoomorphic and anthropomorphic designs depicted on the headstones, being rare, especially in objects or structures of religious nature associated with Islam, raise the following questions for debate:

Whether these graves really belong to the Muslims?

If the answer is positive

Why the Muslims prefer to use zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figures?

As far as the 1<sup>st</sup> question is concerned, the orientation of the graves clearly shows that they belong to the Muslims. The answer to the second question may also be sought by looking at the religious condition of Muslims in Hazara and Kashmir before the religious reform brought by Sayyid Ali Hamadani during the last quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. According to Ahmad Hassan Deni (1996), The Muslims Population in Hazara and Kashmir had lost the true spirit of Islam before the arrival of Sayyid Ali Hamadani. Thus, due to the ignorance and dominance of the Hindu traditions, these zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs might have been used by the Muslims. Whatever the origin of motifs and their purpose might have been, these unique graves with their elegantly carved headstones bear a unique testimony of ancient

craftmanship and belief have great potential to attract tourists/pilgrims from across the country and abroad.

### Naukot Monuments as an Important Destination of Pilgrimage Tourism

One of the most important Muslim monuments recently explored in Mansehra is the ruined enclosure, which is generally taken as the burial place of Sayyid Ali Hamadani ([Hameed, 2012](#)). (Fig. 21)



Figure 21: General View of Naukot Monument overlooking North

The history and architecture of the enclosure have been discussed in detail by the senior author in his previous article ([Shah and Hameed, 2012](#)). Therefore, a brief history of the Sayyid Ali Hamadani is presented here, followed by the potential of the roofless enclosure for pilgrimage tourism.

Sayyid Ali Shah Hamadani, also known as Alī Sānī, Shah-i Hamadan, *Amīr-i-Kabīr*, one of the greatest Muslim personalities of the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE ([Hasan 2004](#); Shah and Hameed, 2012), was born in Hamadan, a city located 297KM southwest of Tehran in 1314 CE ([Babar 2007](#)). The historic city of Hamadan also accommodates the corporal relics of important saints, caliphs and scholars, including Sharf ad-Din Mahmud, Imam Husain, Abu Dajana, and Ibn-i Sina ([Hamadani 2003](#); Shah and Hameed, 2012). His father, Sayyid Shahab Ad-Din, was an important political figure and had once acted as governor of Hamadan. His uncle, Ala-ud-Din, a Muslim saint, taught him the Holy Qur'an. To quench his spiritual thirst, Sayyid Ali Hamadani remained a student of great teachers/scholars, including Shaikh Rukn ad-Din Ala ad-Daulah, Shaikh Saraf ad-Din Mahmud

ibn-i Abdullah Mazuqani, and Qutb ad-Din Nishapuri ([Hasan 2004](#)).

Having completed his education, Sayyid Ali Hamadani started travelling to different regions to propagate the true spirit of Islam. With this mission, he visited Kashmir thrice along with his disciples during the last quarter of the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE ([Hasan 1353](#); [Pandit 1990](#)). On his visits to Kashmir, he was warmly welcomed by Qutb ad-Din, the then ruler of Kashmir ([Pandit 1990](#); [Hasan 2004](#); [Afaqi 1988](#)). During his visits to Kashmir, he did only bring religious reforms but is also said to have converted 37000 individuals ([Hamadani 2003](#)). Impressed by the vision, Qutb ad-Din showed great respect to Hamadani, and the king used to seek his advice on various sensitive matters. On his last visit, he spent a year in Kashmir and decided to return to Khatlan. On his way back to Khatlan, he fell ill and died at Pakhli (Mansehra) on January 9, 1385, CE ([Nashad 2003](#); [Fauq 2003](#); [Hasan 2004](#); [Afaqi 1988](#)).

Sayyid Ali Hamadani was one of the great Muslim saints and preachers who did not only bring religious reform to Hazara, Northern Areas and Kashmir but also brought an economic revolution in the region. ([Dani 1996](#)). He is said to have brought with him artisans and craftsmen from Central Asia who trained and imparted different skills to the people of Kashmir. He also has in his credit to author more than a hundred manuscripts on politics, philosophy, morality, and jurisprudence. In addition, he also wrote many pamphlets, including *Qayām Nāmāh* and *Fi Ilm-ul-Qiyāfah* ([Hasan 2004](#); [Shah and Hameed 2012](#); [Hamadani 2003](#)).

There are two different opinions about his religious approach. Some claim him to be a follower of the Shiite sect, while according to others, he was a *Sunni* Muslim. To whatever sect he did belong, he was a prominent figure to have left deep imprints on the religious life of the people of Central Asia, Iran and particularly Kashmir ([Hasan 2004](#); [Shah and Hameed](#)).

### **Naukot Monument as an Important Destination of Faith Tourism**

According to some the historians, on his return to Khatlan, Sayyid Ali Hamadani was warmly welcomed Sultan Muhammad, the ruler of Pakhli. He stayed a few days here and then on the way, he fell ill and died in 1385CE ([Babar 2007](#); [Khan 1976](#)). His

death body was buried at Naukot on temporary bases that was later taken to Khatan and buried in a magnificent tomb ([Pandit 1990](#); [Khan 1976](#); [Afaqi 1988](#)). The monument at Naukot still accommodates the empty grave of the saint at its southeastern corner. This fortified roofless structure (Fig. 22) at Naukot (district Mansehra), lies between 34 25.532' N and 73 10.602' E and 915m ASL.



**Figure 1:** A View of Hallowed and Solid Bastions at Naukot

It is a square structure measuring 14x14m and is strengthened by bastions at cardinal point. The northeastern and northwestern bastions are hallowed, while those on the southeastern and southwestern corners are solid structures. The monument rests on a Buddhist mound, probably a stupa and is surrounded by many other cultural mounds of the Buddhist period. Of these, Naukot Dheri I, Naukot Dheri II, Shali Kund Dheri and

Kharand Mera are worthy to mention. Naukot monument is though believed to have been constructed to enshrine the corporeal relics of Sayyid Ali Hamadani. But according to some of the historians, the monument existed during the lifetime of the saint who is said to have used the hollowed bastions for the purpose of meditation ([Iqbal 2002](#)). Analysis of the architectural elements and construction materials of the monuments by the senior author has also confirmed that the monument is much earlier in date and may be assigned to the Ghaznavid era. It was due to its association with the saint that the monument was though to be the most appropriate place to bury his corporeal relics on temporary basis ([Hameed 2012](#); [Shah and Hameed 2012](#)). There are some other buildings in the surrounding regions associated with Sayyid Ali Hamadani. Important among these are Khanqah-i Mu alla (Srinagar, Kashmir), the Amborok mosque at Shigar, the Chaqchan mosque at Khaplu and the final resting place of the saint in Khatlan ([Hameed 2012](#); [Hamadani 2003](#); [Nashad 2003](#); [Afaqji 1988](#)).

Due to its association with Sayyid Ali Hamadani, the Naukot monument in Mansehra is visited by his followers on a regular basis. His annual *Urs* is also celebrated by both Sunnis and the followers of the Shiiit sect who come from Kashmir and other far-flung areas to participate and pay reverence to the saint. But due to a lack of basic facilities, i.e., food, accommodation, and restrooms, the visitors can not stay longer. Thus, the promotion of the Naukot monument will not only resolve the visitors' issues but also create livelihood opportunities for the host population.

### **Tourism Development at the Islamic Heritage Sites of District Mansehra with special reference to the Tomb of Sayyid Ali Hamdani**

Tourism development at the Islamic heritage sites is very much important for the following reasons:

- To conserve and preserve the unique and rare heritage of the region
- To highlight the contributions of the saints and the rulers in the propagation of Islam and the Islamic art and architecture in the region
- To create a sense of ownership among the local community about the Islamic heritage

- To attract national and international tourists for the education
- To raise the locals' standard of life
- Following measures are suggested to develop tourism at these sites:

#### **Accessibility**

Access to these sites is not very good. The need is to build proper roads and improve the transport infrastructure so that visitors may access these sites easily.

#### **Conservation Plans**

These monuments are not in a very good state of preservation, and at some points, restoration is also needed. There is a dire need to initiate conservation plans on an emergency basis to conserve this heritage for future generations.

#### **Tourist Facilities**

Well-designed tourist facilities like accommodations, restaurants, public washrooms, refreshment centres, professional heritage guides etc., should be provided at the sites. Further, libraries at the tomb of Sayyid Ali Hamdani should also be provided to highlight the contributions and achievements of those saints and the rulers. Display centres of arts and crafts and the techniques introduced by these saints for the development of the local community should also be introduced at these sites.

#### **Promotion of these Sites**

Proper promotion plans should also be launched to market these important sites in and outside the country. Tomb of Sayyid Ali Hamdani may be promoted in Central Asia where there are thousands of disciples of the saint still living. The visitors from Central Asian states may visit to pay homage to their beloved saint.

#### **Awareness**

Awareness among the local community should be created to know the value of this important Islamic heritage and how to welcome the tourists in their areas. Local community should also be trained in tourism and hospitality related skills to take maximum benefits from tourism.



## **Conclusion**

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The archaeological explorations in Mansehra have unfolded hundreds of sites and monuments, including those of the Muslim period. The Islamic heritage sites and monuments in the region comprise mosques, old houses, water ponds, graves and shrines. Of these, the monument at Naukot, due to its religious, historical and architectural significance, has great potential for the promotion of pilgrimage and cultural tourism. This monument, based on its comparative analysis, has been declared the earliest

Muslim remaining in the entire Hazara region. Being attributed to Sayyid Ali Hamadani, it equally attracts the followers of *Shia*, *Sunni* and *Ismaili* sects who visit the site to pay reverence to the saint. The Monument at Naukot is the region's earliest Islamic monument and can potentially attract international visitors, especially from central Asia. Unfortunately, most of the Islamic heritage sites, including the Naukot monument, are deteriorating due to negligence and natural and human causes, but there is still a lot which, if properly restored and conserved, may attract thousands of visitors.

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Appendix

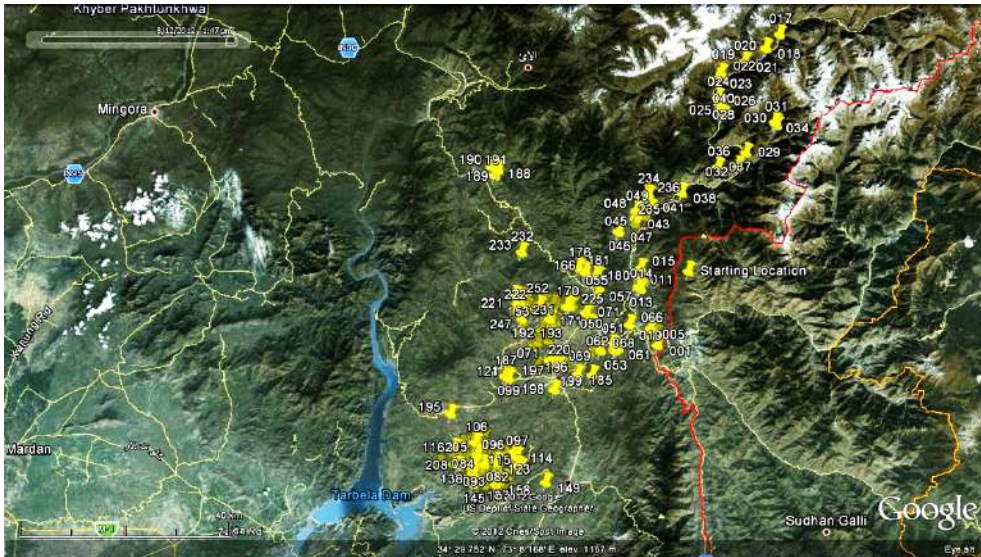


Figure 2: Map showing archaeological sites reported during the Exploration in 2007-08



Figure 3: General View of Bela Mosque Overlooking northeast



Figure 4: Wooden Pillar with Ionic Capital reused in Batlan Mosque



Figure 5: Wooden Pillar and capital reused in Paludaran mosque



Figure 6: Palundaran Wooden Houses of the 16th century



**Figure 7:** Headstone of old graves at Paludaran depict zoomorphic motifs



**Figure 8:** Headstones of Old Graves at Kaghan Cemetery depict zoomorphic and birds' design



**Figure 9:** Headstones of Old Graves at Agla Garan Cemetery depict zoomorphic and Wheel design



Figure 10: Headstones of Old Graves at Sehri Manoor Cemetery depict zoomorphic and Wheel design



Figure 11: Headstones of Old Graves at Agla Garan Cemetery depict zoomorphic and Wheel design



Figure 12: General View of Sakhi Bab Ziarat at Pairan Khairabad



**Figure 13:** Tomb of Dewan Raja Baba at Guli Bagh



**Figure 14:** Tomb of Sultan Mahmud Khurd at Guli Bagh



**Figure 15:** Jamia Masjid Giderpur



**Figure 16:** General View of Saat Darwazay Wali Ziarat



**Figure 17:** Anonymous Grave at Baffa disturbed by the antiquarians



**Figure 18:** Headstones of the graves at Ajakhail Cemetery depict zoomorphic and floral motifs





Figure 19: General View of Chakhchuri Baba Ziarat



Figure 20: General View of Sheikh Baba Ziarat, Malikpur Khwajgan



Figure 21: General View Bankoti Ziarat, Malikpur Khwajgan