



## Heritage walks characteristics, pre-requisites and circuits: a case study of First Revolt at Delhi

**Dr. Arvind Kumar Dubey**

Assistant Professor and Programme Coordinator – BTS, BHM, MHA, EMBAHM, MIHM, NCHMCT programmes & MCC. ( SOTISM, IGNOU, NEW DELHI)

### ABSTRACT

*Interpretation through heritage walk is a process of providing value to a heritage property or circuit and is possible when these are studied. Historical buildings and events have educational and inspirational value but that value will emerge when it is interpreted at the time of visit. Interpretations occur through heritage walks to places of interest.*

*The present study has employed extensive field survey and literature review to obtain an understanding of characteristics and necessary aspects of heritage walk, walk of area/ street related to first revolt at Delhi.*

**KEYWORDS:** Interpretation, Revolt, Mutineers, Heritage walk etc.

### Introduction

A unique way of experiencing the heritage and culture of any given area is to walk through the heritage route/circuit that is earmarked for the purpose by the tour operator/tourist department along with guide/escorts. The guide not only interprets the heritage but also involves the tourists into activities that make them experience the region in a better way. This involves an understanding of history, cultural context, monuments, environment, events, cuisines etc. In fact a heritage walk is a mix of education, experience and entertainment. Hence, the entire experience of the tourist depends on the attitude and quality of the walk leader who must have the necessary knowledge and be thoroughly acquainted with the area.

There are certain heritage walk circuits being operational in Delhi. Out of these, some circuits are very much in demand and most heritage walk providers are doing good business by operating and promoting these walks circuits.

### Objectives

#### This research aimed at the following:

- To understand the features, characteristics and necessary aspects of Heritage walk.
- To identify the major sites / area/ monuments related to First Revolt at Delhi.
- To suggest Heritage Walk Circuits related to First Revolt at Delhi.

### Methodology

Data pertaining to sites, areas, monuments related to First Revolt at Delhi (1857) has been collected from various available books, reports, journals, magazines, and website. The Field survey approach was used to gather data on sites such as Delhi University, Delhi Ridge (Kamala Nehru Park), Red Fort, GGSIP University, Chandani Chowk, Yamuna River belt etc.

### Features and Characteristics of Heritage Walk

Most important element of heritage walk is the availability of heritage area. The heritage may be of any kind i.e. built, cultural or natural heritage or a mix of all. Some stories, intangibility and legends related to the heritage area can be described or re-enacted in front of tourist. The following are some of the features of a heritage walk:

- i. Heritage walk is done for an area having some historical / cultural significance or living tradition and life or both.
- ii. It has well defined circuit (preferably circular route) that can be covered in a short duration with starting and ending points.
- iii. The duration of heritage walk is not very long. It can range from an hour to three hours or half a day depending on the number of attractions and area to be covered along with meals and entertainment.
- iv. The Heritage walk tour is a guided tour. The guide or walk leader has to be well versed with history, events, happenings, art and architecture, customs etc. of the heritage walk circuit and of the destinations.
- v. The route map and the attractions covered during the walk should

be available to the tourist right from the beginning.

- vi. The dos and don'ts have to be clearly specified.
- vii. The walk is not just a narration but an experience of the given area.

### Pre-requisites for a Heritage Walk

- i. Comfortable walking route.
- ii. There must be some interesting concept of the walk and script for narration.
- iii. During walk some nice visual feeling i.e. colour, smell, culture and tradition, etc. add value.
- iv. Host population should be friendly and willing to interact or perform in front of tourist.
- v. The guide or walk leader should be well versed with all features of area including demography, religion/traditional practices and do and don'ts of the area.
- vi. Awareness about cultural values is necessary and they should be respected.
- vii. Accessibility to historic buildings.
- viii. Development of proper network.

Initially, heritage walks were organized more for educational purposes than as a business in tourism. Heritage lovers, students, conservators, etc. used to take such walks not only to understand the heritage but to explore the area for more knowledge and information besides finding something new. The backpackers generally preferred to explore the city through walks. In some countries the local tourism departments started organizing short duration walks as a promotion exercise for the destination. Gradually the tour operators moved in seeing good business opportunities. Walks thus emerged as another tourism product wherein all aspects of product design were taken care of professionally along with marketing them. Herein Delhi provided excellent tourism resources that were converted into tourism products of heritage walks.

### Monuments related to First Revolt at Delhi

In context of the revolt of 1857 the following buildings at Delhi are important, as different episodes of the rebellion are directly related with these structures. **Lal Qila, Red Fort:** Its foundation was laid in the 11<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of the Mughal emperor Shahjahan and completed in 1648 A.D. There are a number of magnificent structures like Diwan-i-Khas, Naubat Khana, Rang Mahal, Shah Burj and Moti Masjid. Salimgarh Fort is situated at the north end of this fort (Red Fort). Here during British period, British Army erected a number of structures for different purposes.

In 1857, there was a bridge of boats that spanned the Jamuna River near Salimgarh Fort. After the outbreak of revolt at Meerut, a messenger from Meerut entered the capital of Mughal Emperor, Shahjahanbad through this bridge of boats. The message was for British Commissioner of Delhi, Simon Fraser. Simon Fraser was living in a room made over Lahore Gate – Red Fort. In the morning of 11<sup>th</sup> May 1857 (Monday) i.e. day after the beginning of the rebellion at Meerut, the mutineers clattered across the bridge of boats and killed the Toll Collector of Delhi and other English officials. The mutineers moved towards the Red Fort and finally entered the fortress through the Rajghat.

**Lahore Gate:** Lahore Gate is situated in the centre of the west wall of the Red Fort. In 1857, the uppermost storey was occupied by the "Commandant of the palace guard". The guard was commanded by a British officer Captain Douglas. Captain Douglas stayed in a quarter situated in the western part of the Red Fort.

**Shah Burj:** It is situated at North – East corner of the Red Fort. It is also called the "Northern Tower". The building was an essential component of the hydraulic system of the fort. During the mutiny of 1857, dome of this structure was demolished.

**Barbicans:** These barbicans were made as an extra protection for the gates. The glacis in this barbican was created after the First War of Independence, 1857. Now these barbicans are used by the Prime Minister of India to address the nation on every 15<sup>th</sup> August.

**Hayat Bakhsh Garden:** After the First War of Independence 1857, half of the site of the original garden was occupied by army barracks constructed by British.

**Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque):** Pearl mosque was constructed by Emperor Aurangzeb (1659 AD). During the First War of Independence (1857) the mosque was badly damaged.

**Burj-i-Tila (Golden Tower) or Musamman Burj (Octagonal Tower):** This Burj was used by the ruler to hear the grievances of his subject. The dome of this Burj was demolished during the great revolt of 1857. Later on it was rebuilt.

**Khizri Gate or Water Gate:** On 11<sup>th</sup> May 1857, Captain Douglas desired to open this gate to talk to the rebels.

**Mosque (unnamed): Bazar Fathpuri and Chhatta Sufi Masjid:** - The original structure was demolished.

**Kotwali or Police Station (Parking place for Shish Ganj Gurudwara) – Chandni Chowk:** Opposite this building, Hudson exposed the bodies of three princes whom he shot in 1857 A.D. At the same site many mutineers suffered the last penalty. Now it has been converted into a parking place for Shish Ganj Gurudwar.

**Commemorative Column (Lothian Road Post Office.):** This granite made commemorative column was installed in 1901-02. It was erected in the memory of British Postal Personnel who died in the First War of India's Independence on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1857.

**Gate of British Magazine (Lothian Road, Kashmiri gate):** On the northern gateway there is a beautiful plaque marking the names of the soldiers who died when they were defending the magazine during the great revolt of 1857.

**Army Barracks:** After First War of Independence in 1857 A.D. a major part of the Red Fort was destroyed. These Army Barracks were constructed after the mutiny.

**Saint James Church:** The Church was targeted by rebels and it was badly damaged. The Church was rebuilt after the mutiny of 1857.

**Hindu Rao's House:** Hindu Rao's House is situated in Northern end of the ridge. During the mutiny Hindu Rao House was headquarter of the British forces.

**Metcalf House:** The building is situated near the Civil Secretariat Building. It was badly damaged by Mutineers in 1857.

**Delhi University Office (Vishvavidyalay Marg, North Campus):** Before the construction of "Rashtrapti Bhawan" this building served as Viceroy's House. But originally it was built as a circuit house for the cantonment. Lord Harding, Chelmsford, Reading and Lord Irwin lived in this building.

Apart from all the structures, there are few other historical structures situated in Delhi ridge which are important with regard to the mutiny.

**Guard House / Garden Pavilions:** The ridge area near Metcalfe House was having a beautiful physiographic structure and kaleido-

scopic view. Britishers had made some garden pavilions in it which are now known as Guard House.

**Flag Staff Tower:** The Flag Staff Tower is situated at Kamla Nehru Ridge, opposite Delhi University Gate. This was the same spot where the ladies of the cantonment gathered with their children and servants, and from which they finally fled to Karnal.

**The Mutiny Memorial:** At this place there existed Taylor's Battery which was demolished by mutineers. A large number of soldiers of Delhi field force were also killed at this place in between 30<sup>th</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> September 1857. In 1972 Government of India declared it a memorial of the mutineers who showed utmost gallantry in the battlefield against the British Force.

Other important monuments are Kushak-i-Sikar (Pirgarib), Baoli, Ashokan Pillar, Guard House, Khuni Khan Jheel, James Skinner House etc. which are situated in the area of battle.

**Table – 1: Monuments and Sites at Delhi related to 1857 Revolt**

Name of the Monument/ Area/Site	Name of the Monument/ Area/ Site
Lal Qila (Red Fort)	Mori Gate
Salimgarh Fort	Dara Sikoh's Library
Lahore Gate	Hindu Rao's House (Hindu Rao Hospital)
Barbicans (in front of Lahore Gate and Delhi Gate)	Ashokan Pillar (Kamala Nehru Ridge)
Shah Burj (North of Hira Mahal)	The Mutiny Memorial (Fathgarh)
Hayat Bakhsh Garden	Metcalf House
Moti Masjid	Qudasia Garden (ISBT) and Mosque
Burj-i-Tila (Golden Tower) or Musamman Burj	Hathi Gate (Qudasia Garden)
Mosque (unnamed), Bazar Fathpuri	Town Hall (Begum Ki Sarai and Bagh)
Khizri Gate (water gate)	Begum Samru's Mahal (Central Bank of India, Chandani Chowk)
Army Barracks	Baoli (Hindu Rao House)
Gateway of British Magazine (in front of Post Office)	Pirgarib or Kaushik-I-Shikhr (Near Hindu Rao Hospital)
Commemorative Column (near Post Office)	Chauburja (Kamala Nehru Ridge)
Kotwali or Police Station (Shish Ganj Gurudwara Parking)	Khuni Khan Jheel (Kamala Nehru Ridge)
Chatta Sufi Masjid (Hauz Qazi, Ajmeri Gate)	St. James Church, Parish Hall, St. James Aennexe, Skinner Family's Cemetery etc.
Delhi University Office	Khuni Darwaza (Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Opposite to Firozshah Kotla)
Guard House (Kamala Nehru Ridge)	Zafar Mahal (Mehrauli)
Guard House (Hindu College)	Purani Sabzi Mandi
Guard House (Kamala Nehru Ridge, near Flag Staff Tower)	Badli Ki Sarai (Azad Pur etc.)
Nicholson Cemetery (ISBT)	Khyber Pass
James Skinner's House (Ganda Nala Bazar, Kashmiri Gate)	Hindon River (Ghaziabad)
Kashmeri Gate	

**Fig.1. Sites and Monuments related to first revolt at Delhi**



**Heritage Walk Circuit – 1**

Khyber pass, Pre Mutiny Cantonment (Delhi University Administrative Block, V.C. Office), Flag Staff Tower, Magazine, Indian metrological office (British Period Cell), Khuni Khan Jheel, Chauburjee, Shikargah, Baoli, Hindurao's House (Hospital), Ashokan Pillar, Mutiny Memorial, Skinners House, Delhi College (I.P. University), Dara Sikoh Library, Saint James Church, Kashmir Gate, Hath Gate, Qudasia Bagh Mosque, Metcalfe House (DRDO's office).

**Heritage Walk Circuit – 2**

Red Fort, Lahori Gate, Chandani Chowk, Town Hall, Jama Masjid etc.

**Conclusion**

The process of making heritage site and monument consumable and meaningful is known as heritage interpretation. A unique way of experiencing heritage of any area is to walk through the route with the help of a good interpreter. The mutiny of 1857 engulfed almost entire north India with the centre of rebellion at Delhi. At that time last Mughal ruler Bahadur Shah Zafar was trying to rule India from ramparts of Red Fort. Delhi is having nearly 50 monuments/ sites with direct association with episodes of the mutiny of 1857. These sites and area can be developed, and interpreted in front of tourists so that the heroism and bravery showed by mutineers in their anti-British uprising, is presented to present and future generations.

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