

Understanding Heritage Walks and Involvement of Different Stakeholders

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Abstract

The dynamics of how heritage walks affect the local community and how various stakeholders participate in them are the subjects of this research work. The goal of this study is to determine how a heritage walk operates, how it involves the local community and visitors, how the organizations that lead these walks operate, and what their requirements are for conducting a heritage walk.

This includes discussing the location of the walks, the rationale behind the selection of the location, and the ways in which these walks involve the community and other bodies. With the support of various international and Indian case studies where heritage walks are organized with the assistance of the community, government, or public-private partnership, the research will give a basic overview of heritage walks and zoom down to heritage walks that are held in various locations with the participation of various stakeholders. Additionally, the research paper will provide a concept on the Heritage walk's financial side and funding mechanism.

Keywords— Heritage Walks, Stakeholders, Community, Organizations, Walk leaders, Public – Private partnership

Introduction to Heritage Walk

People who possess heritage or culture are believed to benefit greatly from heritage walks, which raise awareness of the historicity of localities and associated cultural values. An essential experiential and experimental model for teaching about heritage is the heritage walk. The cultural Trails entail strolling throughout the area, which enables firsthand observations and provides several subtleties of cultural sites in their original context as well as an appreciation of the significance and values inherent in heritage. Simultaneously, the difficulties heritage faces are revealed, which raises queries and worries. This interaction with heritage is a crucial first step in encouraging action for heritage preservation and protection.

Fostering this connection between individuals and their history might help ensure its survival, particularly in risk societies where advancements and other pressures from modernization and globalization are putting it in danger of disappearing.

It is also said that heritage walks are a means of showcasing the historic significance of places and associated cultural values. Tourists and residents will be encouraged to visit rich cultural, archaeological, and architectural treasures by the proximity and association with existing ancient villages and the surrounding environment. Local populations may become more aware of the historical and cultural significance of resources because of such encounters.

Heritage Walks in India

India draws a lot of foreign tourists because of its rich history, culture, and festivals. However, for more than 20 years (since the 1990s), heritage walks and excursions have been popular with both domestic and foreign tourists in India. In the past, professional organizations primarily led heritage walks in Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra, primarily for foreign tourists. There is now a new urban class after liberalization. With the help of numerous additional professionals, this industry has developed over the years, arranging heritage walks and tours in previously unpopular tourist destinations like Ahmedabad, Pune, Amritsar, and Lucknow. Professionals, businesspeople, and members of the local community organized these walks. (Mathur, 2018)

Walking is no longer the only way to display or highlight our history and traditions; other groups have developed ideas such as Metro Trails and Cycle Trails, which take visitors from one location to another while providing them with rest stops. Over time, a new kind of walk called the Audio Walk has also emerged, in which participants are given an earpiece and a tape recorder, and they use the audio tape and directional signage to walk through a specific region.

Case studies of Different Heritage walks

As previously mentioned, heritage walks come in a variety of forms and involve a range of stakeholders, including the local community, organizations that lead the walk, organizations with financial ties, and the tourists who come from various areas to learn about the local culture. As a result, a variety of people are involved in these heritage walks, each with their own advantages and disadvantages to ensure the walk's success.

In the subsequent research, we will learn about several Indian and international walks, their funding strategies, and the various facets and participation of various individuals and organizations. Primary case studies are conducted by attending the walks, whereas secondary sources are used for some of the case studies. The Freedom Trail in Boston, The History Walk in New Jersey, the Heritage Walks of Amdavad and Bombay, and Walking with the Djinns by Feroz Shah Kotla in Delhi, Qila-e-Mubarak, Shahjahanabad, Delhi are among the case studies used in the additional research.

Freedom Trail at Boston

Founded in 1630 by Puritan settlers from England on the Shawmut Peninsula, Boston is one of the oldest cities in the United States and the capital and most populated municipality of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, the Battle of Bunker Hill, and the Siege of Boston were among the major American Revolutionary events that took place there. It remained a major port and manufacturing centre, as well as a centre for culture and education, when the United States gained independence from Great Britain (Freedom Trail, n.d.).

Boston, known as The Cradle of Liberty, played a central role in the winning of American independence from Great Britain. Boston has more sites related to the American Revolution and America's fight for independence than any other city. So, there is an important walk held in this city known as the Boston Freedom Trail. It is said to be an experience of more than 250 years of history on Boston's iconic Freedom Trail—the 2.5-mile red line leading to 16 nationally significant historic sites, each one an authentic treasure. Preserved and dedicated by the citizens of Boston in 1951, the Freedom Trail is a unique collection of museums, churches, meeting houses, burying grounds, parks, a ship, and historic markers that tell the story of the American Revolution and beyond. Today the Freedom Trail is a world-renowned, signature tourist experiences attracting over 4 million people annually to visit Boston's precious 17th-, 18th-, and 19th-century sites (Walking Boston's Historic Freedom Trail 2018).

Heritage walk of Ahmedabad

Ahmedabad also known as Amdavad, is the largest city and former capital of the Indian state of Gujarat. It is the administrative headquarter of the Ahmedabad District Ahmedabad has been selected as one of the hundred Indian cities to be developed as a smart city under Government of India's flagship Smart cities Mission in July 2017, the Historic city of Ahmedabad or Old Ahmadabad, was declared as India's first UNESCO World Heritage City.

The 600 years old city of Ahmedabad (1411 A.D) has some of the finest Indian-Islamic monuments and exquisite Hindu and Jain temples. With the purpose of understanding the walled city and its heritage and aesthetic of the city for the tourists and the citizens themselves The Heritage Walk of Ahmedabad was launched by the Amdavad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in association with CRUTA Foundation, an NGO, on 19th November 1997, during World Heritage Week (Heritage walk of Amdavad n.d.).

The walk commences from the early 19th century Swaminarayan temple Kalupur, encompasses 20 main spots besides numerous areas and aspects of the old city and concludes at the famous 15th century Jama Masjid. Hence the Walk is popularly known as the journey of 'Mandir to Masjid'. The Ahmedabad model of Heritage Walk is being replicated in many other historic cities and towns of India like Jaipur, Amritsar, Lucknow etc. to conserve heritage and promote tourism. The Amdavad Municipal Corporation heritage walk includes Gandhi Ashram, Sardar Patel National Memorial, Hutheesing Jain Temple, SidiSaayad's Mosque, Bhadra Fort, Rani Sipri's Mosque, JultaMinara, Adalaj Stepwell, Akshardham, Manek chowk (Amdavad Municipal Corporation AMC n.d.).

After becoming the world heritage city, the civic body has started work on the key aspects of the policy, including designing a detailed heritage route map, signboards with site details, signposts for easy navigation by tourists, revamping the annual budget for maintenance among others.

Bombay Heritage Walk

Mumbai also known as Bombay is the capital of Indian state of Maharashtra. Mumbai lies on the Konkan coast. From a small fishing village to India's commercial capital is proof of its amazing adaptive and progressive character. From the 17th century archipelago with a Fort built by the British East India Company, it increased in importance as a trading port, then as a seat of governance for the erstwhile Bombay Presidency and now the state of Maharashtra and the undisputed financial nerve-centre of the country. Each generation left an imprint on the city, its people, and consequently its architecture.

Now Mumbai's skyline consists of a multitude of architecture styles - some images from the past, some contemporary, some timeless (Bombay Heritage Walk BHW 2000).

Bombay Heritage walk starts its walk with the history of Bombay, it then continues with the introduction of the walk route and specific area that will be covered. Each building of historic or architectural merit is then pointed out enroute, highlighting any special cultural or social anecdotes. Architectural styles, construction materials and methods, planning elements, ornamental details as well as any conservation efforts or structural modifications are explained (BHW 2000).

Founded by architects of Mumbai, Abha Bahl and Brinda Gaitonde Nayak, THE BOMBAY HERITAGE WALKS (BHW) group has been organising walking tours around the city's heritage precincts since April 1999. The walks aim to raise the awareness of the people of Mumbai and visitors, about the city's architecture and heritage monuments.

In the Bombay heritage walk people are taken around little-known heritage precincts all over the city from Banganga Tank - a holy Hindu pilgrimage centre to Ballard Estate - an early 20th century Edwardian neo-classical business district. Government-controlled heritage properties like the administrative wing of the Victoria Terminus and the 1800s Gothic-style State Police Headquarters. Dockyard Walks with the Indian Navy, a Freedom Trail in association with the Mani Bhavan Gandhi Sanghralaya (Gandhi Museum & Research Centre) (BHW 2000).

Analyzing the Case studies

Boston Heritage walk which is known as Freedom Trail is a walk held on very important spots in Boston which have historic and political significance. The freedom trail has an association with different stakeholders of the city like the local community, families of the warriors in the revolution, the walk conductors, the fund donators etc. It is a self-guided trail and costs 10 dollars per head, which is used for provision of maps and amenities on the walk. The funding system of freedom trail is done by the Freedom Trail foundation to support for the preservation of historic sites in the trail. This foundation also gives some educational and outreach programmes on the trail for more funding.

Ahmedabad Heritage walk also known as the AMC Heritage walk, it was first designed by Mr. Debashish Nayak in 1997. One can enjoy the heritage walk at a minimum fee of 50 in the case of Indian and 100 in the case of foreign nationals. Initiated by the AMC, this walk is run with the support of local volunteers and communities. In the last 18 years It started heritage management-related activities and initiatives in

Ahmedabad city. But many people criticize that it does not cover the true spirit of Ahmedabad city nor has it evolved with the time. The narration and route have not been changed. It does not cover other aspects of heritage, such as festivals, food, arts and craft and communities.

The stakeholders in the heritage walk ecosystem are as follows:

- Heritage walk organizations
- Traders and artisans
- Heritage property owners
- Domestic and international tourists
- Government bodies
- University/educational institutions
- Industry: hospitality, media
- Society

Heritage walks in Ahmedabad triggered interests of preservation and conservation of heritage among local bodies, state government, politicians, local communities and heritage management experts and institutions. More than 100 houses were restored with the collaboration of AMC, Housing Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO). The collaborative organizations worked towards restoring and preserving old houses through full and partial funding of the projects and encouraging people to restore and preserve their old houses.

The Bombay heritage walk is a privately formed Heritage walk committee by two architects of Mumbai, so emphasis of these Heritage walks is more on the architectural side of Mumbai which has been unseen. The founders were already working on several urban improvement and preservation projects in the individual capacity which added to the authenticity of the presentation. The walks drew large crowds comprising locals as well as visitors. Buoyed by the public enthusiasm, overwhelming turnout and positive reactions from participants, The Bombay Heritage Walks (BHW) group was formulated on April 18th 1999 – also World Heritage Day. But as of now Bombay Heritage walk has stopped their regular heritage walks and only private or customized walks are done now. There are many heritages walk organizations in Mumbai like Raconteur Walk, LBB walks but the focus of these walks is more on Film City or Food walks etc.

Analysis and Conclusion

Local community groups now frequently employ historical and heritage walks or heritage trails as a means of promoting their local history and heritage. Additionally, it is employed to raise public awareness of cultural conservation and heritage objects. The purpose of history walks or trails is to connect the pathways to the region's noteworthy historical sites. There are three different sizes of heritage walks:

small, giant, and gigantic. For the community to recognize the value of their material or intangible heritage and use it as a tool for sustainable development, the heritage walks assign them the duty of protecting it.

It is evident from the analysis on the various situations above that these walks function in a variety of ways. As demonstrated by the Boston Freedom Trail, the trail has many different stakeholders, including the Freedom Trail Organization, the families of the American Revolutionary War soldiers, and visitors who find it unique to have such a wonderful walk because they can relate to the people and the history. Because they want the visitors to feel and comprehend the walk better, the local population dresses in exquisite clothing that is allegedly inspired by the time of the revolution. They then guide guests through the area wearing this clothing.

According to some internet conversations with the people who go on these walks, it helps them better visualize and travel back in time. In contrast, the Amdavad walks incorporate the local community to provide financial support, allowing participants to rest at designated locations and purchase water, food, or souvenirs during the walk. In contrast to many other walks, the Ahmedabad Walk is a unique walk that directly involves the government.

It serves as an excellent illustration of the relationship that exists between the community, the government, and the AMC (Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Delhi hosts a variety of heritage walks, each with its own unique characteristics. However, there is a lack of connection between these walks and the local community or government entities as compared to the walks that have been investigated elsewhere. The walk organized by AKTC in the Sundar Nursery, Humayun's Tomb, and Nizamuddin Basti of Delhi is one of the most successful and well-known walks in the city. It serves as an excellent illustration of visitor interest, community involvement, and public-private partnership. The organization invites various members of the Nizamuddin community to display their talents and appoints young people to lead the Heritage walks. So, it is a good example of economic growth and community involvement.

Delhi has a wealth of history and heritage that is being exhibited through Heritage Walks. However, there are still some gaps that can be filled to improve the success of the walks and to create economic growth so that visitors can become more involved in the area's history and the community can participate in a variety of ways that can be studied further in the future.

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