

A Conceptual Study on India's first heritage city Ahmedabad with Reference to Heritage Walk- A Tourist Attraction



ISBN: 978-1-943295-14-2

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Ahmedabad is the most powerful city since ancient times. As it had the benefit of good geographical suitability of business mostly attracted by the Mughals and they came with their own heritage and built many monuments for their livelihood and attraction. It cover architecture heritage which is first in India beautifully crafted in ancient era. Long heritage management related activities have been studied by sociologist, heritage management experts, anthropologists and. This exploratory study suggests various marketing strategies that can be implemented through heritage walk to promote heritage city Ahmedabad.

Keywords: Heritage Walk, Ahmedabad City, Heritage Management, India's First Heritage City

1. Introduction

The historic city of Ahmadabad was founded in 1411 A.D, as the capital of independent Gujarat Sultanate. Its location on the eastern banks of river Sabarmati, along an important trade route fulfilled the requisite condition for growth of a thriving urban centre with a significant population of merchants and artisans. The 600 years old city of Ahmedabad (1411 A.D) has some of the finest Indian-Islamic monuments and exquisite Hindu and Jain temples. Its carved wooden houses are another unique architectural tradition. To experience the glory of Ahmedabad it is necessary to walk through the 'Walled City' and truly observe the nature of its rich and varied architecture, its art, religious places, its culture and traditions.

With the purpose of unveiling this aspect of the city to 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. A special feature of Ahmedabad is the plan of the old city, comprising numerous 'Pols', self-contained neighborhoods, sheltering large numbers of people. Some of these 'Pols' are virtually small villages, traversed by narrow lanes, usually terminating in squares (Chowks) comprising 'Community Well' and 'Chabutro' (for feeding birds). These 'Pols' were protected by gates and secret passages. These historic residential settlements are explained in detail during the walk.

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 Walk, initiated more than one and a half decades ago, the first one of its kind by an Urban Local Body (ULB), has been continuing its journey with an unbroken record of 15 years and has lived up to its purpose of reviving the old city through rediscovery. 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.

2. Literature Review

Ahmadabad commands an important place amongst medieval Indian cities for its rich architectural and urban heritage. During the Sultanate era, a unique synthesis of the Islamic cultural traditions of its founders and the indigenous traditions of its majority Jain and Hindu inhabitants, led to the development of the highly acclaimed Gujarat Sultanate style renowned for the wealth of its monuments and excellence in stone craftsmanship.

The urban structure of the city with its major monuments, fortifications, street networks and residential settlements was well developed by the end of late 16th C. Successive periods of political dominion under the Mughal, Maratha and British rules, built upon the initial footprints of the Sultanate era, adding new institutions, adapting old ones, bringing in new materials, techniques and architectural idioms in the natural processes of cultural exchange, shared influences and evolution resulting in a stratified urban landscape of exceptional cultural significance.

Ahmadabad's walled city houses a large corpus of many remarkable monuments of historic and cultural importance. They most notably consist of the remains of citadel, fortification walls, city gates, mosques, mausoleums, temples and step wells. The city is also renowned for its traditional houses with elaborately carved wooden facades and the community based traditional settlements 'pol'. The 'pol' are characterized by a series of courtyard houses, often ranging between 50 to 100 units, with shared longitudinal walls arranged along a narrow winding street accessed by a controlled gateway and ending in a cul-de-sac. In most cases, the 'pol' also have a small community open space 'chowk', a place of worship, a bird feeder 'chabutaro' and a community well making it a self-sufficient and secure settlement unit. Several of these 'pol' came together to form 'pur'- a larger settlement unit with its boundaries defined by primary 'bazaar' market streets having its own community institutions shared by the group of pol and forming a self-sufficient unit at the larger scale. In a natural

progression of this hierarchy the city was formed by grouping of 'pur' coming together within the confines of the city walls and its larger institutions catering to the needs of entire population, creating an urban system of exceptional homogeneity.

Historical sites have always been popular attractions for both domestic and international tourists. The cultural heritage of an area is expressed in its historical resources and many tourist destinations are devoted to history. The preservation of history, the quality and management of museums are of most importance for successful sustainable tourism. Historical resources when presented properly will not only educate tourists but also the local community and helps in conserving it for future generations. Heritage tourism is concentrated on discovering and experiencing the past in the present. It includes visits to natural, cultural or built heritage sites. Different categories of heritage attractions present a variety of choices for those interested in travel.

Heritage tourism is important for socio-economic reasons too. It enriches the lives of travelers and leads them to appreciate the world and its diverse cultures. At the same time, it instills in the host community a renewed pride in their history and traditions. Both communities realize the need for protecting and conserving the culture and its manifestations. Thus, heritage tourism is to be encouraged as an important component of sustainable tourism. Tourism of any kind is always beneficial to the region where it takes place. It provides employment to the local people, raises their standards of living, etc.

This paper looks at the new and upcoming area of heritage walks as a component of sustainable urban cultural tourism. It highlights the growing area of heritage tourism and its relevance in context of India. It also explains the concept of heritage walks and its various versions in different cities of the world. The study recognizes that tourism is always looked at as a means of rest and relaxation. However, it must not be forgotten that travel is also a powerful tool for learning about the world in general and appreciating different cultures, their history and traditions.

Shraddha Bhatawadekar (2017) Humboldt German Chancellor Fellow and Nehru-Full bright Fellow blogger wrote in article that Heritage walks are an important experiential model for heritage education. Tours involve physically walking in the area, which allows for personal observations and offers several nuances of heritage sites in their original context. This real-time experience is a strong motivator for creating emotional ties with the place, crucial for understanding the meaning and values associated with heritage. Also at the same time, the challenges facing heritage also can be known, will encourage questions and concerns. Engagement with heritage is a first important step towards promoting action for the protection and preservation of heritage. Especially in risk societies, where heritage is at a danger of being lost due to developments, and other such pressures arising out of globalization and modernization, fostering this association of people, especially of youth with heritage, can make the way for its sustenance.

Dr. Arvind Kumar Dubey (2013) Heritage Walks Providers and their Marketing Strategy: A case study of Delhi International Journal of Scientific Research Volume : II, Issue : VII, July - 2013 wrote in that the Heritage walk is not just an activity but a very important tool for creation of understanding related to changing cultural landscapes and the past. The role of heritage walk provider/heritage interpreter/ guide is very crucial in creating heritage and cultural understanding. They not only interpret the heritage but also engage the tourist in cultural activity so that understanding of that region is profound. In Delhi, there are a number of heritage walk providers with numerous products, clientele and marketing strategies.

In the International Journal of Modern Engineering Research (IJMER) Vol.3, Issue.2, March-April. 2013 pp-698-703 Research paper by Dr. B. Shankar and Dr. Chidambara Swamy mentioned that by The Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation (IHCN) in the conference deliberated on various aspects of heritage cities and its conservation. "Heritage Walk" to historic core areas was organized to the conference delegates. Heritage awareness is an important component of conservation. One of the basic causes for damage of heritage is due to lack of awareness to the public at large and non-involvement of people in the process of conservation as well. The Constitution of India prescribed under the *fundamental duties* that the protection of heritage is one of the important duties of each and every Citizen of India, but the efforts made by the local authorities and agencies are not significant. The society's responsibility is to conserve the heritage that was created in the past. The local people need to take part in the process of conservation. Therefore, it is high time that greater emphasis to be laid down for creating awareness to the public including people at large through organizing heritage walks in Heritage Cities frequently with government and private support.

Aman Mathur (2018) wrote in his blog the Heritage Walks have become one of the cool things to do when travelling. In India, can proudly boast of several historical places where a mix of cultures has created a unique diversity that is unmatched. There is a bit of West and a lot of East making Indian locales a treat to visit! Lucknow or the City of Nawabs is one such place – a city that is deeply rooted in tradition, yet metamorphosing into a fast-moving metropolis. For people traveling to Lucknow, it should be very interesting to identify the various hues of this city and a Heritage Walk is the minimum can do. Embarks on these walks, will be experiencing travelling through the times – from the Mughal rule to the British colonization – how such episodes in history impacted the culture, cuisine, architecture, language, businesses, arts and crafts. Heritage walks, are best way to acquire knowledge and acknowledge ones culture, tradition, philosophy, and rituals associated with them. The heritage walk makes one look back and reminds them of their rich culture and history which provokes them to think about the existence of every historical structure and place. It also ties an emotional chord with that place and offers several nuances attached with it.

Deepika Sahu (2013) from Ahmedabad Times group wrote in her article the lanes and by lanes of Ahmedabad's walled city evokes a sense of history, heritage and living architecture through the meticulously organized Heritage Walk by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Every morning, AMC frequently organize walk which starts its journey from the Swaminarayan Temple in Kalupur after a short slide show to the heritage enthusiast walkers. The two hour walk adds on a discovery of a city

steeped in tradition, history, wonderful Indo-Islamic architecture and lots more. The walk brings close to the soul of a city which has a rich textile heritage, intricately designed places of worship, wooden carved houses of pol and lots more.

Zoha Qamar reporter from CNN in the article when addressing in the Poland this weekend, on the 41st session of the official UNESCO committee met and voted in over 20 new inscriptions, bringing the grand total of World Heritage Sites to 1073. The 600-year-old walled city of Ahmedabad has been recognized as a "UNESCO World Heritage Site," making it the first Indian city to be added to the coveted list. The rich culture of Ahmedabad's walled city, which was named in the early 1400s after Sultan Ahmed Shah, draws from its diverse history of Muslim, Hindu, and Jain influences.

UNESCO lauded the historic city's sultanate architecture, especially "the Bhadra citadel, the walls and gates of the Fort city and numerous mosques and tombs as well as important Hindu and Jain temples of later periods." Its traditional houses and streets, finished with intricate bird feeders and community wells, celebrate the fusion of Indo-Islamic architecture and art impacting more tourists to visit heritage hub of India and leisure heritage walks around the city.

Aakanksha Dasgupta write from Times of India Group wrote an article Ahmedabad the home of some beautiful temples, intricately carved monuments, glorious mosques and ancient *havelis*. The 606 year old city is soaked in rich textured history. *Aapnu Amdavad's* impressive heritage has earned it the tag of India's first city to become a World Heritage City by Unesco on the July 8. The rich, textured heritage of Ahmedabad comes alive in its beautiful architecture and also in its Walled City's unique living traditions. As part of this walk, heritage enthusiasts feel to the city's rich heritage.

In another article written by Amrita Shah in the newspaper The Indian Express. She stated the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation's Heritage Walk begins at the Swaminarayan temple in Kalupur. Where in the early morning in the large open courtyard, flanked on three sides by multi-storey and haveli buildings. This temple is very different from the elaborate marble temples associated with the sect. Devotees go about their business and pigeons flutter in droves, as the knot of motley tourists heads out into the narrow lanes of Ahmedabad's old city. The walk meanders through the pols, a form of high-density living accompanied by a highly organized social structure, which is a distinctive and defining feature of the city. There are an estimated 365 pols, accommodating a further 600 sub-pols. A pol comprises a cluster or several clusters of tightly-packed houses connected by an internal network of labyrinthine lanes and fronted by a gate. Ahmedabad, the capital city of Gujarat, was founded on the banks of the Sabarmati in 1411 by Ahmed Shah, direct heir to his grandfather, Muzaffar Shah, who broke away from Delhi rule after Timurlane's invasion, to form the Gujarat Sultanate. The Heritage Walk comprises of the Sultanate-era tombs and mosques, including the magnificent Jami Masjid, evocatively described by John Burton-Page as a "harmony of solids and voids". The last Manek Chowk, where stands a 115-year-old building which housed the country's second-oldest stock exchange.

Special Correspondent of The Hindu Newspaper wrote in the article. The Walled City of Ahmedabad, founded by Sultan Ahmed Shah in the 15th century, been declared India's first World Heritage City. The World Heritage Committee (WHC) of UNESCO made the announcement at Poland's Krakwo. "Thrilled to announce! Ahmedabad has just been declared India's first World Heritage city by @UNESCO," India's permanent representative to UNESCO. According to Ahmedabad Municipal Commissioner Mukesh Kumar, there are 2600 heritage sites and over two dozen ASI protected monuments and sites in the walled city.

Article by Nidhi Sharma in The Economic Times in the article Ahmedabad to turn 'I-Am-davad' to celebrate World Heritage City tag. Gujarati cuisine and folk music in all in-bound flights, Brand "I-Am-davad" on T-shirts, dance and music festivals on the riverfront, heritage walks through Bhadra Fort, lecture series on Parsi community – this and much more is being planned by the government in a 15-day international festival to celebrate India's first World Heritage city at Ahmedabad. Special heritage walk was been organized for the differently-abled around Jain Derashars and a KrantiYatra with freedom fighters. The culture ministry would enable free entry to all national monuments managed by Archaeological Survey of India. Hop-on Hop-off bus service to take tourists around the city would be organized in the 15-day festival organized to attract more locals and tourists to join for heritage walk in Ahmedabad City which is one of the oldest in India heritage.

Shilpa Gupta, in Post Magazine wrote in the article from temple to mosque, a heritage walk reveals secrets of Ahmedabad's Unesco-listed old city. Founded by Ahmad Shah more than 600 years ago, Ahmedabad has had a tumultuous history, with a succession of rulers lording it over the city folk: sultanate, Mughal, Maratha and British. When it was fortified with a 10km-long wall consisting of 12 darwazas, or gates, in the 15th century, no one could have imagined that the defenses would create a stark fission centuries later. The pol walk at the Swaminarayan temple, a 19th-century kaleidoscopic wonder melding Maratha and Jain architecture, wind our way past several smaller Hindu and Jain temples (derasars) at the end Jama Masjid, a yellow sandstone mosque that has stood tall on 260 pillars since 1424. All this within a 2km wander is best heritage walk for discovering heritage of India.

3. Research Methodology

In order to fulfill the objectives of the study, secondary data pertaining to travel agency business has been collected from various books, guide books, pamphlets, brochure and website.

Heritage walk is an important activity to create awareness among people (owner of heritage/culture) about historicity of areas and related cultural values. Through heritage walk, intimacy and association with available historic settlements, and environment can be developed. It motivates tourists, and local peoples to visit cultural / archaeological / architectural sites. These experiences have the capacity to sensitize local peoples towards the historical and cultural values of resources of ancient era.

It also encourages people to preserve and conserve their own culture and heritage. A sense of pride is incurred and people will start appreciating available heritage and culture nearby. Heritage walk is the best medium to initiate community based efforts for conservation and preservation involving volunteers, citizens, political leaders, media and other organizations.

The present research paper aims study India's First Heritage City Ahmedabad. Broadly the study examines potential of Ahmedabad as heritage city with many historical places from ancient times and that attracts more tourist, architectures, and archaeology and history department people to visit them frequently. Through heritage walks, heritage clubs and localities historical sites deserted by the people and lots of findings of ancient history can be evidence.

4. Findings

Ahmedabad is having abundant places of heritage an ancient city rulers from different dynasty have always their eyes on Ahmedabad to rule over also capital of trade and business for them. Rich evidences of culture, lifestyle, rituals, traditions, art can be seen over Old Ahmedabad. Many historical places are so beautifully crafted and made that even archaeologist and architectures visit for study purpose of them. After Ahmedabad been declared as India's Heritage City the tourists/travelers over from the domestic and also foreigners' footfall increased not just to understand the heritage culture of Ahmedabad but to also know how preservation is done of these heritage culture since long.

As comparison to other heritage cities in India like Goa, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai the heritage of Ahmedabad is differentiated as in ancient times Mughals have been sculptured many buildings and sculptures. Here also locals support more to promote and share heritage tradition with all tourists who visit heritage places. More over cuisine, clothes, goods are also part of heritage here in Ahmedabad. Although due to some human damage the heritage buildings were damaged but still leads the most heritage places in the country. Few NGO's are also taking initiatives to preserve and conserve the heritage of Ahmedabad.

5. Suggestions

Ahmedabad is rich in cultural and heritage places but the localities and government is not taking steps to preserve and conserve heritage monuments. Some of the monuments are vanished or damaged because of not preserving the monument which is huge loss to the cultural value of the century. Further research needs to be undertaken into the relationship between weather conditions and particular activities, especially walking. India is boosting in tourism growth and importance internationally so for attracting more international tourist for heritage walk different language guides also be trained for ease of communication with them.

A part from heritage walk the week itinerary must be introduced with includes each day a new heritage site with a week to stay and enjoy the culture properly. This will benefit researchers and enthusiast to find insights of culture and more leisure time can be spend by them. For that also localities have opportunity to earn extra bit more and also share the culture and heritage of Ahmedabad with travelers, tourists, architectures, researchers etc.

6. Managerial Implications

In Ahmedabad, heritage walk providers are offering basically two types of walk i.e. Regular walk and Customized walk. Regular walks are conducted either on daily basis or on weekends. In regular walk the area of walk, its itinerary, type of activity, starting and ending point, meeting place and cost are fixed and communicated to walkers in advance. Marketing strategy of heritage walk providers at Ahmedabad City Heritage Walk can be as under:

1. Direct contract with travel agency, tour operators, hotels, embassies, government stays etc.
2. Direct contract with Corporate Sectors, School and College.
3. By word of mouth.
4. Through online booking and website and mobile applications.
5. Through advertisement in paper, magazine, journals, cable network, TV, Cinema halls, banner's etc.
6. Linkage and collaboration with Travel Agency / Tour Operators and Hotels.
7. Publication of pamphlets, handouts, display, brochure, digital boards.
8. By printing T-Shirts, Cap's, Wrist Bands, Bag's etc.
9. Organizing lectures of prominent personalities like art and architectural experts, historians, scientists, environmentalists, travel and tourism fairs etc.
10. Creation of blog, posts, short video clips on social media, emails etc.

In modern era website and social media are the best and cheapest way of marketing. Through this, like-minded people are in touch with each other. The information of walk area, duration, date, time, cost, meeting point, do and don'ts, brief description, walk leader/guide, booking number/address/contact number, distance of walk, who can come, how to come, what to carry and wear, map of walk route etc. are written easily and with use of smartphones exact location also can be attached with information.

The Marketing strategies ensure that practical tips are provided to heritage walkers. A few tips are listed below:

1. Wear comfortable shoes/ clothes and Ensure for sun protection.
2. Take required medicines (special) and Keep your camera slung around neck or in bag.
3. Take small hand bag and Sunglass on face or in bag.

4. Scarf for covering head (religious places) and During commuting hold your belongings
5. Tightly.
6. No passport at the time of visit and keep your Valuables at Hotel.
7. Take care of your wallet and Photography by permission.

Ahmedabad heritage entity is a living heritage as it is India's first Heritage City which should be contextualized within the surrounding living environment in which heritage/culture is situated in heart of the city. Heritage walk is not just an activity but a very important tool for creation of understanding related to changing cultural landscapes and the past of our ancient era. The role of heritage walk provider/heritage interpreter/ guide is very crucial in creating heritage and cultural understanding in deep and detailed to the heritage walkers. They not only interpret the heritage but also engage the tourist in cultural activity so that understanding of that region is profound and they can come closer to the heritage and culture of India and Ahmedabad.

In Ahmedabad, there are a number of heritage walk providers with numerous products. One of them is (AMC) Amdavad Municipal Corporation which is government body providing services and amenities of heritage walk also they offer night heritage walk. Online sellers like Ahmedabad Heritage walk provides various amenities being private player of heritage walk in market. Few archaeologist, travel and tourism industry members provide personalized heritage walks to group and deliver the guide service too.

Conclusion of Marketing Implications of Heritage Walk providers:

1. The present scenario of the business of heritage walk is good. As Ahmedabad is abundant with heritage places and India's first heritage city tag continuous flow of tourists the business is quite good with fairly good future prospects.
2. In spite of availability of lots of exotic culture, food, cuisine and historical monuments and sites tourist and domestic persons are demanding in high.
3. Heritage walk is a specialized tour. It requires willingness, time and disposable income. The study shows that middle budget and up budget tourists are more attracted towards heritage walk.

7. Conclusion

Ahmedabad heritage walk is a culture to walk though in past era of history of India. All historical remains monuments and architectures which we read in books or some other forms we can feel and see them in reality. We can forward to our future generations history of Indian heritage if we preserve them with care monuments of Ahmedabad Historical City.

Ahmedabad Heritage Walk is not just a walk it's a culture the feelings emotions been attached with the history of past era. As the modernization of lifestyles increasing with that in tourism industry also increasing scope of heritage walk as means of communication increased now to learn, understand more about our past history and civilization. Due to efforts of promotion by Tour Operators / Travel Agency, Guides, Schools and government the increase in demand of heritage walk in Ahmedabad increased.

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