

LJ Institute of Media & Communications



Report:	Heritage Walk
Date	7 th August 2024
Time:	07:00 AM to 10.30 AM
Venue	Kalupur Swaminarayan Temple
Participants:	BMC & MMC SEM-1 students
No. of Participants:	23

INTRODUCTION:

The Ahmedabad Heritage Walk is a captivating journey that offers a deep dive into the ancient city's rich heritage. Conducted by two organizations-Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in collaboration with Akshar Travels-this walk provides a glimpse into the diverse cultural tapestry of Ahmedabad.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Explore the Architectural Diversity:** Understand the historical and cultural significance of the various architectural styles found in Ahmedabad, including Hindu, Jain, Muslim, British, Mughal, Persian, and Maratha influences.
- **Gain Insight into Community Life:** Learn about the unique living arrangements and community structures within the Pols, including their self-contained amenities and emergency systems.
- **Appreciate Religious Heritage:** Experience the rich religious diversity of Ahmedabad by visiting significant temples, mosques, and other religious sites, and understand their historical importance.
- **Understand Urban Planning:** Discover the urban planning and construction techniques that have helped preserve the old city, including effective sewage systems and earthquake-resistant architecture.
- **Engage with Local Culture:** Capture the essence of Ahmedabad's cultural and religious practices through guided tours and interactions with local heritage sites.

VISIT DETAILS:

On 6th August, LJIMC students participated in a heritage walk organized by AMC, which commenced at the Kalupur Swaminarayan Temple at 8 AM. The experience began with a 15-minute audio-visual presentation in a room above the temple's main gate. This engaging

presentation was a highlight, offering an excellent opportunity for photography from the dome-shaped room.

Following the presentation, students were given 10 minutes to explore the first Swaminarayan Temple in the world, a timeframe that barely scratched the surface of the temple's intricate beauty, characterized by its riot of colors and exquisite wooden carvings.

The walk then proceeded to the nearby Poet Dalpatram's home, recently renovated. The route, aptly named 'Mandir se Masjid Tak' (from temple to mosque), took students through Hindu, Jain, and Muslim areas, reflecting the city's rich religious diversity. The knowledgeable guide, Murtaza, a volunteer from Akshar Travels, led the group from Pol to Pol. These Pols are walled communities with security gates and cabins atop them, with around 600 Pols in this area. Each Pol is a self-contained unit with meeting areas, bird feeding poles, notice boards, and secret passages for emergencies.

A stop at Kala Ramji Temple revealed an idol of Lord Rama in black, without his usual bow and arrow, housed in a Burma teak structure adorned with beautiful carvings. The walk then entered the Jain area, where students visited temples like Shantinathji Temple, Chaumukhi Temple, and the eye-catching Sambhavnath Ji Temple. This underground temple, built to protect its idols from Muslim raiders, features a 400-year-old rainwater harvesting system and stunning mega idols of Jain Tirthankaras.

In a nearby Pol, participants observed an amalgamation of British, Mughal, Persian, and Maratha architectural styles in a single frame. The walls of the homes in this area even featured built-in holes for birds to nest.

The next highlight was Harkunvar Sethani ni Haveli, known for having the largest wooden brackets in Ahmedabad. The guide also pointed out the unique construction styles that helped the old city withstand the 2001 earthquake. The efficient sewage system installed by the British has prevented flooding in the old city, with unique poles indicating the direction of sewage lines.

The walk then passed under the Fernandes Bridge, a thriving book market that was once the riverbed of the Manek River, a tributary of the Sabarmati. From here, the walk continued to Chandla Ol, a semi-commercial, semi-residential area known for its religious pooja materials. The next stop was Manek Chowk, famous for its morning vegetable market, afternoon bullion market (second only to Mumbai in turnover), and vibrant street food market at night.

The walk culminated with visits to Rani no Hajiro and Badshah no Hajiro, the tombs of the King and Queen, before ending at the grand Jumma Mosque. Renowned as one of the most beautiful mosques in the East during its construction, the mosque's interiors were breathtaking. It stands on more than 130 pillars and features a separate praying area for women. The architecture, heavily influenced by Jain styles, includes domes and carvings of kalash, Ashoka leaves, kalpa vraksha, and bells, likely due to the hiring of Jain constructors or the reuse of parts from demolished Jain temples.

Then after, the students enjoyed the food at Chandra Vilas Palace-the heritage hotel of Ahmedabad.

OUTCOMES:

- **Enhanced Knowledge of Ahmedabad's Heritage:** Students gained a deep understanding of Ahmedabad's historical, architectural, and cultural heritage.
- **Appreciation of Architectural Techniques:** Awareness was increased of the unique architectural methods used in ancient times, particularly in the construction of Poles, temples, and mosques.
- **Understanding of Religious Harmony:** There was a greater appreciation for the religious harmony in Ahmedabad, as seen in the proximity and integration of Hindu, Jain, and Muslim communities.
- **Awareness of Urban Resilience:** Insights were gained into how historical urban planning has contributed to the resilience of Ahmedabad's old city, particularly in the face of natural disasters.
- **Cultural Immersion:** Students left with a richer understanding of local traditions, religious practices, and community life in Ahmedabad.

ATTENDEES: 22 (BMC) + 1 (MMC) =23

CONCLUSION:

As part of the practical study of the 'Culture and Heritage' subject, the Ahmedabad Heritage Walk serves as a compelling and hands-on learning experience. By traversing the historical Poles, exploring the diverse religious sites, and engaging with the local community, participants are able to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world observations. This walk highlights the intricate relationship between culture, heritage, and urban development, providing students with a deeper appreciation of how historical narratives are preserved and celebrated in modern contexts.

The practical insights gained from this walk—such as understanding the architectural adaptations that have contributed to the resilience of Ahmedabad's old city, or witnessing the peaceful coexistence of multiple religious communities—complement the academic study of cultural and heritage conservation. This experience not only reinforces the importance of preserving cultural heritage but also encourages students to critically reflect on the ways in which heritage is lived and sustained within urban environments. Ultimately, this practical engagement enhances the overall understanding of cultural and heritage studies, making the subject matter more tangible and relevant to contemporary issues in heritage management.





Media Coverage:



અમદાવાદ-ગિરિનાગર 09-08-2024

**સ્ટુડન્ટ્સ માટે
હેરિટેજ વોકનું
આયોજન કરાયું**
અમદાવાદ : એલ.જી.
યુનિવર્સિટીના ઈન્સ્ટિટ્યૂટ
ઓફ મીડિયા એન્ડ
કોમ્યુનિકેશન ફેશર્સ માટે
હેરિટેજ વોકનું આયોજન
કરવામાં આવ્યું હતું.

ઓરિએન્ટેશન પ્રોગ્રામ
અંતર્ગત યોજવામાં આવેલ
આ વોકમાં સ્ટુડન્ટ્સ સાથે
ફેકલ્ટી મેમ્બર્સે અમદાવાદની
હેરિટેજ સ્થળોની મુલાકાત
કરી. સ્ટુડન્ટ્સે શહેરના
હેરિટેજ કલ્ચર, ઇમારત અને
ફૂડની મજા પણ માણી હતી.
સ્ટુડન્ટ્સે હેરિટેજ ફોટોગ્રાફી
કરી વોક થકી ઐતિહાસિક
વારસાને જાણવાની તક
મેળવી હતી.

Link: <https://www.divyabhaskar.co.in/local/gujarat/ahmedabad/news/the-heritage-walk-was-organized-by-the-l-j-institute-of-media-and-communication-133455317.html>