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Name of the Scholar: Shakti Shukla

Name of the Supervisor: Prof. Kulwinder Kaur

Name of the Department: Department of Sociology

Topic of Research: Urban Heritage, neo-liberal urbanism and making of popular culture in Delhi

FINDINGS

The major findings of the study are arrived at through my exploration of the urban built heritage and the engagement of the people of the city through in-depth interviews with various stakeholders. The rationale behind choosing this topic for research, background of my research and a brief of the structure of the thesis is mentioned in my thesis. In my work, I have discussed the idea of heritage and conceptualised it in the context of city. Through my work, I have tried to understand the concept of heritage and I have done the same by discussing the definitions of heritage, various conceptualisations discussed by different authors, understanding it as a notion which is connected with the past, present, and future depending on the narrative that one wants to build around it. I have discussed the impact of the ideology of neoliberalism on the urban social environment. I have traced the journey of the transformation of the concept of liberalism, more specifically economic liberalism, to it taking the form of neoliberalism in the present times. I have tried to understand the different ways in which people of the city engage with the heritage sites as in how that interaction differs in the three cases, and who (which class) is the consumer/audience of these heritage sites and if that audience is same or different in all the three cases. The theoretical significance of my work is reflected in the discourse around neoliberal urbanism, as an ideology, and neoliberal urbanisation as a process, in the context of urban heritage. My work focuses on the phenomenon of heritage walks in the city of Delhi and how the production and consumption of the same is leading to the redefining of the phenomenon of popular culture. I observed the restructuring of the urban public space and how within that, urban heritage is transformed. Monuments are transformed to look like urban spectacles which is an attempt to create a place for the city in this world of mobile investments and economic opportunity. Neoliberalism exploits the distinctiveness of the cities shown in the form of urban heritage: urban heritage is used as a tool for economic development. Within this restructuring, I saw the exclusion of a certain group of people so that it allows the public spaces to become viable sites of capital accumulation.