Post-Independence India: A Travel Journal

Project Proposal

Time Period and Region: Post-Independence India (1947-

Focus: Exploring some of the most important events and sites in the early years of independent India.

Introduction

I travel through post-independence India as a wayfarer, looking to seek out those life-intensive events and iconic sites that defined the nation in its early years. I chronicle here, through my visits to some of these sites, the pouring in of historical events that raged between the late 1940s and the 1970s. My traveling journey in post-independence India shall expose my readers to the changing socio-political scenario, cultural transformation, and economic development during this kaleidoscopic period in Indian history.

Thesis

The first few years of post-independence in the eventful life of a modern nation were filled with significant struggles and triumphs, evidenced by these transformative events and sites that would embody the efforts of the country to assert its own identity, push for national unity, and achieve economic progress.

Site 1: Red Fort, Delhi (15th August 1947)

Narrative

Elements Answers: On the 15th of August, 1947, as they reach Delhi and its Red Fort, an electrifying atmosphere would greet them—the vast, sprawling grounds in-flooded by humans from all walks of life. They were glowing with hope, beating with pride, each face, each heart. Against the phosphorous sky stands the historic Fort, a telltale witness of India's rich heritage.

I push through the crowds, taking in the lively scene. Patriotic songs are played in the air, and fresh flowers mix with smells of street food hawkers near the site. Having managed to find a place where the dais in the center of the fort was in clear view, I feel the gravity of this historic occasion.

Soon, aat midnight, Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, launched his famous radio brodcast to the nation. His "Tryst with Destiny" speech I-laden with feelings and confidence, filtering hope for the millions-came alive in every courtyard.

Thus, it was—a pageant to be remembered of the Indian tricolor fluttering aloft for the first time. The cheers went up from the crowd and were joined in when a collective feeling of elation overwhelmed me. This was when a new nation was born - free from colonial yoke.

Historical Context

It has been a symbol of power and authority for centuries. Much of its significance was laid by Nehru's famous speech that he delivered within its confines on the eve of independence. The fort remains the focal point of Independence Day celebrations in India because it very well reflects the endurance and unity of the nation.

Site 2: Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad

Narrative

Then, I  head to the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, identical with the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, being of a non-violent and self-relieant nature. On an entry into the serene ashram, where one strikes with the simplicity and tranquility that prevails in the atmosphere, it feels.

The ashram is a testimony to Gandhi's vision for an independent India. In the Hriday Kunj, I read that it was from this humble private room that Gandhi planned many of his campaigns. The spinning wheel, known as a charkha, reached the pride of the place in this room; actually, this became a symbol of a fight for economic independence attached to the Swadeshi movement in India.

Walking along the Sabarmati River, images pass before my mind of the Salt March of 1930 that began from this ashram. The peacefulness of the place is hard to put in perspective with the swinging of the great revolution that originated there. The ashram's activities, like spinning a wheel and going for prayer meetings, make me much more familiar with the philosophy of Gandhi.

Historical Context

Sabarmati Ashram wielded its influence in the movement for the nation's freedom. The ideology of non-violent resistance and self-sufficiency propounded by Gandhi turned out to be the mantra for mass mobilization. Today, this ashram receives the highest number of pilgrimage tourists who seek solace in searching for inspiration from the life and teachings of Gandhi.

Conclusion

My journey across post-independence India is also a journey across a change-transformed nation. Starting from the festivities at the Red Fort on Independence Day to the industrial dreams of Bhilai Steel Plant, every location and event captured is representative of a different change seen occurring in India. These places tell of the struggles and triumphs that the persistence, togetherness, and unbeatable character brought to form by the people of India during the transformation process in the early years of independence.

Sources

The Primary Sources

1. Nehru, Jawaharlal. "Tryst with Destiny.
2. Gandhi, Mahatma. "The Story of My Experiments with Truth."

1. The Hindu Newspaper archive (1965).

1. Government documents relevant to Operation Polo.

1. Archival Personal Interview on Workers in Bhilai Steel Plant. Secondary Sources
2. Guha, Ramachandra. "India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy."
3. Wolpert, Stanley. "A New History of India.".
4. Brown, Judith M. "Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope." Menon, V.P.

4”The Story of the Integration of the Indian States."

1. Chatterjee, Partha. "The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories.