

**A Critical Analysis of Dissonant Heritage and Dark Tourism  
in India: The Case of the 'Wall of Truth' Memorial**

**by**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirement for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire

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## Abstract

For more than two decades, the concept of dark tourism has increasingly attracted the attention of both academia and the popular media. At the same time, there is evidence that there has also been continuing growth in the supply of dark tourism attractions and experiences, whether sites of or associated with mass death and suffering related to genocide, warfare or natural disasters, sites of individual death, or more educative or even playful places associated with death, dying and suffering. Consequently, not only does there appear to be greater interest on the part of tourists, for whatever reason, in dark tourism experiences, but also the diverse issues surrounding the understanding of dark tourism have been explored in a burgeoning literature on the subject within tourism studies and also in related disciplines. Nevertheless, a number of significant gaps in knowledge remain, not least with regards to research into the phenomenon in general and its related sub-themes such as dissonant heritage in particular, in non-Western contexts. Hence, the overall purpose of this thesis is to address this gap in knowledge.

More specifically, the phenomenon of dark tourism is a concept that, in the specific context of India, has been largely neglected by academics. That is, the majority of the research into dark tourism has been undertaken through a predominantly ‘Western-centric’ analytical lens; the phenomenon is typically explored within a Western conceptual framework particularly with regards to culturally defined perspectives on death and dying. As a consequence, there remains limited knowledge and understanding with regards to the issues surrounding the establishment, management and interpretation of dark sites in India. Hence, though the case study of the Wall of Truth, a memorial established in recent years to commemorate the victims of the 1984 Sikh massacre, it seeks to make an original contribution to the dark tourism literature through both developing an alternative conceptualisation of the concept relevant to the Indian context in general, and to explore issues surrounding the management and interpretation of a dark site through the lens of dissonance in particular.

Though reviewing dark tourism literature, relating to the significance of experiences within cultural understandings of death and dying of religious traditions and practices in India, the thesis first proposes an ‘Indian Thanatological Model’ to illustrate death and the consumption of dark tourism in India. In contrast to established models, this demonstrates that death in India is ‘ever-present’ and, hence, dark tourism offers a platform for Indians to consume death for either curiosity or education, to encounter the actual event, or to witness or engage in collective mourning. Building on this conceptual

foundation, the thesis then goes on, though the case of the Wall of Truth and framed within a preceding critical review of memorials and memorialisation in India, to examine the concept of dissonance from the perspectives of identified stakeholder groups. This research is based on the application of qualitative methods within a case study approach employing in-depth semi-structured interviews as a means of generating rich primary data. Specifically, the research involves eliciting the views of key stakeholders with potentially different opinions on the WoT memorial. Thematic analysis is utilised to analyse the interview data. In so doing, a Dissonant Heritage Cycle model is proposed to demonstrate the cycle of dissonance, not only of the Wall of Truth but also potentially at any other heritage site associated with a contested heritage. Thus, the thesis adds an empirical dimension to the discussion surrounding the understanding of the cycle of dissonance at sites of contested heritage / dark tourism.

In particular, the empirical research suggests that for memorials or sites of commemoration to be effective and to act as a catalyst of reconciliation, it is important that dissonance is minimised. This, in turn, suggests that it is important to understand the role of stakeholders within the development and interpretation of any site. In other words, the understanding of dissonance and means of addressing it is of vital importance to the legitimacy of a memorial site, thus contributing to the validity of any memorial as a place of reconciliation. Yet the research reveals that, in India, this legitimacy may be challenged by what emerges in the thesis to be the pervasive politicisation of memorialisation.

In sum, this thesis contributes to knowledge and understanding of dissonant heritage both generally and within the context of India, whilst also offering an additional and original perspective on dark tourism and memorialisation.

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## Acronyms

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
CST	Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus
DCMS	Department for Cultural Media and Sports
DSGMC	Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee
DHC	Dissonant Heritage Cycle
DHG	Dark Heritage Governance
HFF	Heritage Force Field
INA	Indian National Army
MTF	Memorial Task Force
NRI	Non-resident Indian
PIO	Person of Indian Origin
TAACHT	The Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust
WoT	Wall of Truth



# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Origins: Introducing Wall of Truth (WoT)

*I apologise not only to the Sikh community but to the whole Indian Nation because what took place in 1984 is the negation of the concept of nationhood as enshrined in our Constitution. On behalf of our government, on behalf of the entire people of this country, I bow my head in shame that such a thing took place.*

(Dr. Manmohan Singh, Former Prime Minister of India, 2004-2014)

( The Tribune, 2005)

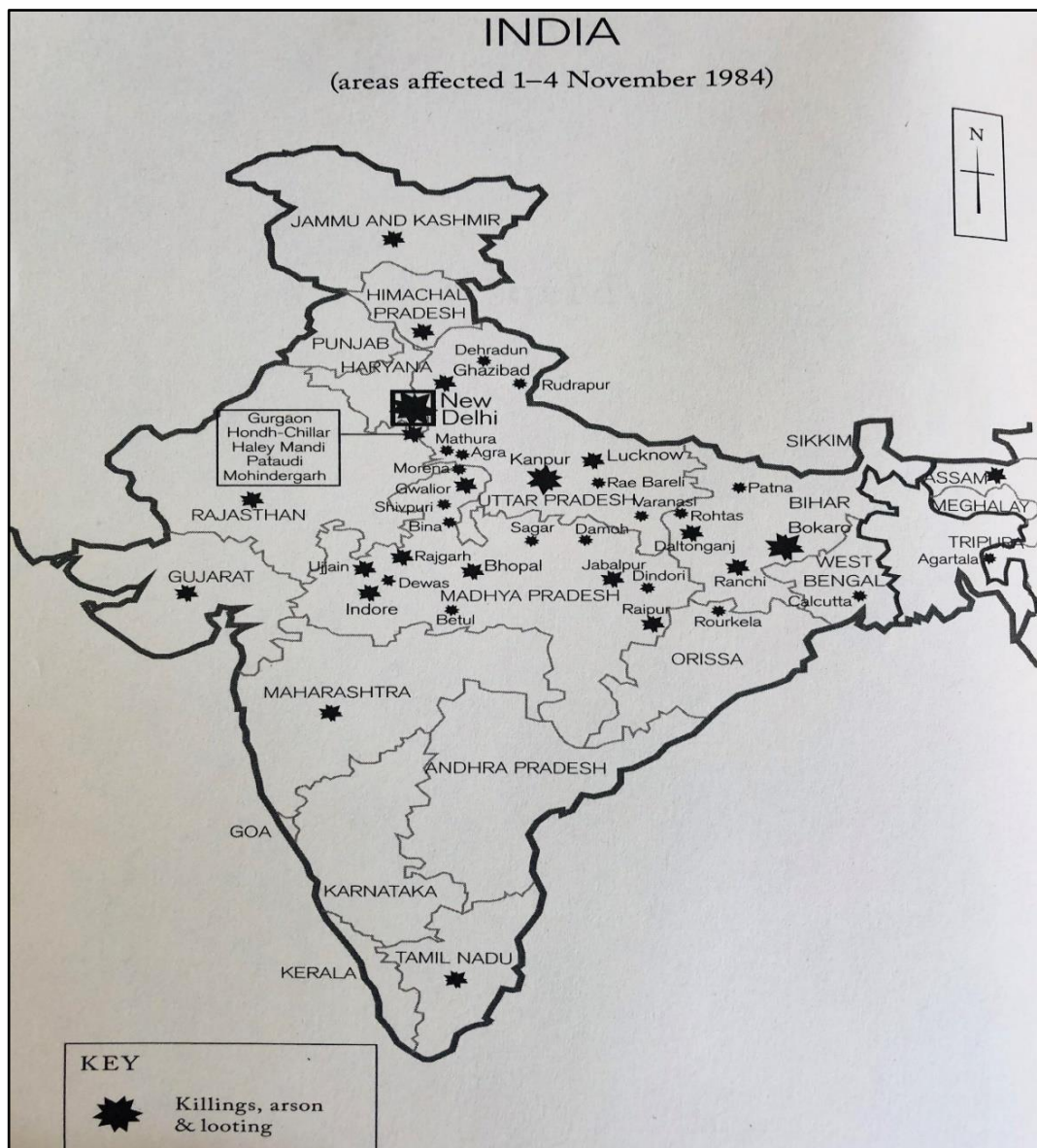
On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2017, India witnessed the inaugural ceremony of the Wall of Truth (WoT) memorial in the capital New Delhi. Built at the cost of 2.45 crores Indian Rupees (approx. £280,000) (Pandit, 2017), the memorial commemorates the 1984 Sikh massacre, one of the darkest events in contemporary Indian history. Throughout India but particularly in Delhi (see Figure 1.1 below), more than 3000 Sikhs died at the hands of mobs in politically inspired violence (Chakravarti, 1994; Madan, 2018; Mitta & Phoolka, 2007). Specifically, the massacre of Sikhs occurred in response to the assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, which itself was in response to Operation Blue Star.

#### 1.1.1 Operation Blue Star

‘Operation Blue Star’ was a government-sanctioned assault on the Golden Temple, located in Amritsar in the State of Punjab which borders Pakistan in north-west India. Punjab is the heartland of the Sikh religion – almost 60 per cent of the population are Sikh – and the Golden Temple is their holiest and most significant religious centre. Following the orders of the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Indian army launched an attack on the main grounds of the Golden Temple on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1984 (Tully & Jacob, 1985). Referred to as Operation Blue Star, the purpose of this military assault was to remove the Sikh militant extremist leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his armed followers from the building. It transformed the confines of the Golden Temple into a battlefield; 493

people lost their lives, including both Bhinderwale himself and his followers and also innocent civilians who were caught up in the crossfire (Aurora, 2015; Malik, 2017). In addition, the assault by the Indian army wrought considerable destruction on the Golden Temple complex and, in particular, on the Akal Takht, the Eternal Throne which is the highest seat of earthly authority for Sikhs (Chopra, 2010; Kundu, 1994). The assault on the Golden Temple ‘shocked and angered the Sikh masses and created anguish to more than religious beliefs’ (Aurora, 2015: 123); it was seen by many Sikhs as an assault on their religion and, perhaps unsurprisingly, resulted in both widespread anger and the desire for revenge for Operation Blue (Deo, 1984).

**Figure 1.1:** Map of India: The ‘black’ stars highlight key areas affected during the 1984 massacre



Source: Singh (2017)

### **1.1.2 The Assassination**

Four months after Operation Blue Star, on the morning of 31<sup>st</sup> October 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards who gunned her down at her residence (Deo, 1984). This act of assassination, subsequently, sparked off mass reprisals by politically instigated Hindu mob against Sikh communities across India, impacting on their 'lives and properties...in 40 cities and towns in the country' (Deo, 1984: 459). Deo (1984: 459) further notes that the initial 'violence against the Sikhs that took place in Delhi on 31<sup>st</sup> October was more of a sporadic outburst of people who appeared grief-stricken by the demise of their leader'; however, the violence that followed elsewhere soon become a fully 'organised' massacre which subsequently became known as the '1984 Anti-Sikh Riots' (Ahmed, 2010; Tatla, 2006).

### **1.1.3 The 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots**

The 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots, also referred to by some as the 1984 Sikh massacre, occurred over a period of four days, from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1984. The attacks against the Sikh community are widely considered to have been orchestrated in a systematic manner, specifically targeting Sikh men who were taken from their houses, 'beaten first and then burnt alive' (Deo, 1984: 459). In addition, Sikh-owned shops and properties were vandalised and burnt down, while Sikh women were raped (Singh, 2017).

The attacks were carried out throughout India, although the capital, Delhi, was most affected, followed by the cosmopolitan city of Kanpur (Singh, 2017). After four days of violence, on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1984, the administration 'whose district magistrate was accused of complicity in the violence, imposed a curfew to give relief to the beleaguered Sikhs' (Singh, 2017: 29). Overall, Operation Blue Star and the subsequent assassination of Indira Gandhi left thousands of Sikhs orphaned, widowed and rendered homeless (Mitta & Phoolka, 2007). The Delhi administration recorded an official death toll of 2733 (Singh, 2017). However, several non-governmental organisations rejected this official account and conducted their own independent inquiry. They concluded that the death toll in Delhi alone amounted to 3870 people (Singh, 2017).

The evidence linking politics to religion can be seen in comments made by Rajiv Gandhi, the eldest son of Indira Gandhi, who became Prime Minister following his mother's death, serving from 1984 to 1989 and himself dying at the hands of an assassin in 1991. He issued a statement relating to the assassination of his mother, which can be interpreted as offering political legitimacy to the subsequent violence in the form of the

1984 Anti-Sikh Riots. Specifically, he stated that ‘When a mighty tree falls, it is only natural that the earth around it does shake a little’ (Mitta & Phoolka, 2007: 3; Singh, 2017: 120). In the context in which this comment was made, it is seen as the definitive statement that not only condoned but also incited attacks on Sikhs, particularly by Hindu supporters of the ruling Congress Party at that time (Mitta & Phoolka, 2007). Moreover, further evidence of direct political involvement in the Sikh massacre was unearthed by India’s Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Following an investigation into the widespread violence against the Sikh community, the CBI concluded that it was not a spontaneous reaction to Indira Gandhi’s assassination but was, rather, a well-organised operation orchestrated by government officials belonging to the Congress Party with the cooperation of the Delhi police (Sharma, 2012).

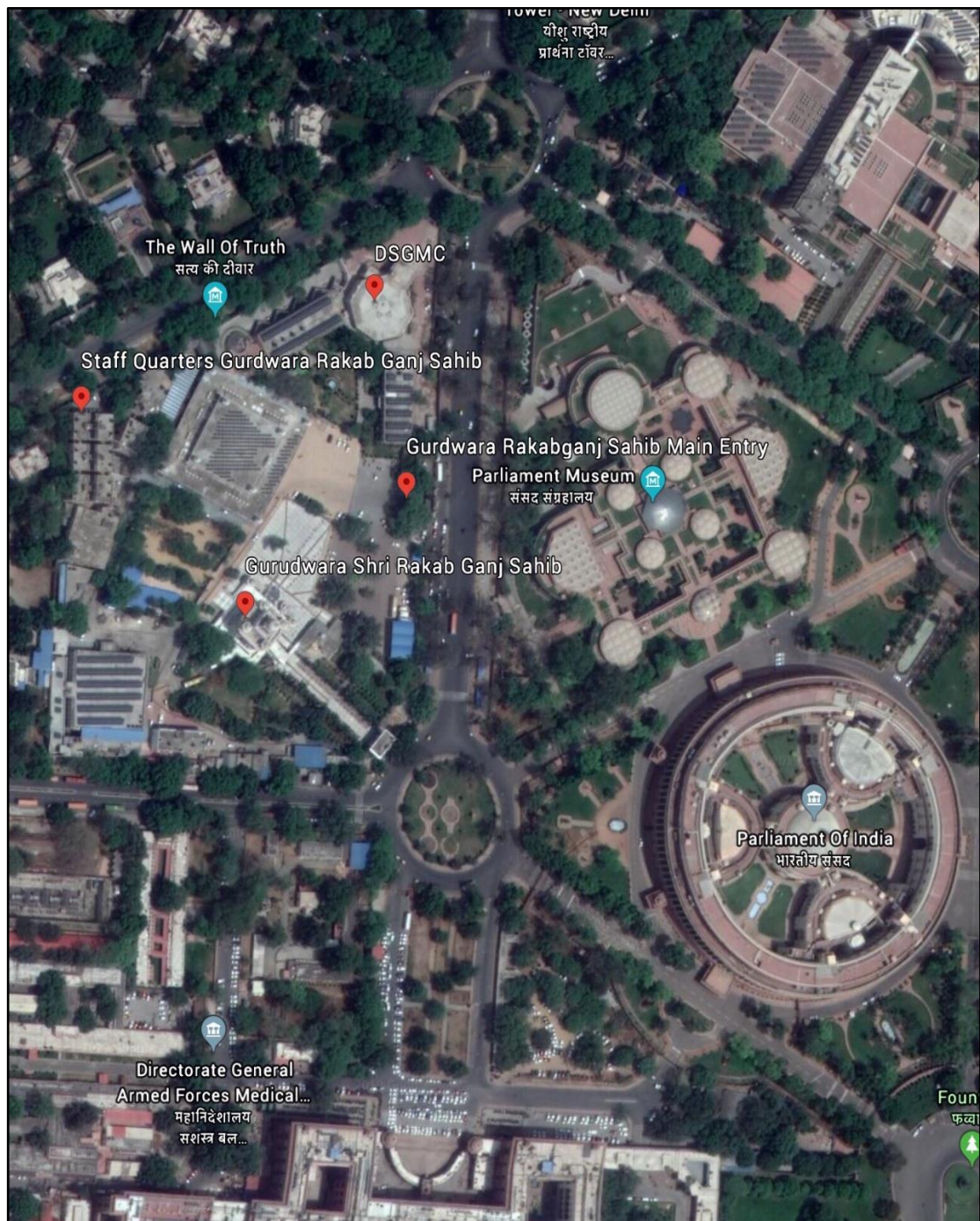
#### **1.1.4 The WoT**

Although the Sikh massacre dates back to 1984, it took almost 33 years for any memorial for the victims to come into existence. Indeed, the WoT is the first Sikh memorial in the country (Qazi, 2017); its foundation stone was laid on the thirtieth anniversary of the massacre, on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014 (Indiatodayin, 2014). It is located in central New Delhi within the grounds of the ‘Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib’ Sikh Temple, one of the most important Sikh temples in Delhi which, as can be seen in Figure 1.2 below, itself lies in close proximity to the Indian Parliament (PTI, 2017). This location for the memorial was purposefully selected by the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) to ‘remind the government of its failure to do justice to its people’ (PTI, 2017).

The Sikh temple complex comprises four key areas: (i) Gurdwara Shri Rakab Ganj Sahib; (ii) DSGMC main Office; (iii) Staff Quarters; and (iv) the WoT. The memorial sits towards the far-right extremity of the grounds when facing the entrance of the main Sikh temple (see Figure 1.2 below).

The memorial itself commemorates more than 3000 people whose names are listed on the walls of the memorial. In addition, the names of two Hindus and a Muslim woman who were also killed while protecting Sikhs during riots are also honoured. The memorial is constructed in a zigzag manner, presenting its visitors with a panorama of the narrow streets of India in which Sikhs were massacred (Figure 1.3 below). The white background of the WoT emphasises that truth prevails, and justice is yet to come (Figure 1.4 below). In addition, the memorial includes four sculptures representing humanity, equality, humility and tolerance.

**Figure 1.2:** Aerial of WoT demonstrating its close proximity to the Indian Parliament and its position within the complex of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib Sikh Temple



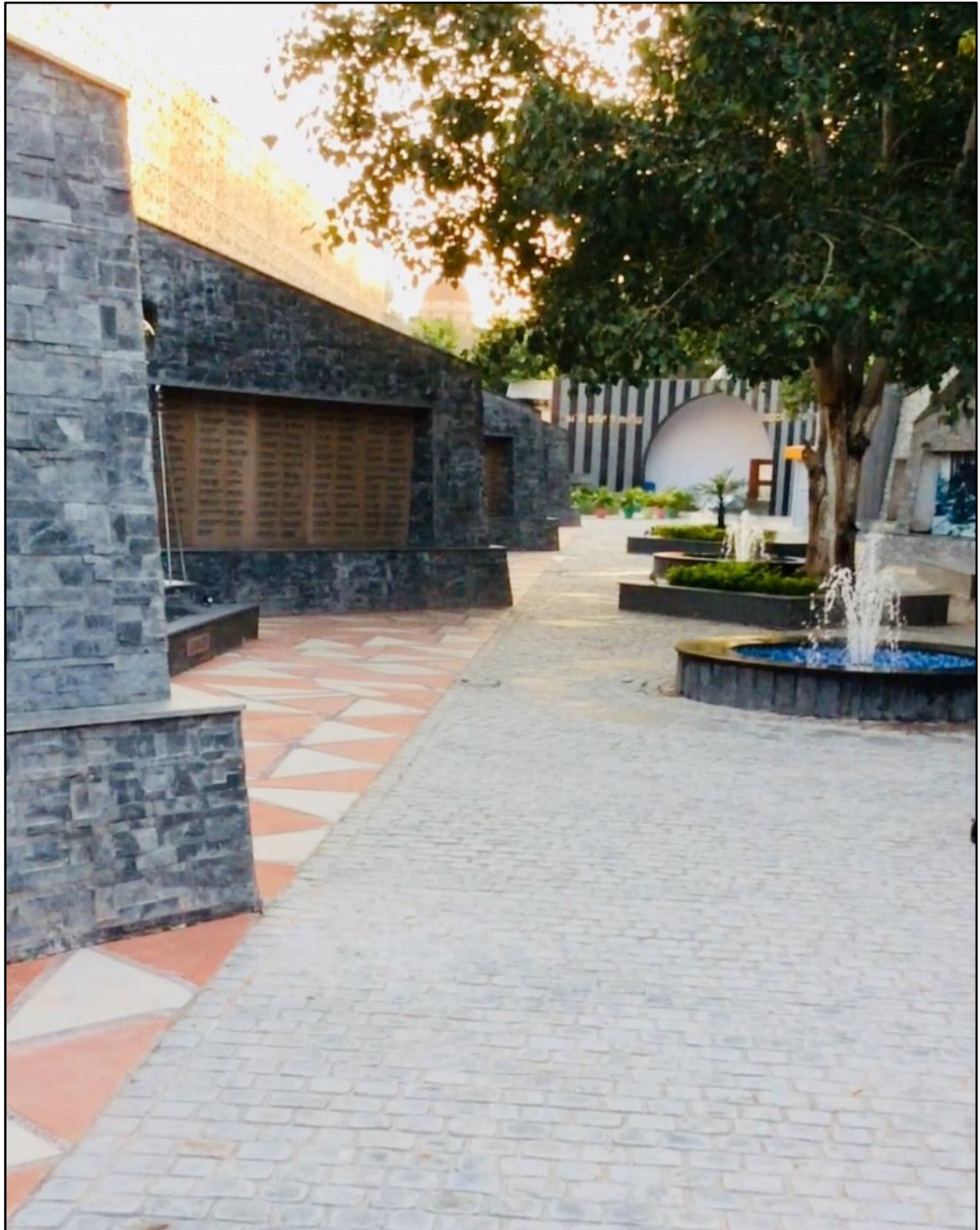
**Source:** Google Maps

However, the construction of the WoT memorial has proved to be highly controversial, for two principal reasons. First, its location in New Delhi, specifically, within the grounds of Sikh temple has generated mixed responses, as has the dominance of its management by the DSGMC. Second, controversy surrounds the fact that there has been no governmental recognition and sanctification of the events of 1984; rather, it has been left

to the victim group, that is, the Sikh community, to sanction and develop a national memorial. Perhaps as a consequence, there is evidence of substantial disparity in attitudes between different stakeholder groups with regards to the actual purpose of the memorial, its fair representation, the utilisation of site and, consequently, the potential of the memorial to act as a focal point for reconciliation. In other words, the WoT appears to display a significant degree of dissonance. Authors such as Ashworth and Tunbridge (1996) suggest that dissonance is an intrinsic quality of heritage (see also Graham et al, 2005; Tunbridge, 1998). Ashworth and Tunbridge (1996) explain that the root cause of dissonance within any contested heritage lies in the manner in which that heritage is encapsulated and understood. In other words, heritage is created by its interpretation; however, 'not only what is interpreted, but how it is interpreted and by whom, will create quite specific messages about the value and meaning of specific heritage places and the past it represents' (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 1996: 27). Importantly, these messages do not always find consent amongst all its stakeholder groups; that is, one group's heritage may be favoured or emphasised over another's, hence resulting in dissonance or the disinheritance of some groups of stakeholders (Smith, 2006).

The concept of dissonance is returned to shortly. However, the point is that all heritage is potentially susceptible to dissonance, not least because multiple groups are likely to have an interest in a particular heritage, implying multiple stories and potentially competing for interpretations. Significantly, however, Ashworth and Hartmann (2005: 254) argue that not only does 'human tragedy imbue [dissonance] with a capacity to amplify the effects and thus, render more serious what otherwise would be dismissible as marginal or trivial', but also that dissonance is inevitable in dark heritage construction and interpretation.

**Figure 1.3:** WoT, New Delhi



**Photo:** B. Singh

**Figure 1.4:** WoT, New Delhi



**Photo:** B. Singh

With regards to the WoT, in particular, it is evidently both a memorial and a visitor attraction. As a memorial, its purpose is to act as a focal point for commemoration for the victims, their families and the wider Sikh population; as a visitor attraction, its value lies in its potential to develop understanding of a controversial ‘dark’ or difficult historical event (or heritage) amongst the wider audience. As such, the WoT can be firmly placed under the umbrella of dark tourism, a concept widely discussed and defined in the literature (for example, Ashworth, 2002; Blom, 2000; Dann, 1994, 1998; Foley & Lennon, 1996; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Light, 2017; Seaton, 1996; Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Stone, 2006; Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Tarlow, 2005).

Stone (2006: 146) in particular defines dark tourism as ‘the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and seemingly macabre’. Whilst, the WoT is not an actual site of death or suffering – no victims of the 1984 massacre lost their lives within the complex in which the memorial is located – it does, however, represent the victims of the event and is, thus, associated with their death and suffering. Therefore, it is, in essence, a dark tourism site and, as such (and according to contemporary interpretations of dark



tourism) it may play a potential mediating role between visitors and the event which it portrays or commemorates (Sharpley & Stone 2009).

However, despite the extensive academic attention paid to the concept of dark tourism over the last two decades, as well as its increasingly evident profile in the popular media, such as in the movies including *Kalifornia* and *Suri Krishanmma* and explicitly in the Netflix 2018 series *Dark Tourist*, little if any academic attention has been paid to it within a South Asian and specifically Indian context. This omission in the research or, putting it another way, the predominance of research into dark tourism from a primarily Western perspective, has been noted by commentators such as Stone (2013) who suggests that there is a need to undertake further work into how different societies address the mediation between the living and the dead in the context of dark tourism sites. In addition, and more specifically, both Yoshida et al. (2016) and Light (2017) criticise Stone's (2006) spectrum model, arguably one of the most influential and certainly most widely cited typologies of dark tourism, for its Western centrism. As Light (2017: 281) argues, Stone's (2006) spectrum is a 'Western concept that has been applied to non-Western contexts in which the relationship between the living and the dead can take very different forms ... [and hence] ... is an unfitting model for dark tourism in an Asian context'.

Given the acknowledged lack of research on dark tourism within the Indian context, the WoT as a case study offers the opportunity to address this gap in the literature. In particular, it represents a valid context for considering the significance of the concept of dark tourism from a South Asian / Indian perspective, in so doing providing the opportunity to offer an original contribution to the literature by extending understanding of dark tourism beyond the typical Western cultural framework and developing a new 'thanatological' model of dark tourism. Hence, it responds to Stone's (2013), Yoshida et al. (2016) and Light's (2017) call for additional research.

At the same time, memorials and other sites of commemoration can be categorised as dark tourism sites and, hence, a consideration of their role in commemoration and reconciliation demands contextualisation within both an appropriate understanding of dark tourism and also a culturally determined understanding of memorialisation. Specifically, it is important to understand the roles of memorials within India as a framework for exploring critically the WoT memorial in general and the controversies surrounding it in particular. However, as with the concept of dark tourism, the value and role of memorials may be perceived and understood differently in India compared with Western countries. Therefore, it is important to consider and critically compare the

concepts of memorials and memorialisation from both a Western and Indian perspective, thereby establishing a foundation for appraising the development of the WoT, in particular within the context of dark tourism. In addition, by reviewing how a memorial might better achieve its purpose, it provides an opportunity to measure the extent to which the WoT has been successful (or not) in meeting its objectives of becoming a ‘purposeful’ memorial.

As noted above, however, not only does the value of the WoT memorial as a visitor attraction lie in its potential role in reconciliation between its stakeholder groups, but also there is already evidence that, in reality, the opposite is occurring. That is, controversy surrounds its development and management and the messages it conveys. In an ideal world, the interests of all stakeholders in any memorial should be represented in the presentation and interpretation of the events, it commemorates. However, not only is such a complete representation difficult to achieve but also, again, as noted above, at dark heritage sites such as the WoT, some discord is inevitable. In short, commemoration sites are often typified by dissonance. The concept of dissonance is considered in more detail in Chapter 4. For the purposes of this introductory chapter, however, dissonance or, more precisely, dissonant heritage is manifested when there exists a ‘lack of congruence at a particular time or place between people and the heritage with which they identify’ (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005: 253). Putting it another way, it occurs when the past is represented or interpreted in such a way that, for particular people or groups, ‘their’ past is distorted or displaced.

For any memorial or site of commemoration to be effective, to generate understanding and to act as a catalyst of reconciliation, it is important that dissonance is minimised. This, in turn, suggests that it is important to understand the role of stakeholders within the development and interpretation of any site. In other words, the understanding of dissonance and means of addressing it, is of vital importance to the legitimacy of a memorial site, thus contributing to the validity of any memorial used as a place of reconciliation.

This research, then, will explore critically the stakeholder groups associated with the WoT memorial, in particular, examining the concept of dissonance from the perspective of these groups. In so doing, it seeks to contribute to knowledge and understanding of dissonant heritage both generally and within the context of India, whilst also offering an additional and original perspective on dark tourism and memorialisation. Specifically, it seeks to develop both a ‘thanatological’ model of dark tourism in India

and drawing on Seaton's (2001) the heritage force field model and Sharpley's (2009) model of dark heritage governance, a new model to illustrate the cycle of dissonant heritage.

## **1.2 The Research Rationale**

As suggested above, the phenomenon of dark tourism within South Asia, in general, and in India in particular, is a concept that has been largely neglected by academia. Consequently, whilst the majority of literature focusing on dark tourism explores the phenomenon from a Western perspective to date few studies have examined dark tourism within non-Western contexts, and specifically within an Indian context (Light, 2017; Stone, 2013; Yoshida et al., 2016). By extension, issues surrounding the establishment, management and interpretation of dark sites in India, in particular, the concept of dissonance or dissonant heritage, have similarly not benefited from academic scrutiny.

The overall purpose of this thesis, therefore, is to explore critically the extent to which there is evidence of dissonance at a specific and contentious dark tourism site in India, namely, WoT memorial in New Delhi. This memorial provides the basis for research that broadly considers and critically compares the concepts of memorials and memorialisation within Indian with those in other (Western) countries as well as, in particular, for research into the concept of dissonance from an Indian perspective. In doing so, particular emphasis is placed on exploring the levels and types of dissonance found within such (dark) sites in relation to their political, cultural significance to Indian stakeholder groups. Overall, the thesis aims to make an original contribution to the dark tourism literature in general and to further broaden the knowledge and understanding of the concept of dissonant heritage, in particular by analysing it from an Indian perspective.

### 1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

Given the nature and significance of research, the aim and objectives of the research are as follows:

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**Research Aim:** To apply the concept of dissonance to a ‘dark’ site in India, thereby exploring both dissonance and the wider concept of dark tourism within that context.

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**Research Objectives:**

1. To explore critically, the concept of dark tourism from a non-Western perspective, specifically within the context of socio-cultural perspectives on death and dying in India, as a framework for the analysis of the development of and potential for dissonance at the WoT.
2. To consider and critically compare the concepts of memorials and memorialisation from both a Western and Indian perspective, thereby establishing a foundation for appraising the development of the WoT memorial.
3. To identify and critically review the stakeholder groups relevant to the 1984 Sikh massacre and the WoT memorial.
4. To apply and critically analyse the concept of dissonance within the context of the WoT and, in particular, from the perspective of different Sikh and Hindu stakeholder groups.

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#### **1.4 Personal Testimony**

Dark tourism is, for Indians, an alien concept. That is, sites which, according to the contemporary literature, might be described as ‘dark’ are in all likelihood considered by Indians to be heritage / commemorative sites that are connected with either colonial rule or independence. Such sites are, therefore, generally considered (in India) to convey significant political messages. Indeed, as will be discussed later in this thesis, in post-independence India, the development of monuments and memorials has tended to reflect the influence and deeds of India’s political elites rather than commemorating events (dark or otherwise) that have impacted upon the people of India. However, as a non-practicing Sikh, educated at Indian Public school, college and University and subsequently at a British University and growing up in an age of global terrorism, I became more aware of differences in the ways in which events of death, suffering and disaster are commemorated and commodified in the West as compared to India. In particular, as an Indian, I was all too aware of the 1984 Sikh Massacre, and with some limited research, I soon discovered that even though around 3000 Sikhs had died, there was, in fact, no national recognition, for what can be argued to be a shameful event in India’s recent post-independence history. Hence, I was motivated to undertake this research by the desire to understand why this is the case.

#### **1.5 Introduction to the Research Methods**

As established earlier in this chapter, the research in this thesis is based upon the case study of the WoT in New Delhi, India. Given the nature of the subject, overall the research adopts a constructivist paradigm followed by a relativist ontology and interpretivist epistemology. To support the research on the WoT, the researcher has also undertaken a collective approach whereby a number of similar case studies are examined in order to draw comparisons and help construct a general overview of the position that commemorative memorials hold within contemporary Indian society. The research methodology is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. In brief, however, based on the ontological and epistemological approach, the research adopts a qualitative research method utilising semi-structured interviews.

To meet the research objectives and based on probability and non-probability selection methods, four key categories of informants associated with the WoT were identified.

- First group [non-probability] comprises the representatives (including both the current – at the time of the research – president and the ex-president) of the Management Committee of Rakab Ganj Sikh Temple.
- Second group [non-probability]: Eyewitness associated with the 1984 riots.
- Third group [non-probability]: The experts on 1984 Sikh massacre.
- Fourth group [probability]: General Community, which included both Sikhs and Hindus.

The interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data. The method of analysis followed the format by utilising a three-column system of recording – one for the interview transcript, one for the preliminary explorative comments and one for emergent themes. The philosophy of using the three columns allowed the researcher the opportunity to build a greater level of familiarity with the content of the transcripts and provided rich, sensitive and insightful research data findings.

## **1.6 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is structured into seven chapters, the content of which is summarised as follows:

Chapter 1 commences with a brief background to and overview of the WoT, thereby, introducing the focus and purpose of the research. It then goes on to justify the research by highlighting the relevant gaps within the extant dark tourism literature, noting the significance and potential contribution of the research, before going on to establish the aim and objectives of the thesis. The methodological approach adopted in the thesis is also briefly introduced.

Chapter 2 provides a foundation for the thesis by exploring the concept of dark tourism, both generally and in the specific context of India. It begins by providing an overview of the dark tourism literature in general, reviewing its typologies and locating the WoT within Stone's 'dark tourism spectrum.' It also discusses significant limitations within the dark tourism literature with regards to understandings of dark tourism within the South Asian / Indian context. This then leads into a discussion of dark tourism as a mediator within the Indian context, followed by an examination of dark tourism within

contemporary Indian society. Here, specific emphasis is placed on the difference between Western and Indian perspectives on the notion of dark tourism. To facilitate this, Hindu and Sikh perspective on death and death rituals are compared with those from a Christian centric Western perspective in order to illustrate the cultural differences in India, facilitating the development of an Indian dark tourism thanatological model.

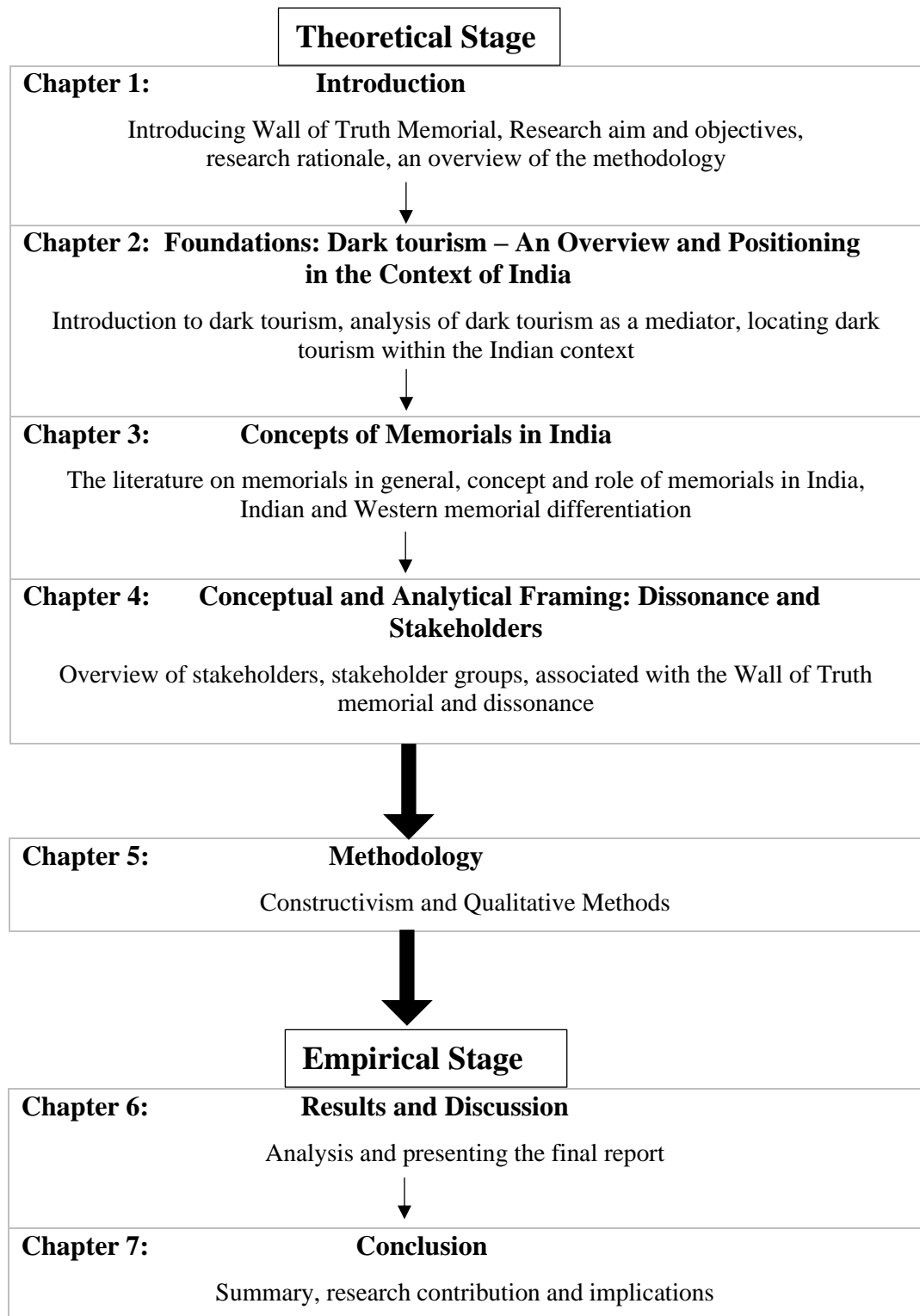
The purpose of Chapter 3 is to review the roles of memorials in India as a framework for the specific focus on the WoT memorial. It first examines the literature on memorials in general, their significant roles in society and how a memorial might best achieve its purpose. It then goes on to illustrate and distinguish the role of memorials in India from those in Western culture within the context of dark tourism. Following this, Chapter 4 then introduces and considers the concept of dissonance in general before applying it to the case of the WoT in particular. In addition, in order to explore the concept of dissonance, this chapter also discusses stakeholders, both conceptually and as specific identified groups relevant to the WoT, which might be affected by dissonance at the site.

Chapter 5 establishes and explains the philosophical approach adopted towards the research in this thesis. It explains and justifies the research methods employed to meet the aim and objectives of the research. Overall, the research adopts a qualitative method within a case study approach employing semi-structured interviews as a means of generating primary data as it involves eliciting the views of different stakeholders with potentially different opinions on the WoT.

Chapter 6 considers the findings of the research. It develops the themes emerging from the data by analysing and interpreting the in-depth, semi-structured interviews before going on to consider the implications of the findings with regards to dissonance at the WoT.

This is finally followed by Chapter 7, which presents a summary of the research and draws conclusions from it. The contribution to knowledge is also highlighted, and future avenues of research are proposed. Figure 1.5 (below) provides a summary of the chapters within this thesis.

**Figure 1.5:** Thesis structure





## **1.7 Summary**

This chapter has introduced the research topic, followed by its aim and objectives. Specifically, having introduced the WoT as the case study upon which the research in this thesis is based, the chapter has highlighted the lack of research into dark tourism and associated concepts, particularly dissonant heritage, from non-Western perspectives. Specifically, the lack of research into dark tourism and memorialisation in India is noted. The first then is to establish the conceptual foundation for the research; this is the focus of the following chapter, which reviews the concept of dark tourism in general and also its relevance and significance in the specific context of India. In so doing, it not only seeks to provide a framework for both the following review and the subsequent empirical research but also to offer an original contribution to the literature.

## Chapter 2

### **Foundations: Dark tourism – An Overview and Positioning in the Context of India**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

As introduced in the preceding chapter, the overall aim of this thesis is to explore critically the extent to which dissonance exists or may occur at the WoT memorial in New Delhi, India. In doing so, to explore both dissonance and the wider concept of dark tourism within that context. In other words, and as previously explained, the construction of the WoT memorial has proved to be highly controversial, not least because of its actual location but also, perhaps more significantly, because of the emotive and still-contentious event that it seeks to commemorate. That is, there is evidence of considerable disagreement between different stakeholder groups with an interest in the memorial with regards to its purpose, the extent to which they are fairly represented and, consequently, the potential of the memorial to act as a focal point for reconciliation between them. Thus, the WoT as a case study offers the opportunity to consider and enhance knowledge and understanding of dissonance or, more precisely, dissonant heritage, a concept long associated with so-called ‘dark’ sites (Ashworth & Hartman, 2005; Poria, 2007; Sharpley & Stone, 2009; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996), as well as to respond to Foote’s (2003) assertion that the commemoration of tragic or violent events that give shape to national identity demand close academic scrutiny.

It was also noted in Chapter 1 that commemorative sites such as the WoT fall under the umbrella of dark tourism, or tourism to / at places and events associated with death, disaster and suffering. Thus, the concept of dark tourism, which has attracted increasing academic attention over the last two decades, represents an appropriate conceptual framework within which the research in this thesis can be located, not least because extant studies suggest that dark tourism sites may play a mediating role between visitors and the events they commemorate (Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2012). Significantly, however, with only few exceptions (Cohen, 2018), the great majority of the dark tourism literature explores the phenomenon from a Western perspective, as indeed do studies of dissonant heritage. In contrast, applications of the concept to non-Western contexts, such as India, are notably lacking. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is not

only to review the concept of dark tourism in general but also to consider its relevance and significance in the specific context of India in particular. In so doing, it not only seeks to provide a conceptual framework for both the following review chapters and the subsequent empirical research but also to offer an original contribution to the literature by extending understanding and developing a new ‘thanatological’ model of dark tourism from a South Asian / Indian perspective.

## **2.2 An Introduction to Dark Tourism: Concepts and Definitions**

The practice of dark tourism has been witnessed throughout the history. Indeed, as Sharpley (2009: 4) observes, ‘for as long as people have been able to travel, they have been drawn – purposefully or otherwise – towards sites, attractions or events that are linked in one way or another with death, suffering, violence, or disaster’. He goes on to offer examples, including travel to attend Roman gladiatorial games and to public execution sites, such as Newgate in England, or early participation of religious pilgrimages, as evidence of the long history of dark tourism. Whilst, more specifically, Boorstin (1964) claims that the first ever guided tour in England took tourists on a train trip to witness the execution by hanging of two murderers. Similarly, battlefields and other sites of warfare have also long attracted the attention of tourists, an early example being the Battle of Waterloo (Seaton, 1999) – and interestingly, sites of or associated with warfare are now considered to represent ‘the largest single category of [dark] tourist attractions in the world’ (Smith, 1996: 248; also Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009; Ryan, 2007). In more contemporary times, however, there has been a remarkable increase in the variety of places and attractions that can be referred to as dark tourism sites. These include genocide sites, such as those in Rwanda (Friedrich & Johnston, 2013), concentration camps and sites of atrocities and mass murder (for example, Ground Zero or the site of the terrorist bombing of the Sari nightclub in Bali in 2002 – see Henderson, 2003) which collectively may be considered to be darker in nature based on the event and ‘on their authentic location’ (Light, 2017: 280). Conversely, and as discussed shortly, ‘lighter’ sites, for example, houses of horror, may also be classified as dark tourism attractions.

Despite its long history, it was only some two decades ago that the concept of dark tourism became established in the field of tourism studies and, since then, it has enjoyed increasing academic attention around the world. The term ‘dark tourism’ was first coined in 1996 by Malcolm Foley and John Lennon in a special issue of *The International Journal of Heritage Studies*, in which they defined it as a complex phenomenon of visiting

sites of disaster, destruction and death (Foley & Lennon, 1996). In so doing, they not only introduced the idea of dark tourism as an identifiable form of tourism but also aroused wider interest both in academic circles as well as in the popular media.

**Table 2.1:** Evolution of definitions and explanations of dark tourism

<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
Foley & Lennon	1996	'The presentation and consumption (by visitors) or real and commodification death and disaster sites' (Foley & Lennon, 1996: 198).
Foley & Lennon	1997	'The visitation to any site associated with death, disaster and tragedy in the twentieth century for remembrance, education or entertainment' (Foley & Lennon, 1997: 155).
Lennon & Foley	1999	'Tourism associated with sites of death, disaster and depravity' (Lennon & Foley, 1999: 46).
Tarlow	2005	'Visitation to places where tragedies or historically noteworthy death has occurred, and that continues to impact our lives" (Tarlow, 2005: 48).
Preece & Price	2005	"Travel to sites associated with death, disaster, acts of violence, tragedy, scenes of death and crimes against humanity' (Preece & Price, 2005: 192).
Stone	2006	'The act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre' (Stone, 2006: 146).
Ashworth	2008	'Dark tourism... is where the tourist's experience is essentially composed of 'dark' emotions such as pain, death, horror or sadness, many of which result from the infliction of violence that are not usually associated with a voluntary entertainment experience' (Ashworth, 2008: 234).
Sharpley	2009	'...subset of the totality of tourist sites associated with death and suffering' (Sharpley, 2009: 9).
Robb	2009	'Involves visiting destinations at which violence is the main attraction' (Robb, 2009: 51).
Light	2017	'Dark tourism tends to be used as an umbrella term for any form of tourism that is somehow related to death, suffering, atrocity, tragedy or crime (Light, 2017: 277).

In addition, in the same publication, Seaton (1996) introduced the term ‘thanatourism’, which emphasises the behavioural dimension of dark tourism focusing on the experiences and motives of tourists visiting sites of or representing death. In contrast, Foley and Lennon’s (1996) use of term dark tourism implied a more destinational perspective.

Since then, numerous definitions have been coined by academics relating to both dark tourism and thanatourism. These are summarised in Tables 2.1 above and 2.2 below. This illustrates the evolution of definitions and explanations of both dark tourism and thanatourism.

**Table 2.2:** Evolution of definitions and explanations of thanatourism

<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>
Seaton	1996	‘Travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death’ (Seaton, 1996: 240).
Dann & Seaton	2001	‘Heritage staged around attractions and sites associated with death, acts of violence, scenes of disaster and crimes against humanity’ (Dann & Seaton, 2001: 24).
Knudsen	2011	‘Tourism to globally recognised places of commemoration’ (Knudsen, 2011: 57).
Tanaś	2014	‘Particular type of cultural tourism, including trips to places which document or commemorate death’ (Tanaś, 2014: 23).
Johnston	2015	‘A form of travel where tourists encounter places associated with death, disaster and the macabre’ (Johnston, 2015: 20).
Johnston & Mandelartz	2016	‘A form of tourism where tourists visit sites primarily associated with death and disaster’ (Johnston & Mandelartz, 2016: p. v).
Seaton	2018	Seaton’s EOR model ‘that aims to avoid the difficulties within current definitions, by shifting the focus of thanatourism / dark tourism from that of tourism contact with death, to tourism encounters with <i>remembrance of fatality and mortality</i> ’ (Seaton, 2018: 2).

Given these two distinctive (and, to some, inter-changeable) terms, Stone (2006) attempted to adopt a ‘common-sense’ approach by defining ‘dark tourism’ as ‘the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre’ (Stone, 2006: 146), in doing so, embracing both Foley and Lennon’s (1996) definition of dark tourism and Seaton’s (1996) definition of thanatourism.

As discussed shortly, debate continues over the merits of each term and also over the extent to which dark tourism can be considered behavioural (as implied by Stone’s assertion that is the ‘act of travel’) with implications surrounding tourists’ motives (see Sharpley & Friedrich, 2016). Nevertheless, the term dark tourism has subsequently become widely accepted as the umbrella term to refer to sites and attractions of or associated with death and suffering (Light, 2017).

Although the term was, as noted above, coined by Foley and Lennon in 1996, the concept of what is now known as dark tourism was in fact first referred to by Rojek (1993) who introduced the term ‘black spot tourism’ to describe the commercial development of places of death and disaster as tourist attractions. Interestingly, he later distinguished between these as ‘postmodern spectacles’ (hence, aligning them with Lennon and Foley’s (2000: 11) later description of dark tourism as an ‘intimation of postmodernity’) – that is, sites of death that can be visited / re-visited or what are perhaps commonly considered to be dark tourism sites – and disaster sites which he referred to as ‘sensation sites’, and, hence, analytically different (see Wright & Sharpley, 2018).

Similarly, Dann (1994), while not explicitly using the term dark tourism, suggested that places linked with atrocity, terror or the macabre were fascinating and attracting tourists in large numbers and that this fascination went beyond ‘morbid curiosity’ (Dann, 1994: 61). Interestingly, Seaton (1996) subsequently contributed his alternative, behavioral perspective, namely ‘thanatourism’ as referred to above, which he defined as ‘travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death particularly, but not exclusively, violent death’ (Seaton, 1996: 240).

Subsequently, Dann and Seaton (2001: 24) referred to ‘thanatourism’ more broadly as ‘heritage staged around attractions and sites associated with death, acts of violence, scenes of disaster and crimes against humanity’, in doing so, extending the definition of thanatourism beyond its original focus to embrace the ‘product’ of dark tourism. Again, however, they were not the first to implicitly link heritage to what became known as thanatourism / dark tourism; some five years earlier, Tunbridge and Ashworth

(1996) had coined the term ‘heritage of atrocity’ when discussing issues of dissonance and human trauma at heritage sites, the focus of this thesis. Having considered the dilemmas inherent in the management of heritage atrocity sites, they note that heritage assets have conflicting meanings for separate groups, whether victims, perpetrators or others indirectly connected, and that the supply of a distinct heritage for tourism will inevitably dispossess some groups from within society who do not associate themselves with that heritage. To illustrate this, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) identify several categories of heritage atrocity, including:

- Natural and accidental disasters by alleged human action or neglect
- Broad group atrocity, actions perpetrated by an entire category of people upon another group
- Atrocity arising from war or from within the context of war
- Persecution and judicial process as atrocity
- Atrocity associated with the persecution of racial, ethnic or social groups
- Large scale killings or massacre
- Genocide atrocity

Clearly, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) are concerned with a specific form or category of dark tourism or heritage, that is, places where atrocities occurred or places representing such atrocities. As such, their focus is on different stakeholders (victims and perpetrators) and the dissonance that might occur between these two groups; hence, their work is of direct relevance to this thesis in general, whilst the issue of stakeholder groups, in particular, is considered in more detail in Chapter 4.

Inevitably, perhaps, whilst ‘dark tourism’ and ‘thanatourism’ remain the terms most widely used to describe both the production and consumption of sites and events related to death, atrocity and suffering, a variety of other terms have also been proposed in the literature to refer to either dark places / attractions or as a form of tourism more generally. These include: ‘morbid tourism’ (Blom, 2000); ‘fright tourism’ as ‘a variation of dark tourism ...[where] ...individuals may seek a thrill or shock from the experience’ (Bristow & Newman, 2004: 215); ‘trauma tourism’ (Clarke, 2009; Tumarkin, 2005); ‘dark heritage’ (Sharpley, 2009; Wight & Lennon, 2007: 519); ‘grief tourism’ (Lewis, 2008); ‘sites of darkness’ (Jamal & Lelo, 2011: 40); ‘the dark side of travel’ (Skinner, 2012); ‘death tourism’ (Sion, 2014); and ‘thanatological tourism’ (Yan et al, 2016). At

the same time, Tarlow (2005) associates the visiting of dark sites with ‘reflexive’ or ‘restorative’ nostalgia. However, these are all broad perspectives which embrace a wide variety of different categories of dark sites, yet arguably fail to highlight the specific forms, the phenomenon adopts. Hence, an increasing number of terms are also proposed to describe specific manifestations of dark tourism, such as: prison tourism (Strange & Kempa, 2003; Wilson et al., 2017); disaster tourism (Kelman & Dodds, 2009; Wright & Sharpley, 2018); battlefield tourism (Ryan, 2007; Slade, 2003); Holocaust tourism (Cohen, 2011; Thurnell-Read, 2009); genocide tourism (Beech, 2009); and ghost tourism (Holloway, 2010).

These lists are by no means exhaustive. The point is, however, that despite the proliferation of terminology, ‘dark tourism’ remains widely recognised and cited within academic circles (and, indeed, in media circles) although, as previously noted, some scholars continue to prefer to use ‘thanatourism,’ some regarding it as a more ‘technical term’ (Tarlow, 2005). However, the concept of thanatourism (drawing on thanatopsis, or contemplation of death) implies specifically that it is a form of tourism driven by a desire for authentic or representative encounters with death (Seaton, 1996). This interpretation may be contested on two accounts. First, for most visitors to dark sites, the opportunity to contemplate or encounter death is rarely, if ever, a motive (Biran & Hyde, 2013: 192). Second, and more significantly, Seaton (2018) himself, equipped with hindsight, states that dark tourism is not and can by no means be a medium for confrontation with actual death; this engagement is only for the few who happen to be physically present ‘when another dies’ (Seaton, 2018: 13). Moreover, tourists’ motives for visiting dark sites are too numerous and diverse to be collectively explained by reference to thanatopsis.



**Figure 2.1:** In August 2007, five people were hanged from the nooses in state execution in Mashhad, Iran



**Source:** Finn (2015)

Nevertheless, this argument follows an arguably Western perspective; as will be seen later in this chapter, tourists in India can have actual encounters with death when, for example, visiting the ‘Burning Ghats’ at Varanasi. In addition, in the Middle East, visits to sites of public executions are still commonplace (Baum & O’Gorman, 2010) – see Figure 2.1 above. In other words, some specific forms of tourism fall within the original definition of thanatourism.

Generally, then, and as observed by Light (2017), numerous terms and definitions fall under the broad umbrella of dark tourism, thereby revealing not only the breadth of the concept but also the multitude of ways in which it might be interpreted. This lack of precise definition leads some to question the validity of the concept (Bowman & Pezullo, 2009), whilst others continue to interpret it variously. However, this thesis adopts Stone’s (2006: 146) definition of dark tourism as:

...the act of travel to sites associated with death, suffering and the seemingly macabre.

Whilst broad, it can be narrowed to the context of this thesis and be applied to a full range of events, monuments and memorials, as discussed in subsequent chapters. Now, however, it is important to review the nature of dark tourism.

### **2.2.1 Dark Tourism and its Typologies**

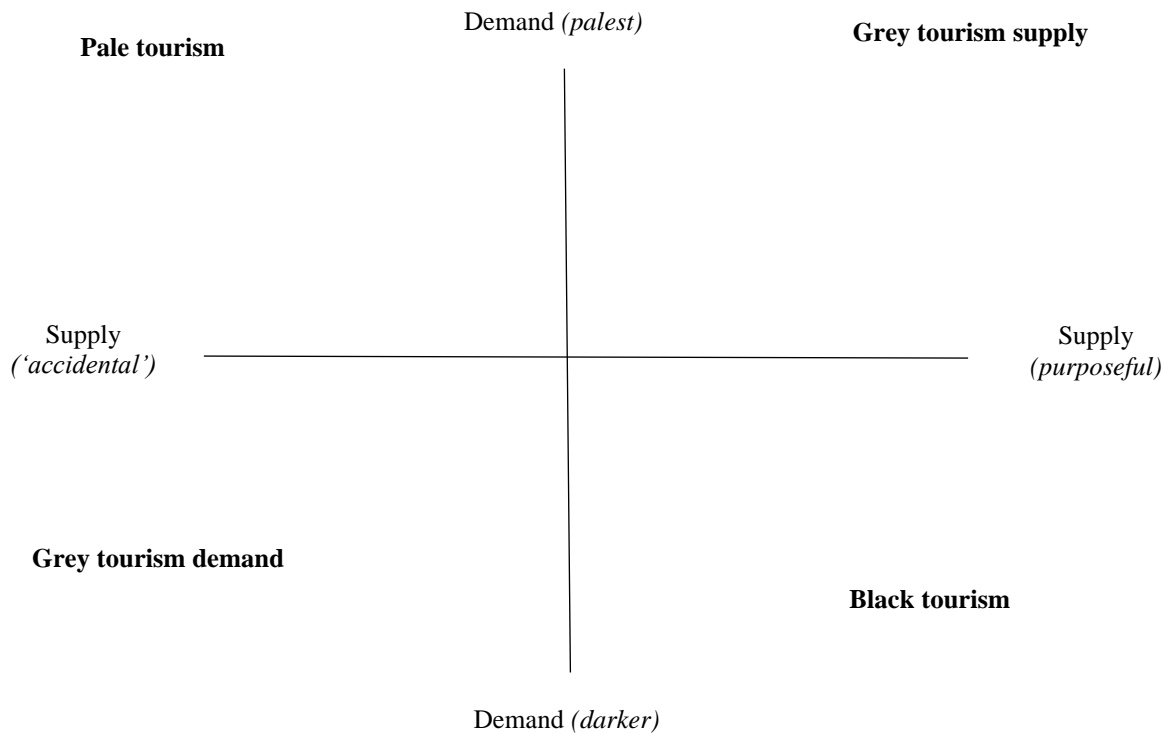
A number of scholars, such as Seaton (1996), Miles (2002), and Strange and Kempa (2003) have proposed different dark tourism (or thanatourism) typologies. Some focus on the motivation factors for visiting dark places; others attempt to categorise sites on the basis of their degree or shade of darkness, while others, adopt an approach which combines these (Raine, 2013; Sharpley, 2005).

Models proposed by Stone (2006) and Sharpley (2005) are both based on the notion of varying degrees of darkness. According to Seaton (1999), the shade or degree of darkness of a place is not fixed but can change over time owing to, perhaps, the passage of time itself which may lead to transformations in tourists understanding or perceptions of the place and its significance, whilst the role of media may also be influential. Such changes may, in turn, result in new strategies for promoting the site or developments in how they will be presented and interpreted with the passage of time.

In one of the earliest models, Sharpley (2005) offers a matrix of dark tourism demand and supply comprising four shades, varying from ‘black’ tourism to ‘pale’ tourism (see Figure 2.2 below). Black tourism involves tourists with a deep (at the extreme, morbid or voyeuristic) interest in visiting sites that purposefully offer opportunities to encounter death and suffering; conversely, pale tourism involves tourists with minimum interest in death visiting ‘unintentional’ sites, such as graveyards. Between these extremes, grey tourism supply ‘involves sites which are intentionally established to exploit death, but attracting visitors with some, but not a dominant interest in death’ (Sharpley, 2009: 20), whereas grey tourism demand involves ‘tourists with a fascination with death visiting unintended dark tourism sites’ (Sharpley, 2009: 20).

Thus, the intent of Sharpley’s (2005) model was to emphasise that there is no single dark tourism or dark tourist; not all so-called dark sites are perceived to be dark, and not all visitors who visit dark attractions / sites are interested in death (Light, 2017).

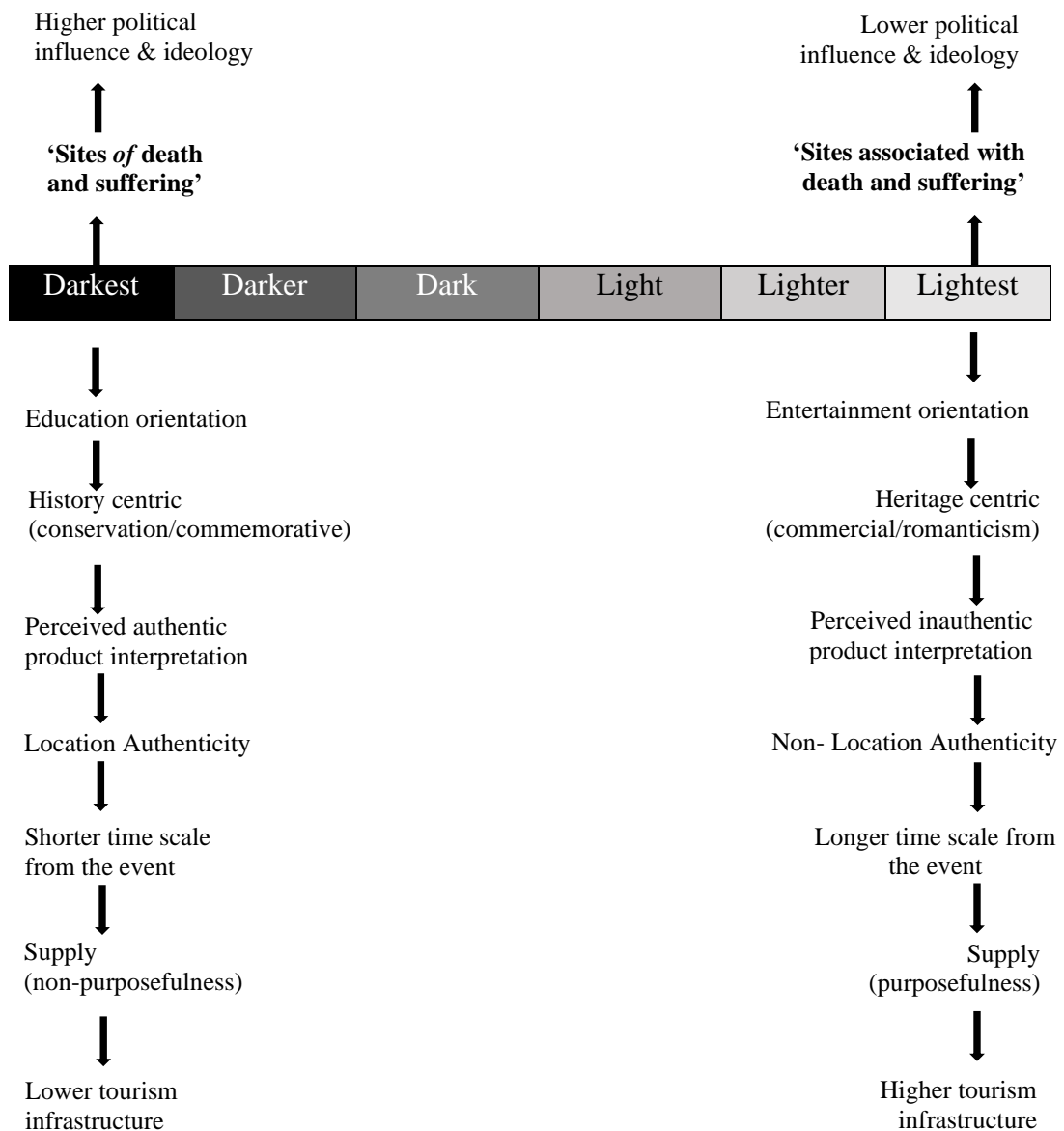
**Figure 2.2:** Matrix of dark tourism demand and supply



**Source:** Sharpley (2005)

Subsequently, Stone (2006) proposed a dark tourism spectrum embracing six ‘shades of darkness’ ranging from ‘darkest’ to ‘lightest’, the purpose being to distinguish and highlight the degree of darkness of specific category of site based upon the ‘multifaceted complexities in the design and purpose ... of the ... multilayers of dark tourism supply (Stone, 2006: 150) – see Figure 2.3 below.

**Figure 2.3:** A dark tourism spectrum



**Source:** Stone (2006: 151)

Figure 2.3 above implies various typologies of ‘dark suppliers,’ based on categorising factors such as degree of authenticity, chronology (its distance in time from the event), location, orientation such as education, entertainment. These categories allow for the measurement and positioning of sites within an organised framework by which multiple sites of dark tourism can be compared and contrasted, varying from the lightest category, which might include ‘dark fun factories,’ to the darkest. As an example, the Castle Dungeon at Warwick Castle in the UK, managed by Madame Tussauds, can be considered

a 'dark fun factory', providing as it does a 'medieval experience' involving death and suffering but in a safe, 'fun' environment. In contrast, 'the darkest' category includes sites such as concentration camps (for example, Auschwitz) and genocide sites, such as those in Rwanda or the 'killing fields' in Cambodia (Williams, 2004). Between these extremes, the Taj Mahal Tower Hotel in Mumbai, India, is an example of a dark / darker tourism site. In 2008, the hotel witnessed the killing of 183 people and wounding of another 239 in 60-hour siege. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of each November, a memorial is held in the exact location where the terror attack took place (see Figure 2.4 below).

**Figure 2.4:** The Taj Mahal Tower Hotel, Mumbai: Memorial to 26/11



**Source:** Daniel (2008)

Although the hotel was restored back to its full glory, the authenticity of the location and the political agenda for developing the heritage site as a form of memorial, displaying the hotel as a victim of terrorism, places it towards the darker end of Stone's spectrum.

Indeed, Strange and Kempa (2003) suggest that the true nature of 'dark' sites can be entirely changed when it comes under the influence of factors such as political control and the domination of culture. These elements can significantly transform the nature of a site, acting as what Strange and Kempa (2003) refer to as 'memory managers' for those who want to unravel the dark history associated with the site. For instance, Port Arthur in Australia was between 1830 and 1877 a colonial prison, in modern times, it has become

a tourist attraction based on its penal history. However, Port Arthur was also the site of a massacre in 1996, when 35 people were killed and 23 wounded, when a man carried out a shooting in this popular tourist site. Thus, once managed for its lighter shade of tourism in the form of its famous lantern-lit ghost tours, it has now also become a site of the commemoration of more recent death, giving it a dual position of being both ‘darker’ and ‘lighter’. The darker typology adheres to the commemoration of those massacred in 1996, the lighter for the Victorian era prison experience. Hence, Port Arthur has now become a product which endorses commemoration, reconciliation and remembrance, which can be identified as a ‘shade more serious’ (Stone, 2006: 150).

### **2.2.2 Typologies: Exploring Stone’s (2006) Spectrum**

The models considered in the preceding section imply that dark sites may be simply categorised according to an identified set of parameters. The purpose of this section, however, is to demonstrate the complexity of defining and categorising a single typology of dark supply. In other words, Stone’s (2006) model illustrates a raft of supply typologies, his definitions attempting to demonstrate the way in which a given site / attraction conforms to a specific supply typology. However, in many cases, sites may have simultaneous links with more than one typology, the WoT – the focus of this study – being one such site. Hence, it is important to discuss Stone’s (2006) spectrum in detail in order to illustrate this complexity, thus facilitating a subsequent categorisation of the WoT.

As is evident from the model illustrated in Figure 2.3 above, Stone (2006) categorises dark tourism supply under seven headings. These ‘seven dark suppliers’ include: (i) dark fun factories; (ii) dark exhibitions; (iii) dark dungeons; (iv) dark resting places; (v) dark shrines; (vi) dark conflicts sites; and (vii), dark camps of genocide. These are now considered in turn.

*Dark fun factories* fall under the lightest category of Stone’s spectrum. Dark fun factories are categorised as sites or attractions which have an emphasis on fun by presenting death fictionally, marking the visitor experience a form of entertainment. These sites display death in an atmosphere in which visitors young and old can enjoy exhibits that draw on the macabre process of death in the past, though in a playful manner. These sites experience little to no political influence and are more likely to be separated from the seriousness of the original event by the passage of time, separating the events depicted

from social consciousness. Examples of such places include, in the UK, the London Dungeon, Blackpool's Tower Dungeon and, as previously noted, Warwick Castle.

*Dark exhibitions* are located towards the 'lighter' scale of the spectrum. Dark exhibitions are places and exhibitions which seek to showcase an educational element through the manner in which exhibits are displayed. One example of dark exhibition is Menschen Museum in Berlin, a relatively recently constructed attraction and the first permanent Body Worlds museum. It displays 20 preserved bodies stripped of skin to uncover the complexity of the human body, similar to the famous Body Worlds exhibition that globally, has attracted more than 40 million visitors. The exhibition has long been highly controversial, not least for the manner in which bodies are obtained but also for the claims of its creator, Gunther von Hagens, with regards to his motives (Stone, 2011). These debates are beyond the scope of this thesis but, for the present purpose, the Menschen Museum aims to educate people and provide them with a new perspective on the human form (Woitaschek, 2015). These products have more tourism infrastructure and what Stone (2006: 153) describes as a 'more serious and possess[ing] a darker edge'.

*Dark dungeons* are those sites that are located in the middle of Stone's dark tourism spectrum, offering both a fun as well as serious element. Dark dungeons are categorised as places which exhibit (typically historical) prisons and judicial processes. One better-known example is the Galleries of Justice in Nottingham, UK, which is shaped from original prisons and court buildings. The Galleries of Justice seek to entertain as well as educate their visitors; such places tend to have high tourism infrastructure, are commercial operations and offer a mixture of both fun and education, although some, such as Bodmin Gaol in Cornwall, are perhaps better categorised as fun factories.

*Dark resting places* represent a more serious shade in Stone's spectrum. Typically comprising graves and cemeteries (Seaton, 2002; Stone, 2006), dark resting places can be considered commemorative sites replete with what Meyer and Peters (2001) refer to as 'emotive qualities' and are often accorded a more romantic element – a notable example being the Taj Mahal in Agra, India (see Edensor, 1998). This category of site is positioned in the centre of dark spectrum; Stone (2006) includes components of both dark and light as, for some, dark resting places are sites for commemorating deceased loved ones whilst, for others, they are places where tours guides bring visitors to showcase death. For

instance, in the Netherlands, there can be found the famous graves known as the graves of a Catholic woman and her Protestant husband (see Figure 2.5 below). The graves represent the religious divides at a time when cross-faith marriage was shunned, even in death. The couple were not allowed to be buried together; however, to overcome the politics of both churches, they were buried head to head on opposite sides of a dividing wall, the husband on the Protestant side and his wife on the Catholic side. However, the graves are connected by two clasped hands connecting each other's grave. As such, this dark resting place shows that although the graves are a commemorative site, at the same time, they also are an 'entertaining' attraction for tourists.

**Figure 2.5:** Graves of a Catholic woman and her Protestant husband in Limburg, Netherlands



**Source:** Bruce (2013)

*Dark shrines:* As Minić (2012) states, dark shrines (as distinct from the more general category of memorial) are effectively non-purposeful from a tourism point of view and generally benefit from very little supportive tourism infrastructure. Stone (2006) suggests that such sites are close to actual sites of death, appear within a short period of time following the occurrence of death and tend to act as a marker for 'mourners'. Generally, dark shrines can be divided into two categories, those commemorating celebrities and those representing general members of society; equally, mourners can also be divided into two categories, namely, those directly related to the victim and those who are not. Shrines that are related to the general populous are more often created spontaneously by



friends and relatives visiting the site of death and may be, for example, the site of a road accident or the place where a murder took place. An example of the latter, the location in London of the politically sensitive murder of Steven Lawrence in 1993, where a plaque still attracts media attention. Indeed, Stone (2006) argues that dark shrines can be ‘very media influenced’ reflecting a strong political element. Examples of such shrines to celebrities include the Flame of Liberty, the unofficial shrine for Diana, Princess of Wales located above the Pont de L’Alma road tunnel in Paris where she died. Stone (2006: 155) states that such sites ‘emotionally invigilate the consumer to react in a particular manner’, which might display a voyeuristic macabre engagement combined with a sense of grief. Hence, when plotting dark shrines on Stones (2006) spectrum, they might typically fall under the dark shade of the spectrum.

*Dark conflict sites* are those sites which are associated with war and battlefields and have evolved to become a key attraction to larger audiences (Smith, 1998). According to Stone (2006), they can be located at the darker end of the spectrum as they tend to be commemorative driven, educationally informative and ‘history-centric and originally non-purposeful in the dark tourism context’ (Stone, 2006: 156). In recent times, dark conflict sites have become more popular resulting from, for example, the recent 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of World War I and, more generally, the relentless media coverage of live conflicts zones since the Vietnam war, including the breakup of the old Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and the Gulf Wars, followed by the conflicts of the Arab Spring in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt and currently the civil war in Syria. As a result, dark conflict sites have increasingly become commercialised through a plethora of special interest tour companies who offer a variety of guided tours to war-related sites. Such companies include ‘Guided Battlefield Tours’ who focus on taking visitors to ‘cold’ war zones, providing all necessary provisions, from accommodation to food, and advising its customers on how to research a family member who fought in the War (Guided Battlefield Tours, 2014). Cold conflict zones include such sites as Gettysburg from the American Civil War, the Somme battlefield of World War I, the Normandy landing sites of the Allied invasion of German-occupied France, and the Cù Chi tunnels dating from the Vietnam War. Other companies, such as War Zone Tours (WZT) have also been established, offering the ultimate in adventure tours and developing products while the emphasis is on ‘extreme travel / hot conflict zones.’ Examples of destinations WZT promote as hot conflict zones include Iraq, Afghanistan, Beirut and even Mexico which

is promoted as the murder capital of 2010 and a destination offering the potential experience of the unrivalled brutality of the warring factions of the drug cartels (Warzonetours, 2018).

*Dark Camps of Genocide* comprise the darkest category of Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum and are actual sites of death, suffering atrocity, and genocide (Stone, 2006). Such genocide sites are rare but are high in the intensity related to death and suffering, being saturated with 'traumatic history' (Keil, 2005). As Stone (2006: 157) observes, dark camps of genocide reflect 'terrible tales of human suffering and infliction and have a high degree of political ideology attached to them'. They have the potential to elicit extreme emotional feelings among its visitors (Sharpley & Friedrich, 2016), as visitors to genocide sites are more often than not sightseers 'in the mansions of dead' (Keil, 2005: 482). Genocide camps such as Auschwitz in Poland and Munchausen in Austria are two of a number of death camps constructed by Nazi Germany whilst, as noted earlier, genocide sites open to tourists also include the killing fields of the Cambodian genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge Regime and the genocide sites in Rwanda.

### **2.2.3 Applying of Stone's (2006) Spectrum to the WoT**

As established in the introduction of this thesis, the WoT memorial in New Delhi is being employed as case study to explore the concept of dissonance. It is, therefore, both appropriate and useful at this stage to consider the memorial against the framework of Stone's (2006) spectrum.

Immediately, it is apparent that it is difficult to locate the WoT in a single category, not least because of the complex manner in which the memorial came into existence, a point which has been touched on within the historical underpinning of this thesis and one which will be subsequently examined in more depth within the empirical findings. Consequently, in the following discussion, what are considered to be the three most appropriate categories are selected from Stone's supply typology; these are then applied to the WoT as a basis for legitimising its positioning within an established spectrum. These three categories are Dark Shrines, Dark Exhibitions and Dark Conflict sites.

According to Stone (2006), dark shrine sites 'trade on the act of remembrance and respect for the recently deceased'. There are, then, clear links between what Stone defines as a shrine and what might be the more commonly understood term of memorial. Yet,

there are some conceptual differences between Stone's definition of dark shrines and the WoT memorial which relate in particular to the distance in time between the event and the emergence of a shrine. That is, Stone (2006) asserts that dark shrines are created within a very short period time after the event / death; the WoT, however, though essentially trading on acts of remembrance and respect, was not constructed until some 33 years after the event, it commemorates. This chronological distance is discussed by Lennon and Foley (2000) and Miles (2002), who both state that events associated with death or tragedy experienced within a recent time frame can be carried in living memory by those who directly experienced that event, either as a witness or a survivor. Moreover, these events witnessed by the living should be deemed darker than those events which have fallen out of the public memory over time (Miles, 2002). Certainly, in the case of the WoT, given the time lapse of 33 years, the potential exists for the vividness of the memory of those who were involved to have dimmed.

In addition, issues surround the memorial's authenticity; that is, according to Stone's parameters, the location can be thought of as inauthentic owing to the fact that no actual killings took place in the grounds of the Sikh Temple in which it is located (the Gurdwara Rakab Ganj in New Delhi, India). In contrast, Stone (2006) suggests that dark shrines are located close to the site of the death. Nevertheless, the temple is located in New Delhi, where a large number of killings took place during the 1984 riots.

The other main reason for choosing New Delhi for its siting was the belief that the memorial should be built in front of India's parliament building, ostensibly a political decision so that it would become a reminder of the allegedly evil acts performed by the government at that time. Therefore, it is not a site of death but, rather, a site which not only represents commemoration of multiple death events but also one imbued with political significance. Hence, the memorial provides a marker for mourners with either a direct or indirect relationship with victims; indeed, its location was chosen to not only represent victims but also the religious community as a whole that was targeted in the riots. It should also be noted that Stone (2006) states that dark shrines are often semi-permanent, whereas the WoT is a permanent construction.

In addition, when examining the memorial's commemoration function and its educational value, a degree of educational value is in evidence given its explicit focus on the event. That is, the memorial is a historical marker that the event occurred, and that large numbers of Sikhs were killed, as demonstrated by the authentic images within the memorial confines exhibiting scenes of the burning and killing of Sikhs on the streets of

Delhi (Figure 2.6). However, no indication or information is provided as to the cause of the attacks. Nevertheless, the names of those who were tragically caught up in the 1984 riots have been engraved on the walls of the memorial. At the same time, the site does become the focus of attention at certain occasions, such as on the 1<sup>st</sup> November anniversary of the riots, emerging as an agenda item within the contemporary media and visitors. Thus, there are elements of the memorial, which suggests it falls within the categories of dark exhibitions and dark conflict sites.

**Figure 2.6:** WoT, New Delhi. Authentic images of streets of Delhi during 1984 riots



**Photo:** B. Singh

Overall then, it is apparent that the WoT does not fit easily into Stones (2006) spectrum; it cannot be categorised according to one single typology, but, rather, can be linked to three different typologies including dark shrine, dark exhibitions and dark conflict sites. This, perhaps, calls into question either the nature / purpose of the site itself (questions addressed later in the empirical research) or, alternatively, the validity and applicability of Stone's (2006) model. However, it should be noted that, in positioning the site within Stone's (2006) spectrum, the supportive literature relating to the discussion has been overwhelmingly drawn from Western academic literature and, thus, is formulated from a

Western perspective. Indeed, some, including Yoshida et al. (2016) and Light (2017), have argued that Stone's spectrum is more a Western-focused concept and, hence, is an unfitting model for the consideration of dark tourism in an Asian context. In other words, dark tourism as generally considered in the literature 'is essentially a 'Western concept' that has been applied to non-Western contexts in which the relationship between the living and the dead can take very different forms' (Light, 2017: 281) and, hence, is unable to provide a valid conceptual framework for exploring that relationship.

In response, the latter part of this chapter is concerned with conceptualising dark tourism from a South Asian / Indian perspective. Here, however, the following section moves the debate forward by looking briefly at the political dimensions of dark tourism supply.

#### **2.2.4 Dark Tourism and its Politics**

Roberts and Stone (2014) assert that despite the increasing attention paid to dark tourism over the last two decades, insufficient importance has been attached to its political and social contexts. Places associated with suffering and death almost inevitably embrace a political agenda for, as Stone (2016: 23) observes 'dark tourism is concerned with encountering spaces of death or calamity that have political or historical significance, and that continue to impact upon the living'. Although such a claim is clearly not relevant to all dark sites, many of the dark tourism supply categories within Stone's spectrum do have a political element (excluding, of course, those sites that fall under the umbrella of fun factories). Indeed, much research highlights the relationship that exists between heritage and its politicisation and, consequently, issues of dissonance (Light, 2017: 284).

Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge (2000) and Ashworth and Hartmann (2005) have all undertaken extensive work on the concept of dissonant heritage by examining the contentious issues that revolve around the politics of heritage and dark tourism destinations. Collectively, their work and that of others focusing on the politics of dark tourism suggests that many different sites associated with death and suffering suffer a significant degree of tension and dissonance (Light, 2017). Nevertheless, Sharpley (2009) proposes that limited attention has been paid to the *theories* of politics of dark tourism as opposed to evidence of political influence, a notion more recently supported by Light (2017: 284).

When looking at the process of politicised nation building, all too often locations associated with heritage / dark tourism development aligned with death, tragedy and

suffering can often play a very crucial role in formulating a national identity (Light, 2017; Sharpley, 2009; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). An example of this can be found in Jackie Feldman's *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland* and the performance of Israel national identity. The book charts the voyages of enlightenment and discovery undertaken by a group of Israeli youths to Auschwitz Birkenau supported by the Ministry of Education. The youth delegation was sponsored by the Israeli government to highlight the atrocities imposed on the Jewish people by Nazism and anti-Semitism. Feldman (2008) concludes that the journey resulted in a heightened sense of Zionism within many students as well as giving them a heightened sense of pride in their flag and identity as a Jewish Israeli, culminating in greater sense of duty to fulfil their obligations to serve in the Israeli Defence Force (Feldman, 2008). The construction of this kind of project by nation and state is often undertaken to endorse a sense and realisation of a national past and its community and state. Moreover, it is also undertaken in order to reassure the commitment of its citizens to the political entity. This engagement with a nation's dark past may be further enhanced through the construction of a national identity that can be further moulded by engaging with sites of its traumatic past, as these may offer representations of its people's shared interest bound by collective memory. Hence, in short, places such as Auschwitz Birkenau go on to become dark sites of 'national remembrance and identification' (Light, 2017: 284).

In the context of this thesis, the focus of WoT arguably represents a new, unique level of conflicting political arguments, as is evident through its conceptual development and its construction in a contentious location. More specifically, this implication of political influence on the memorial as a whole provides an opportunity to investigate the actual scope of WoT to be developed and promoted as a national site in India. It also represents an opportunity to scrutinise the relevant stakeholders involved in the memorial and the roles played by them for the development of this memorial. As such, Simone-Charteris et al. (2013) state that 'many places associated with tragic events and atrocities (such as sites of violence, military conflicts and defeats or attempted genocide) are actively constructed as sites of national remembrance and identification'. Thus, not only further research is required to generate a greater understanding of the perceptions of the role of the memorial amongst its stakeholders, but also whether this dark tourism destination fulfils what Lelo and Jamal (2013) refer to as 'national remembrance and identification'.

### 2.2.5 Dark Tourism and its Limitations

When considering the term ‘dark tourism’ in particular, it is evident that the concept has yet to achieve universal acceptance (Light, 2017). Indeed, irrespective of the rapid expansion of the dark tourism academic literature, the topic requires further investigation in order to establish its conceptual validity. Much of its earlier research focuses on definition, its scope, categorising sites under dark labels and the supply and demand of dark sites whilst, according to Light (2017), much of the research in dark tourism is predominantly focused on war and battlefield tourism, although dark tourism does not enjoy its ‘monopoly’ over it. Light (2017) also notes that much of the research conducted into dark sites makes only limited reference to theory. Moreover, equally, other scholars such as Ashworth and Hartmann (2005), Ryan (2007), Logan and Reeves (2009) and Butler and Suntikul (2013) avoid making any reference to the term dark tourism when discussing the heritage and management of dark sites; as Light (2017: 279) summarises, ‘the study of tourism at other types of places associated with death often makes no reference to dark tourism or thanatourism’.

In short, despite the increase in research in the field of dark tourism, many are still sceptical regarding the concept and its underpinning theory, undoubtedly in part because dark tourism has become ‘an umbrella term for any form of tourism that is somehow related to death, suffering, atrocity, tragedy or crime’ Light (2017: 276). In other words, it has become so broad that it has become meaningless. Whether or not this is the case remains debatable but, in the context of this thesis, the concept remains incomplete given that, to date, research has largely been dominated by Western scholars within the context of Western societies. Indeed, Table 2.3 below illustrates this Western dominance and, in particular, the lack of research from an Indian perspective.

Table 2.3 below is adapted from Wright (2014) building on his chronology of dark tourism research from 1996 to 2013 and extending the analysis from 2014 to the end of the first quarter of 2018. Each section within the table is allocated a specific supply typology followed by listing of authors, the topic areas and the article focus. The purpose of the table is to not only demonstrate the scope and extent of research in dark tourism in general but to indicate the relevant contributions of work undertaken by Western, Eastern or South Asian authors and having a Western or South Asian perspective. To differentiate between the authors, those highlighted in blue (in Table 2.3) indicate those from the East writing on dark tourism. Subsequently, Table 2.4 identifies Western authors exploring dark tourism in India, whilst Table 2.5 highlights the work of Indian researchers exploring

dark tourism in India. Collectively, these tables reveal the lack of research into dark tourism from a South Asian or Indian perspective, emphasising the dominant contribution to the subject by Western scholars which, as Stone (2006: 19) notes, renders it a ‘Western phenomenon’, thus highlighting a significant gap in knowledge.

**Table 2.3:** Summary of dark tourism and thanatourism research. Adapted from Wright (2014), continued from 2014 to the end of the first quarter of 2018. To differentiate between Western and Eastern authors, Eastern authors are highlighted in blue

<b>Battlefield Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Hartmann (2014)	Dark tourism, thanatourism, and dissonance in heritage tourism management: new directions in contemporary tourism research.	This paper explores tourism to heritage sites with a controversial history and sites associated with death, disaster, and the macabre, by revisiting war memorial.
Miles (2014)	Battlefield sites as dark tourism attractions: An analysis of experience.	This paper seeks to meet this challenge by providing more evidence of the actual experiences of tourists at those sites which are conceptually identified as ‘dark’ using the particular example of battlefields in the UK.
Van der Merwe (2014)	Battlefields tourism: The status of heritage tourism in Dundee, South Africa.	This paper analyses the economic opportunities for battlefield- heritage tourism in South Africa by examining the battlefields route within KwaZulu-Natal.
MacCarthy & Willson (2015)	The business of D-Day: an exploratory study of consumer behaviour.	This study explores the symbolic aspects of heritage tourism are considered from a consumer behaviour perspective.
Murphy (2015)	Dark tourism and the Michelin World War I battlefield guides.	This article provides insight into Michelin World War I battlefield guides within the context of dark tourism.
Lee (2016)	The relationships amongst emotional experience, cognition, and behavioural intention in battlefield tourism.	The objective of this study was to identify the hypothesized relationships amongst emotional experience, cognition, and behavioural intention in battlefield tourism.
Chen & Tsai (2017)	Tourist motivations in relation to a battlefield: a case study of Kinmen.	This paper provides a viable basis for the tourism authorities concerned to evaluate the essence of its tourism industry in the context of battlefield resources and attractions.
Fallon & Robinson (2017)	‘Lest we forget’: a veteran and son share a ‘warfare tourism’ experience.	This paper provides a fresh perspective on participation in ‘warfare tourism’ by investigating the behaviour and



		experiences of a living veteran and his son returning to two theatres of war in which the veteran had served in the Royal Navy during the Second World War.
Chanuanthong & Batra (2017)	Dark Tourism: Push–Pull Motivations, Satisfaction Experience and Post Behavioural Intention–Sites of Death Railway Tragedy Kanchanaburi Province.	This study investigated the “push and pull’ motivations of visitors at the war memorial sites of the WWII Death Railway museums and cemeteries in Kanchanaburi Province.
Upton et al. (2017)	Reflections of battlefield tourist experiences associated with Vietnam War sites: an analysis of travel blogs.	This paper aims to analyse online travel blogs in order to gain an understanding of the reflections held by battlefield tourists in Vietnam.
Vanneste & Winter (2018)	First World War Battlefield Tourism: Journeys Out of the Dark and into the Light.	This study involving interviews with tourists on the battlefields of Flanders (Belgium) sought to examine how these taboos may manifest for tourists visiting the war sites.
Virgili et al. (2018)	‘From the Flames to the Light’: 100 years of the commodification of the dark tourist site around the Verdun battlefield.	In order to contribute to research on dark tourism, this article details the process of commodification of a dark site by adopting a supply approach, by applying the dark tourism spectrum (Stone, 2006) to the battlefield of Verdun in France from 1916 to 2016. Moreover, in doing so, the paper shed light on the relationship between the temporal distance from the tragic event and potential economic exploitation.

<b>Holocaust Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Isaac & Çakmak (2014)	Understanding visitor's motivation at sites of death and disaster: the case of former transit camp Westerbork, the Netherlands.	This study begins to fill the gap in research of people's motivations to visit sites of death and suffering and to contribute to a deeper understanding of dark tourism consumption within dark conflict sites. The article aims to examine the motivations of visitors to former transit camp Westerbork as an iconic dark site in the Netherlands.
Brown (2014)	Memorials to the victims of Nazism: The impact on tourists in Berlin.	This qualitative study explores tourist responses to memorials to the victims of Nazism in Berlin and the impact they have on the tourist experience.

Nawijin & Fricke (2015)	Visitor emotions and behavioural intentions: The case of concentration camp memorial Neuengamme.	This study examines emotional responses of 241 visitors to concentration camp memorial Neuengamme and assesses how emotions are associated with long-term consequences of revisit intentions and positive word of mouth.
Liyanage et al. (2015)	Dark destinations–visitor reflections from a Holocaust memorial site.	This paper examines the Second World War Nazi concentration camp at Dachau in Germany to explore the psychological impact of the site on its visitors as well as critical self-reflection processes triggered by this experience.
Reynolds (2016)	Consumers or witnesses? Holocaust tourists and the problem of authenticity.	Based on field research conducted at numerous sites of Holocaust remembrance, this article considers how Holocaust tourists exercise agency, especially through the practice of photography.
Isaac et al. (2017)	Understanding Dutch visitors' motivations to concentration camp memorials.	This study examined the motivations to visit concentration camp memorial sites in the Netherlands.
Podoshen et al. (2018)	Dark tourism, abjection and blood: A festival context.	This paper, utilizing long-form interview data and content analysis, examines the psychological processes of some global Jewish citizens in relation to tourism activity and local hosts surrounding historic Holocaust sites located in Eastern and Central Europe.
Hartmann (2018)	Tourism to Memorial Sites of the Holocaust.	This chapter in his book reconstructs the evolution of the memorial landscape. Hence, focuses on importance to understand that not only has the memorial landscape been substantially expanded and changed over the years but also the approaches in the study of these sites and their management practices.

<b>Ghost Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Heidelberg (2015)	Managing ghosts: exploring local government involvement in dark tourism.	This study presents factors local governments should consider as they examine their role in dark tourism, including planning for site

		management, consideration of the safety of, and services provided to, their citizens, examination of potential economic benefits, and most importantly, to ensure that they have a voice in the stewardship of their history.
Hanks (2016)	Haunted Heritage: The Cultural Politics of Ghost Tourism, Populism, and the Past.	This study aims to address what the increase of ghost tourism reveals and asks, “How does what Derrida called the ‘critical space of spectrality’ in ghost tourism support and reconfigure understandings of history, national belonging, and knowledge itself.
De Antoni (2017)	Lust for Death: Dark Tourism, Creation and Consumption of Haunted Places in Contemporary Kyoto.	This paper focus on Kyoto tour, in order to enlighten the processes of construction, commoditization and negotiation of haunted places in contemporary Kyoto.

<b>Dracula Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Light (2016)	The Dracula Dilemma: Tourism, Identity and the State in Romania.	This book focuses on the development of 'Dracula tourism' in Romania.
Light (2017a)	The undead and dark tourism: Dracula tourism in Romania.	This study examines the Dracula tourism in Romania from the perspectives of both supply and demand within context of dark tourism.

<b>Terrorism and Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Ranga & Pradhan (2014)	Terrorism terrorises tourism: Indian Tourism effacing myths?	The study focus, how terrorist attacks affect tourism, by analysing Various statistics on the Foreign Tourist Arrivals, in the study shows the direct relationship of the effect of terrorism on tourism during 2006 to 2012.
Baker (2014)	The effects of terrorism on the travel and tourism industry.	This paper aims to clarify the relationship and examines the relationship between selected factors and tourists’ decision-making process for destination choice, and Tourists’ risk perception associated with

		terrorism served as a basis for the analysis
Bac et al. (2015)	Terrorism and its impacts on the tourism industry.	The paper tries to verify the existence of a connection between tourism and terrorism and to present the responses of the industry toward these acts focusing on the US market.
Dobрева (2015)	Tourism and Terrorism: The Case of Bulgaria.	The paper presents a matrix that depicts the linkage between crime and tourism and examines the relationship between the two by focusing shifts to the case of Bulgaria and its terrorism vulnerability.
Liu & Pratt (2017)	Tourism's vulnerability and resilience to terrorism.	This research quantifies the relationship between terrorism and tourism in 95 different countries and territories using international tourism demand models.
Seraphin (2017)	Terrorism and tourism in France: the limitations of dark tourism.	This paper presents the limitations of dark tourism, terrorism, and tourism in France showing that dark tourism is not popular in France, and dark tourism activities are unlikely to develop anywhere near the places where the recent terrorist attacks happened.
Timothy (2018)	Sites of Suffering, Tourism, and the Heritage of Darkness: Illustrations from the United States.	This study examines the role of dark events and their associated locales in the United States. It examines the various dark spaces that have become significant tourist attraction in the U.S.

<b>Genocide Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Friedrich & Johnston (2013)	Dark tourism, thanatourism and Rwanda	Drawing on the contemporary thanatourism, genocide, heritage and memorialisation theory and discourse, this study critically explores the challenges faced by actors involved in the production and consumption of memorial sites in Rwanda
Dalton (2014)	Dark tourism and crime.	This study is devoted to dark tourism as a general topic, to explore dark tourism in spaces where crime-mass murder, genocide, State-sanctioned torture and violence has occurred as an organising theme.

Koleth (2014)	Hope in the dark: geographies of volunteer and dark tourism in Cambodia.	This article explores the convergence of the hope for a better world with sites of past violence within volunteer tourism placements in Cambodia. Also, its gestures towards the capacity of post-phenomenological geographies of experience within specific sites to enable a greater appreciation of how this kind of hope comes to matter.
Sharpley & Gahigana (2014)	Tourist experiences of genocide sites: The case of Rwanda.	Locating genocide tourism within the context of dark tourism more generally, this paper studies briefly how the Rwandan genocide presented / memorialised before considering research into how tourists experience genocide memorial sites in Rwanda.
Isaac & Çakmak (2016)	Understanding the motivations and emotions of visitors at Tuol Sleng genocide prison museum (S-21) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.	The purpose of this paper is to examine the motives and emotions of Western tourists visiting Tuol Sleng Genocide Prison Museum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and further contribute to a deeper understanding of the dark tourism consumption.
Owens (2016)	Journeying to the heart of darkness: An analysis of genocide tourism.	This thesis examines ‘genocide tourism’ as a contemporary socio-cultural phenomenon which has the potential to play a significant role in the dissemination, at an exoteric level, of a greater awareness and understanding of genocide and genocide prevention.

<b>Slavery Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Forsdick (2014)	Travel, slavery, memory: thanatourism in the French Atlantic.	This paper discusses French Atlantic slavery focusing on contemporary tourism within thanatourism context.
Yankholmes & McKercher (2015)	Understanding visitors to slavery heritage sites in Ghana.	This paper studies visitors in Ghana and examines their knowledge and attitudes towards the site, motives for visitation and sensitivity towards other visitor. By describing visitor behaviour at such places depending on the intensity of experience sought or gained.
Michel (2016)	A Study of the Collective Memory and Public	This article aims to analyse the conditions of the institutionalisation and transformation of the official

	Memory of Slavery in France.	memory of slavery in contemporary France and to theorise a new version of the memory, which is known as public memory.
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<b>Prison Tourism</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Dalton (2014)	Dark tourism and crime.	This study focuses on specifically on crime and dark tourism, exploring the contexts of crime-related dark tourism sites like prisons.
Gould (2014)	Return to Alcatraz: Dark tourism and the representation of prison history.	This study looks at places of violent death have become part of the landscape of tourism, an industry that is otherwise dedicated to pleasure and escape, in dark places like concentration camps, prisons, battlegrounds, and the sites of natural disasters, how are memory and trauma mediated by this thanatourism, or tourism of death.
Aslan (2015)	Prison Tourism as a form of dark tourism.	This study describes the general framework of dark tourism and prison tourism, then specifically considers Sinop Fortress Prison drawing particular attention to its historical features.
Casella & Fennelly (2016)	Ghosts of sorrow, sin and crime: dark tourism and convict heritage in Van Diemen's Land, Australia.	This paper examines a closer examination of the colonial institutions suggesting a far more ambivalent relationship with this "dark heritage," evidenced by continuous tourism and visitation to these places of pain and shame from the mid-nineteenth century to the present.
Carrabine (2017)	Iconic Power, Dark Tourism, and the Spectacle of Suffering.	This study explores some of the ethical questions posed by dark tourism and the spectacle of suffering, via two examples. One is of Ai Weiwei's temporary exhibition on Alcatraz, which juxtaposes extraordinary conceptual art installations in one of the significant sites of prison tourism, to explore the relationships between art and activism in carceral space.

<b>Dark tourism / Thanatourism concept</b>		
<b>Author / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Hartmann (2014)	Dark tourism, thanatourism, and dissonance in heritage tourism management: new directions in contemporary tourism research.	This research focuses on tourism to heritage sites with a controversial history and sites associated with death, disaster, and the macabre. Several new concepts and research directions have emerged in the study of such sites. Particular attention is given to the dark tourism and thanatourism approaches as well as to an analysis of dissonance in the management of heritage sites.
Johnston & Mandelartz (2015)	Thanatourism: case studies in travel to the dark side.	Thanatourism, or dark tourism, is an increasingly pervasive feature of the contemporary tourism landscape. Travel to have actual or symbolic 'encounters with death' is not a new phenomenon and is now one of the fastest growing areas for debate and research in the study of Tourism.
Korstanje & George (2015)	Dark Tourism: Revisiting Some Philosophical Issues.	Tourism scholars have widely explored the concept of dark tourism because of two main reasons. First, it signals a new practice that takes death as the main attraction. Second, dark tourism may be useful to revitalise and reconstruct destinations in post-disaster contexts.
Fonseca et al. (2015)	Dark Tourism: Concepts, Typologies and Sites.	The concept of dark tourism has been designed and studied for the last years, and many are the destinations around the world where it has been implemented, playing an essential role in both a country's economy and its image. However, there is a gap in literature about this specific type of tourism. The main goal of this paper is to present a literature review about this new tourism product where the thrill-seeking is the main motivation.
Ashworth & Isaac (2015)	Have we illuminated the dark? Shifting perspectives on 'dark 'tourism.	This paper examines the promise of the idea as it evolved through the work of numerous scholars who developed and refined the concept and discovered new applications for it and will explain how the focus, which initially was to identify and catalogue dark sites, has shifted towards the motivation,

		subsequent experience and consequent behaviour of the tourist in relation to the sites.
Nisthar et al. (2017)	Dark tourism and its potential impacts on tourism industry in Sri Lanka.	This study aimed to find the likelihood of improving dark tourism and its impacts on the tourism industry in Sri Lankan context using the methodology of descriptive analysis from the secondary sources of written materials and web-based documents.
Lennon & Teare (2017)	Dark tourism–visitation, understanding and education; a reconciliation of theory and practice?	This paper presents dark tourism site educational guidelines for practitioners showing that visitors to dark tourism sites are often motivated by respect and remembrance and that this motivation is frequently reported by the practitioners who manage these sites.
Light (2017)	Progress in dark tourism and thanatourism research: An uneasy relationship with heritage tourism.	This paper reviews academic research into dark tourism and thanatourism over the 1996–2016 period. The aims of this paper are threefold. First, it reviews the evolution of the concepts of dark tourism and thanatourism, highlighting similarities and differences between them. Second, it evaluates progress in 6 key themes and debates. Moreover, third, search gaps and issues that demand fuller scrutiny are identified. The paper argues that two decades of research have not convincingly demonstrated that dark tourism and thanatourism are distinct forms of tourism, and in many ways, they appear to be little different from heritage tourism.
Podoshen et al. (2018)	Dark tourism, abjection and blood: A festival context.	This study research yields significant implications on collective memory and narrative, representation, authenticity and ownership within the context of dark tourism.
Podoshen (2018)	Dark Tourism in an Increasingly Violent World.	This study theoretically examines dark tourism in an increasingly violent world. While early conceptualisations of dark tourism guide in examining the phenomena of exposure to death-related tourism, a more violent age in a post-9/11, post-Charlie Hebdo world forces us to come to terms with a more violent existence.



Stone et al. (2018)	The Palgrave handbook of dark tourism studies.	This extensive study is the definitive reference text for the study of 'dark tourism', the contemporary commodification of death within international visitor economies. Shining a light on dark tourism and visitor sites of death or disaster allows us to better understand issues of global tourism mobilities, tourist experiences, the co-creation of touristic meaning, and 'difficult heritage' processes and practices.
<b>Deaths of famous individuals</b>		
<b>Authors / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Tinson et al. (2015)	Exploring the role of dark tourism in the creation of national identity of young Americans.	The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of dark tourism in constructing narratives and stories which co-create and reinforce national identity.

<b>Natural Disaster</b>		
<b>Authors / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Biran et al. (2014)	Consuming post-disaster destinations: The case of Sichuan, China.	This study reveals the importance of newly formed dark attributes that emerge from the disaster as another means to destination recovery, reflected in the emergence of new tourist segments.
Wright & Sharpley (2018)	Local community perceptions of disaster tourism: the case of L'Aquila, Italy. Current Issues in Tourism.	This paper addresses the significant gap in the literature, based on research undertaken in L'Aquila, an Italian city that in April 2009 suffered a devastating earthquake; it explores the responses of members of the local community to their city becoming a dark (disaster) tourism destination.
Yan et al. (2016)	Investigating the motivation–experience relationship in a dark tourism space: A case study of the Beichuan earthquake relics, China.	This study identifies implications of dark tourism and describes how tourists and destinations, which are principal collateral cores, define what constitutes "dark" travel. The study also examines the dimensions of dark tourism motivation and experience and finds that the former partly affects the latter.

Liu (2017)	Chinese tourists perceived value in dark tourism consumption experience.	The purpose of this research is to propose a theoretically integrated approach to understanding dark tourism consumption that does not necessarily belong to the western tradition.
Miller et al. (2017)	Phoenix tourism within dark tourism: Rebirth, rebuilding and rebranding of tourist destinations following disasters.	This paper addresses the knowledge gap in the field of dark tourism with phoenix tourism showing a presentation of post-disaster strategies and recommendations with attention to the re-branding of images associated with death and darkness to enhance a destination's resilience.
Skinner (2018)	“The Smoke of an Eruption and the Dust of an Earthquake”: Dark Tourism, the Sublime, and the Re-animation of the Disaster Location.	This study explores the re-animation of Pompeii as a disaster tourism trope found used, for example, on the Caribbean island of Montserrat. In so doing, this chapter engages with the question of whether or not there is space in dark tourism debate for the natural disaster, and whether or not dark tourism, then, is a relatively new phenomenon.

<b>Heritage and Dark Tourism</b>		
<b>Authors / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Hartmann (2014)	Dark tourism, thanatourism, and dissonance in heritage tourism management: new directions in contemporary tourism research.	This paper note focuses on tourism to heritage sites with a controversial history and sites associated with death, disaster, and the macabre, particular attention is given to the dark tourism, and thanatourism approaches as well as to an analysis of dissonance in the management of heritage sites.
Roberts & Stone (2014)	Dark tourism and dark heritage: Emergent themes, issues and consequences.	This study focuses on heritage sites and dark tourism.
Magee & Gilmore (2015)	Heritage site management: from dark tourism to transformative service experience?	This paper investigates the managerial perspectives of dark heritage sites and considers how visitors can benefit from and ideally be transformed by the overall experience.

**Table 2.4:** Dark Tourism and India by Western Authors

<b>Authors / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Sharpley & Sundaram (2005)	Tourism: A sacred journey? The case of ashram tourism, India.	Based on an exploratory study, it considers the motivations and experiences of Western tourists visiting the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and the nearby utopian township of Auroville in Pondicherry, south-east India.
Zara (2015)	Rethinking the tourist gaze through the Hindu eyes: The Ganga Aarti celebration in Varanasi, India.	This article is about the practices of the gaze enacted in tourist sites. It draws on ethnographic research carried out in the sacred Indian city of Varanasi, on the bank of the 'holy' Ganges, to suggest alternative, non-Western ways of conceptualising and performing sight and the visual.

**Table 2.5:** Dark Tourism and India by Indian Authors

<b>Authors / Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Article Focus</b>
Verma & Jain (2013)	Exploiting Tragedy for Tourism.	Events, sites, types of visit and 'host' reactions are considered in order to construct the parameters of the concept of 'dark tourism' and India is slowly catching up on this global phenomenon.
Singh et al. (2016)	Dark Tourism in India- Introduction, Places of Interest, Challenges and Strategies to Overcome Them.	This paper studies the challenges faced by dark tourism in India, strategy to overcome challenges, and what will be the consequences, if these strategies will be implemented.
Sharma (2016)	Beyond the Shades of Darkness. A Case Study of Varanasi, India.	This study aims at analysing the phenomenon of dark tourism in the context of a non-Western and religious setting in India, focusing specifically on tourist interest and perceptions. The study focuses upon two types of Hindu death-related rituals performed at the cremation grounds and attempts to understand how travelling to religious sites and witnessing "live" events of death can fall under the broad context of dark tourism.
DarI & ReshiII (2016)	Future of the Past; Developing Jammu and Kashmir as a Dark Tourism Destination.	This research investigates the potential for developing this form of tourism, since Jammu and Kashmir have been undergoing death, suffering, violence, or

		disaster through political tension and instability since 1948 and arguably for a generation earlier. The study tried to identify and analyse both the existing resources of the region and institutional requirements for potential development of dark tourism in Jammu and Kashmir and considerations for future of dark tourism industry in Jammu and Kashmir.
Sharma & Rickly (2017)	Self-care for the researcher: dark tourism in Varanasi, India.	This paper analyses the emotional experiences and aftermath of fieldwork at the cremation grounds of Varanasi, India, which involved working closely with tourists, Doms, and Aghoris by focusing on the relations of reflexivity, positionality, and emotionality.

In addition, as argued by Yoshida et al. (2016) and Light (2017), the main limitation of the dark tourism research concerns the gap in knowledge surrounding varying cultural perceptions of the notion of dark tourism. That is, although tourism is a universal phenomenon, dark tourism is mainly Western-focused concept, and as argued above, despite the growing academic attention given to subject, the analysis of dark tourism has to date been primarily from a Western cultural perspective. One notable exception is Cohen's (2018) *Thanatourism: A comparative approach*, in which the phenomenon of dark is discussed concisely in the non-Western context. Specifically, Cohen (2018) highlights the point that 'dark' places and visits related to thanatourism do exist in non-Western countries, involving large number of tourists. However, he argues that 'thanatourism' sites in non-Western countries do not play a mediation role in the same way as it is claimed in Western regions. Specifically, Cohen (2018) recognises that, in a Western context, there may exist a more immediate sense of mediation experienced by visitors to dark or thanatourism sites, largely reflecting Western socio-culturally determined understandings of and responses to death and dying. In Asia, however, Asian visitors to sites that would be deemed in the West as a site of thanatourism typically do not experience the same depth or intensity of mediation that a Western visitor would, primarily because the experience for Asian visitors is just an extension of their existing cultural understanding of death.

Cohen's (2018) arguments are, however, theoretical and relate broadly to Asia. Hence, there exists the opportunity for further research in the specific context of dark

tourism in South Asia / India, a region with a strong culture and distinctive cultural practices related to death and dying. Specifically, the opportunity exists to explore (and compare with extant research from a Western perspective), how people's understanding and contemplation of death in India is culturally determined and, consequently, how this influences their engagement in visiting dark tourism destinations. As such, this research will play a potential role in identifying and exploring the significance of dark tourism in India, in particular in comparison to its significance in the West. Hence, the following section commences with a discussion of the underpinning theories on the relationship between life and death in the West, followed by similar focus in the Indian context.

### **2.3 An Analysis of Dark Tourism as a Mediator: Between Life and Death in the West (UK) and Between Life and After-life in India**

#### **2.3.1 Dark Tourism in Contemporary Society**

In contemporary societies, dark tourism sites, attractions and events (re)present the concept of death to the tourist whilst, at the same time, recreating its presence, or enhancing awareness of it, within societies which perhaps deny or ignore it. As Stone (2006: 146) observes, dark tourism is:

the phenomenon by which people visit, purposefully or as a part of a broader recreational itinerary, the diverse range of sites, attractions, and exhibitions which offer a (re) presentation of death and suffering is ostensibly growing within contemporary society.

Visiting dark places associated with death and suffering offers people an opportunity to confront death (their own and of others) and quench their own curiosity about the reality of death. It also, perhaps, provides people with a platform to absorb the idea of death, hence rendering death more 'socially acceptable' in society (Stone, 2009a: 33). Putting it another way, as legitimised sites presenting a cultural / social depiction of death and dying, dark tourism has been described as a 'contemporary mediating institution between the living and the dead' (Walter, 2009: 39); that is, potentially 'dark tourism provides an opportunity to contemplate the death of the self through gazing upon the significant death' (Stone, 2011a: 25). Hence, in a post-modern world, dark tourism is one medium through which absent death may be made present. Indeed, although Stone (2011a;2012) suggests

that dark tourism experiences may vary significantly amongst visitors, for many they are meaningful as they offer the opportunity to consider ‘life and living in the face of inevitable mortality’ (Stone, 2012: 1566).

Importantly, however, the meaning or significance of death, as well as the manner in which it is confronted and managed, varies enormously from one culture to another (Howarth, 2007; Robben, 2017). Specifically, death and dying in Western societies is confronted, interpreted and addressed in very different ways from other societies, particularly those in the East in general and South Asia in particular. Hence, exploring how dark tourism may (or may not) adopt a mediating role in different socio-cultural contexts requires a deeper understanding of the cultural significance of death and dying in those different contexts. Thus, it is necessary to re-assess the contemporary dominant Western perspective on the study of dark tourism by considering the broader cultural context in which dark tourism is increasingly being studied. In particular, Western scholars need to break away from the constraints of their old colonial boundaries when dealing with the ‘Other,’ acknowledging alternative perspectives on death and dying. In the context of this thesis, this requires the positioning of the study of dark tourism within a cultural understanding of death and dying in India. The following section, therefore, reviews the Western perspective on death and dying and its relevance to dark tourism as comparative basis for then developing a ‘thanatological’ model of dark tourism in India.

### **2.3.2 Death, Dying and Dark Tourism: A Western Perspective**

As Biran and Buda (2018) observe, it was Stone and Sharpley (2008) who first introduced the sociology of death to the study of dark tourism. The sociological study of death highlights the different ways in which various cultures and societies deal with death and dying, not least because, as Biran et al. (2011: 837) argue ‘it is not death or the dead that should be considered, but living people’s perception of them’. As already observed, this perception of death and the dead cannot be seen as similar around the world, varying as it does according to cultures and religions. In other words, as Stone (2012: 1570) points out ‘death is universal, but dying is not’. Hence, the sociological study of death and dying uncovers differences in cultural rituals that shape the process of dealing with death. As is now discussed, within Western culture, this process is seen to have followed a distinctive path.

### **2.3.2.1 Understanding the Role of Death in Western Culture**

Within the broad context of contemporary Western society, understanding of death and dying is characterised by a variety of complexities. In other words, death is a ‘fundamental underpinning to life’ (Stone, 2012: 1570) or, alternatively stated, death is ‘often considered the only certainty in life’ (Buck & Pipyrou, 2014: 262). Yet, despite this acceptance of the significance of death, there arguably remains a lack of a substantial or meaningful framework in Western societies for understanding death (Mellor & Shilling, 1993). As a consequence, the question arises: what is the attitude towards death in the West? Or, more precisely, how is death contemplated in Western societies? Is it accepted or embraced as an inevitability, or is it ignored or denied? The purpose of this section is to address these issues through a critical analysis of the ‘absent-present’ death paradox.

According to Berger (1967), the inevitability of death represents a major challenge for societies, not least because of the threat it poses to the permanency of human relationships and, hence, the manner in which it jeopardises the basic conventions of the order by which society works. In essence, Berger (1967) is stating that the marginal conditions of human actuality expose the intrinsic instability of ‘all’ social worlds, a reality that is apparent in both the East and the West. However, when looking at the West, in particular, there has been a considerable paradigm shift by which the individual navigates the death experience, manifested in death becoming ‘absent’ in society, reflected in the privatisation and medicalisation process of dealing with death and dying. This, in turn, is arguably the outcome of a rise of secularism in the West as observed by Porter (1999) who, critically reviewing the work of Aries (1981), argued that ‘modern mortality’ has become ‘invisible’ due to the demise of religious organisations and their social standing and influence, and that with this demise religion has lost the control over the dying process. This phenomenon has been driven by the increasing secularism in Western society (Porter, 1999). This is in contrast with India where, as discussed later in this chapter, the strength of religious tradition remains ever present, helping to bond people to institutions which, in turn, facilitate the contemplation and meditation of death through religious rituals.

This shift from a religious to a secular driven society in the West is contextualised by Berger (1967: 24) who states that ‘every socially defined reality remains threatened by lurking “irrealities.” Every socially constructed nomos must face the constant possibility of its collapse into anomy’. Hence, though his work on the sociological theory

of religion, Berger (1967) goes on to suggest that death is considered an essential feature of the human condition, a condition that demands people to foster mechanisms to cope with their ultimate demise. Moreover, he suggests that to disregard death is to overlook one of the few world-wide factors in which both the cooperative and the singular self is constructed. Yet, with the rise of secularism and the loss of religious institutions to help cope with death, this is arguably what is occurring in the West.

Interestingly, prior to World War I, people in the West viewed ‘death as too horrible to contemplate’ (Gorer, 1965: 51); death and or even talking about death publicly was considered as a ‘taboo’ (DeSpelder & Strickland, 2002; Leming & Dickinson, 2002; Mannino, 1997) or at least referred to as such (Walter, 1991). Indeed, according to Woods (2007), in (Western) societies, people typically avoided talking about the subject of death. However, by the end of the War, the West witnessed what had become a shift in the public’s attitude towards the mourning of death, driven not least by the need within the warring nations to deal with the carnage of the conflict (Walter, 1991). Nevertheless, by the end of World War II, within Christian doctrine, there was widespread disillusionment in the belief of an afterlife, with the result that many in the West had discarded that belief (Gorer, 1965). Gorer (1965) further notes that during the previous fifty years, advancements made in public health care resulted in the experience of natural death in the home becoming much less common and, consequently, personal encounters with death, particularly for younger members of society, also become less common. In other words, for them, death became more ‘absent’ compared to previous generations where death was more present. Aries (1981) expresses his distaste for this transformation: ‘Modernity is marked by the waning of faith—above all, in the afterlife—and by a bureaucratisation and hospitalisation which have robbed dying of all dignity. Rather as the philosophes rationalised death, modern man has in effect, denied his own mortality, and death has become taboo, the modern pornography’ (Porter, 1999: 84).

This increasing secularism in the West, based on rational knowledge and scientific advancement, has failed to replace the religious certainties such as those found in the East (Giddens, 1991). Consequently, Giddens (1991) argues that the meaning of an individual’s life has been relocated from the public sphere to the private realm; people are left to establish their own values to guide their social lives and to provide their own sense of order (Giddens, 1990;1991). In other words, they are required to establish their own ‘ontological securities’.



### *Ontological security*

Ontological securities are regarded as a distinctive feature of contemporary (Western) society (Stone, 2009a). Giddens (1991) argues that by the ‘purchasing’ of ontological securities from various institutions, people can shield themselves from madness, sexuality, criminality, nature and death. Furthermore, he states that in contemporary individualistic Western societies, it is these ontological securities which can deliver ‘practical consciousness of the meaningfulness’ (Giddens, 1991: 36) which, in turn, can fulfil an individual’s sense of continuity within their social lives. However, this meaningfulness is constantly threatened by the fear of disorder or chaos or, as Mellor (1993: 12) puts it, ‘chaos signals the irreality of everyday conventions since a person’s sense of what is real is intimately associated with their sense of what is meaningful’.

In addition, drawing on the concept of dread considered in the works of Kierkegaard (1944), Giddens (1991) argues that individuals are surrounded by anxieties or dread when confronting the ultimate reality and meaning of life, and respond by ‘bracketing out of everyday life those questions which might be raised about the social frameworks which contain human existence’ (Giddens, 1991: 37-38). Moreover, as Stone and Sharpley (2008) observe, death and dying are deemed as part of or the end of life; when placed in the context of Western culture, they create anxieties and, hence, become a key issue to be bracketed out of everyday consciousness. However, Mellor (1993) observes that bracketing out may not always be effective, as it may result in the contemplation of death developing as a taboo to the extent society controls the factors which suggest a relevant threat to ontological securities.

Certainly, as also suggested by Stone and Sharpley (2008), if death and mortality are not dealt with by suitable confrontation mechanisms, individuals may suffer a loss of ontological security, a condition which more broadly might result in chaos or the / collapse of social frameworks. The contemporary era is defined by rapid progress in science and technology, which constantly challenges the maintenance of ontological securities, making it increasingly difficult to deal with death. Indeed, McKay (1992: 89) observes that ‘in the promise of power and control over life and death offered by technological advance...with no meaningful framework for understanding death, Western technological culture has adopted a style of avoidance’. In other words, death is a ‘human problem and not a technical one’ (McKay, 1992: 89), and one that individuals increasingly bracket out in a process that has been fuelled by the sequestration of death from the social domain.

### *Sequestration of death*

With mechanisms for addressing death and dying in the West becoming increasingly absent from the public realm, there is evidence, according to Giddens (1991: 160), of ‘intense confusion, anxiety, and even terror which are frequently experienced by individuals before signs of their own mortality’. Specifically, ‘reviews of contributions to the sociology of death and dying have drawn attention to the sequestration of death in contemporary society’ (Stone & Sharpley, 2008: 583) – there is clear evidence of the medicalisation and privatisation of death by which death, rather than being an open and a communal event, has become a private experience and relatively hidden (Mellor, 1993; Mellor & Shilling, 1993; Shilling, 1993; Stone & Sharpley, 2008; Stone, 2009a; Willmott, 2000; Winkel, 2001).

The sequestration of death and dying from public space in the West is believed to have begun in the 1860s (Allen, 2007). More recently, however, and in tandem with the disconnection between religious institutions which promised life after death and the secularisation of modern societies (Woodthorpe, 2010), medical institutions such as hospitals, hospices, and care homes have increasingly relocated death away from the community and into a closed private world of doctors, nurses and specialists (Byock, 2002). Elias (1985: 85), for example, notes that ‘never before have people died as noiselessly and hygienically as today, and never in social conditions fostering so much solitude’. In a similar vein, Hart et al. (1998) note that the emergence of the hospice movement from the 1960s onwards was a response to the medical sequestration of death and dying in the West; hospices were established on an ideology ‘of “the good death” which, compared to the closed awareness context of the hospital, is based on the notion of preparing for the end which involves an awareness of dying, an adjustment to dying, the making of farewells’ (Allen, 2007: 83).

Indeed, on examining the privatisation or professionalisation of death, it can be concluded that the professionalisation of death has become one of the primary reasons for the continued isolation of the real death experience among individuals in the West. This professionalisation of death is deemed to be a formal, almost regimented process from the time a person dies through the mourning phase and to the management of disposal (Woodthorpe, 2010). In Western societies, death is portrayed as ‘final journey’ or ‘crossing to the other side’ (Maddrell & Sidaway, 2010: 1), a journey which is delivered by undertakers who stage the dead as the central character in the procession to the grave. Woodthorpe (2010: 64) states that the grave space becomes the final resting place where

the body is laid down, concealed below the ground and left to decompose; the grave provides a visual connection with the dead (Woodthorpe, 2010), but also represents a natural process by which the ground consumes the dead, earth to earth, dust to dust and ashes to ashes (Figure 2.7 below).

**Figure 2.7:** The grave shown is that of a George and Mary Chaplin, Uplands Cemetery, Smethwick, West Midlands, England



**Photo:** B. Singh

Figure 2.7 illustrates the process of decay and how time erodes the memory. The grave shown is that of a George and Mary Chaplin, Mary having died on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1950. This site was selected as to illustrate the passage of time. After seven decades, the consumption of the dead by the ground is well underway; the memory of the dead is held through setting the memory in stone. Yet, (this) the human disconnection with death leads to the abandonment of the dead, eventually fulfilling the cycle of decay in a long, drawn-out process; in contrast to the East, the dead are typically quickly released by the living from their earthly confines through cremation.

Yet, to suggest that death is entirely absent from the contemporary society is to deny the universality of death. Death in the West is consistently experienced or perceived within popular culture and media output (Durkin, 2003). More specifically, Gorer (1965) argued that society needed to become reacquainted with its real mortality and coined the term ‘pornography of death’ to describe the voyeuristic gaze of the then contemporary

youth on representations of death in the mass media. Western movies of cowboy and Indians, detective thrillers, war and horror movies all allowed individuals to witness an event which delivered pain, suffering and death to someone else (Gorer, 1965: 51). He also stated that if society ‘dislikes the pornography of death, then we need to give back to death – natural death – its parade and publicity, re-admit grief and mourning’.

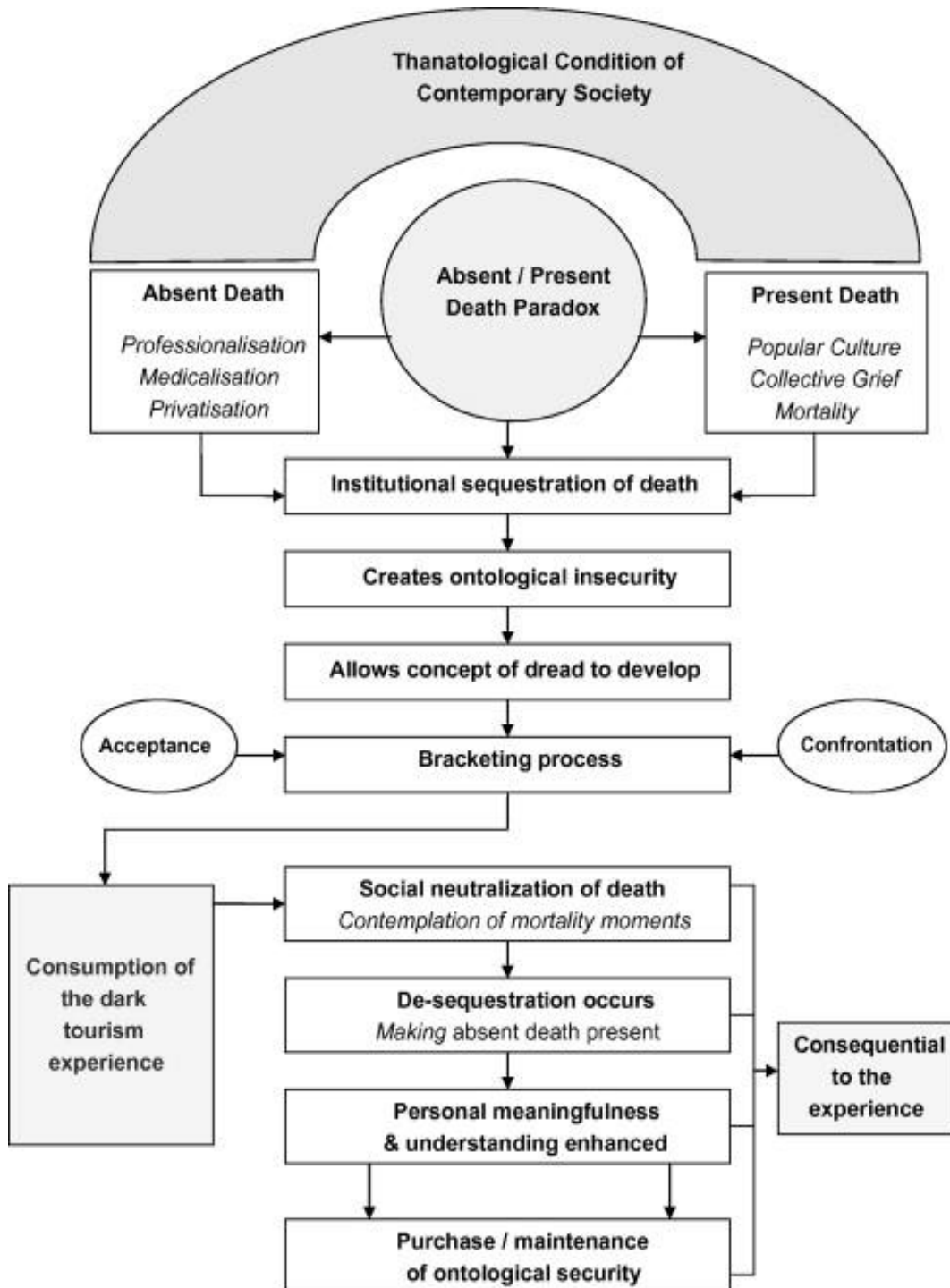
However, with the media taking over the narrative and visual display of death, death becomes ‘abstracted, intellectualised and depersonalised’ (Walter, 1991: 295). Petley (2005: 182) further notes that ‘death in fictional feature films is not only amply represented but is often exceedingly visible and is safely contained by narrative; in iconic and symbolic signs and structures, cinematic fictions offer a mediated view of death which softens its threat’. However, Tercier (2005: 234) argues that ‘the televised pornography of death, with its slippages of reality and representation, is no more likely to replace the experience of the deathbed than the dirty movie is likely to replace sex’.

Overall, then, the death-denying culture of Western society coexists with a complex representation of death. On the one hand, absent death is evident owing to its privatisation and medicalisation, very much hiding death away from the public realm in Western society (Stone, 2009a). It is ‘not forbidden, but hidden’ (Walter, 1991: 299) or as Stone and Sharpley (2008: 585) put it, ‘death appears invisible rather than denied’. On the other hand, it is very much present in popular culture. As Russell (1995: 1) notes, in Western culture ‘death remains feared, denied, and hidden, and yet, images of death are a staple of the mass media’.

It is within this paradoxical context of absent-present death that Stone and Sharpley (2008) suggest that an innate need to confront death and mortality can be met through visiting sites associated with death and dying. In other words, dark tourism potentially mediates between the living and the dead, reducing the sense of dread and allowing death to be brought back into the public realm. It can facilitate the de-sequestration of death, allowing absent death to become present. This role of dark tourism is conceptualised in their model of the consumption of dark tourism within a thanatological framework (Figure 2.8), fundamental to which are the concepts of the sequestration of death, absent death, ontological insecurity and bracketing, all of which are firmly rooted in a Western cultural context. This suggests, then, that the model is limited in its application, not least because the understanding, contemplation and confrontation of death and dying in other cultures varies significantly. Specifically, in the context of this thesis, the notions of sequestration, ontological insecurity, bracketing and

others may not necessary apply as, within Indian culture, death is ever-present. Hence, the significance of dark tourism may also vary from one culture to another.

**Figure 2.8:** Dark tourism consumption within a thanatological framework



**Source:** Stone and Sharpley (2008)

Putting it another way, and as previously noted, much of the research into dark tourism has been driven by Western scholars adopting a Western cultural perspective (Light, 2017). The need exists, therefore, to consider dark tourism from alternative cultural perspectives, to locate it within alternative thanatological frameworks based upon context-defined understandings of death and dying. Hence, the following section now turns to a consideration of Indian perspectives on death and dying.

### **2.3.3 Locating Dark Tourism within the Indian Context**

Numerous sites exist in India that might conventionally be described or referred to (according to the prevailing Western perspective on the phenomenon) as dark tourism attractions. However, when viewed through a South Asian / Indian cultural lens, those Western conventions no longer apply; that is, owing to the cultural differences in the way in which death is understood and socially mediated in India compared with the West, the meaning or significance of dark tourism attractions (particularly to Indian visitors) will also differ. Consequently, the potential exists for misunderstandings on the part of Western academics and Western visitors who visit dark tourism sites in India as they, perhaps inevitably, experience and interpret such sites through a Western cultural lens. Hence, in order to fully comprehend the phenomenon of dark tourism within Indian context, specifically the potentially mediating role of dark tourism attractions in India, it is necessary to explore the cultural context of death and dying in India.

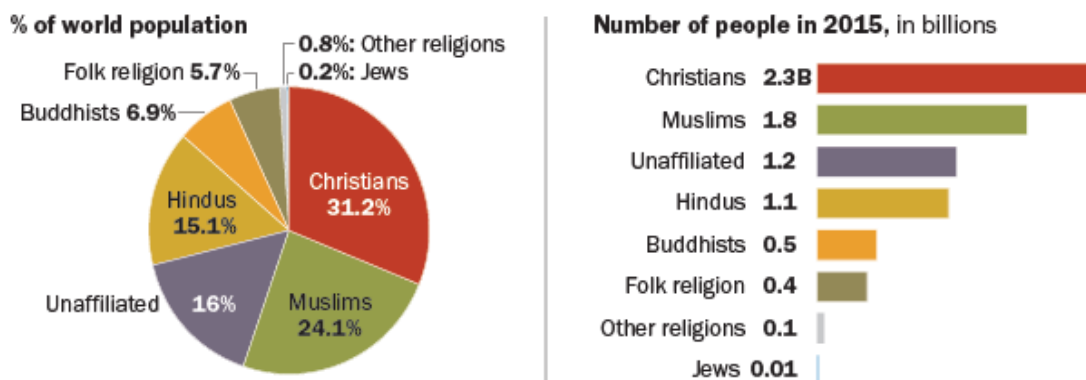
As observed earlier in this chapter, the academic study of what is defined as dark tourism can be traced back some twenty-five years, with pioneering authors such as Rojek (1993), Dann (1994), Seaton (1996), Foley and Lennon (1996), Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) and Dann and Seaton (2001) establishing a foundation upon which the more recent dark tourism literature has built. However, as argued above, much of the research has remained within the confines of a predominantly Western conceptual perspective. As not only limited attention has been paid to dark tourism destinations elsewhere (exceptions being, perhaps, work focusing on sites such as Hiroshima in Japan (Yoshida et al., 2016), on post-earthquake disaster tourism in China (for example, Biran et al., 2014) or battlefield tourism in the Pacific (Cooper, 2006), but also there remains only a limited number of 'home-grown' academics in Asia and elsewhere who are currently actively engaged in dark tourism related studies, implicitly considering from their cultural perspective. Particularly in India, dark tourism still remains a relatively new focus of research in comparison to other tourism-related fields of study within the region. To

illustrate this point, when looking at the Table 2.3 above, it is notable that until 2013, there is no record of literature on dark tourism in India. Since then, there is evidence of work by Asian authors such as Verma and Jain (2013), Singh et al., (2016), Sharma (2016) and DarI & ReshiII (2016). However, studies of dark tourism in India remain rare. Hence, by relating dark tourism to socio-cultural understandings of death and dying in India, the thesis will make a significant contribution to the literature on dark tourism in the region. The task now, then, is to explore the cultural context of death and dying in India as a framework for developing a conceptual model of the significance of dark tourism in that country.

### 2.3.3.1 When Dying Makes Living Easy: Dying in India

In a multicultural nation such as India, religions such as Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism share an almost identical process when it comes to performing the rituals associated with death and dying. Although Sikhism, like Jainism, was born out of Hinduism, each religion follows a different philosophy of living, but they share the same cremation process. Within India, Hinduism is the largest and the predominant religion, followed by 79.8% of the total population (The Hindu, 2016). It is also the world’s fourth-largest religion (Pew Research Center, 2017) as demonstrated in Figure 2.9 and one of the oldest religious customs in the world, dating back some 3500 years. The earliest roots of Hinduism can be traced back even further to 2500 B.C.E., with evidence emerging from archaeological digs at various Harappan sites of an ancient urban civilisation that flourished along the banks of the river Indus.

**Figure 2.9:** Statistics of the global religious landscape



**Source:** Pew Research Centre (2017)

During these excavations, artefacts in the form of terracotta figurines were unearthed, which bore a striking resemblance to images of later Hindu deities (Warrier, 2007).

Hinduism, the indigenous tradition of India (Sau, 2014), is not a religion in the sense that Christianity, Islam or Judaism might be understood (Warrier, 2007). Indeed, as a religion it was not founded by any one particular individual or by any group of people, and nor is it based upon any central scripture or form of scriptures such as the Bible or the Qur'an (Warrier, 2007). Therefore, it is difficult to allocate a specific time by which contemporary Hinduism can be attributed to. Rather, Hinduism can be seen to have from the historical religious periods of Vedic Hinduism to *bhakti* tradition, *bhakti* being defined as devotion or passionate love for the Divine (Sau, 2014). Moreover, there is a considerable body of texts including the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Agamas, that define the doctrine of Hinduism, through its philosophy, mythology and, the practice of *dharma* or, religious living (Knott, 2016). Among these texts, the Vedas are regarded as the most sacred texts; 'the Vedas are viewed as the foremost in authority, importance and antiquity' (Sau, 2014: 20). These date back to the Vedic period (1750– 400 B.C.E) and include a complex system of rituals (Shattuck, 2002). It is also within the Vedas that *moksha* (liberation) theory (see below) was to be found through the precise and elaborate conduct of rituals.

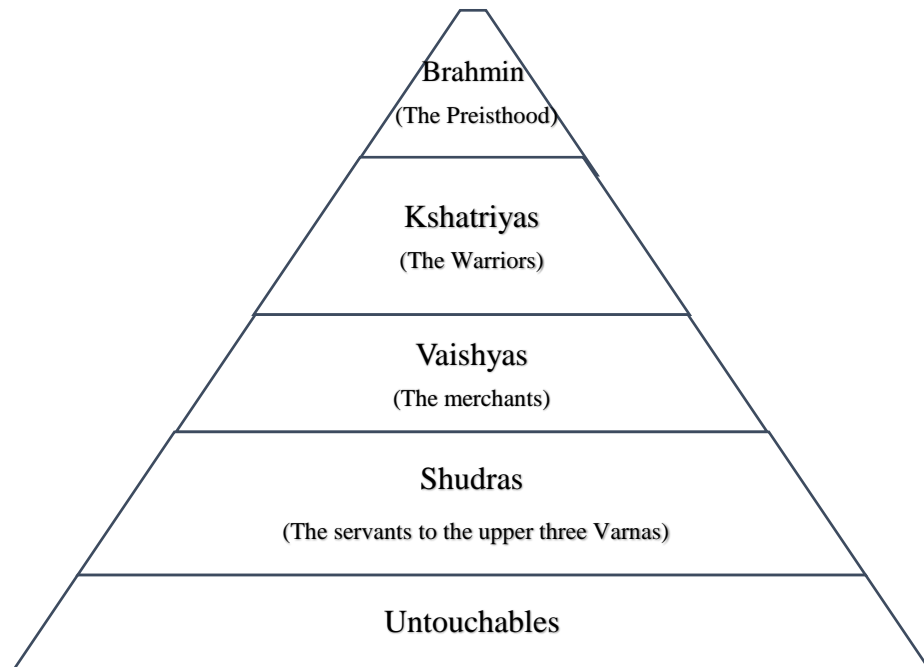
After the Vedic period, there followed the epic, classical and medieval periods of Hinduism dating from 400 B.C.E – 1500 C. E. (Shattuck, 2002). The epic period witnessed the evolution of two additional texts to the established Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Agamas, namely, the 'Mahabharata' (in which two divisions of the royal family fight to govern India) and the 'Ramayana' (an account of Lord Ram who must conquer the demon 'Ravana' to restore peace) (Narayan, 2000). These additional epics give narrations of kings and queens, heroic battles and rules by which people are expected to live an ideal life and are seen as the final additions that contemporary Hinduism draws its inspiration from.

In addition to the religious structure of contemporary Hinduism, recognition of the medieval period law books needs acknowledging. For, it is these law books which established a hierarchy, a social order for people for controlling the social order of Hindu society, which led to follow a five-tier caste system. Figure 2.10 below summarises this hierarchy, with each caste having its own specific temples (Fuller, 1979) which traditionally served to re-enforce segregation and create a stoic acceptance of an individual's position within the social order. However, post-1978, the Mandal



Commission proposed a political intervention called the reservation system to assist the upward mobility of the lower cast members. This was introduced in 1995 to level equality and, in effect, bringing Hinduism into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Figure 2.10:** The Hindu caste hierarchy



Given the diversity within the Hindu belief system, it is almost impossible to define such a thing as a specific ‘Hindu belief structure’ (Warrier, 2007: 5). Indeed, there is no one single worldview shared commonly by all Hindus, but many. Nevertheless, among all its practices and philosophies, Hinduism does include an extensive spectrum of the law of ‘daily morality’ (Sau, 2014) which is based, as discussed shortly, on the notion of Karma.

In contrast, to Hinduism, Sikhism is one of the youngest (approximately 500 years old) religions in the world, though it was born out of Hinduism. With the rise of idol worship and the introduction of the caste system within Hinduism, along with Muslim conquerors (the Lodi dynasty) in India bringing their own religion, Sikhism was established by the first guru (Guru Nanak) (Safdar et al., 2018). The term ‘Sikh’ is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘Shishya’ which means ‘disciple’ (Safdar et al., 2018). Sikhism followed its ten Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, though following the latter’s death in 1708 (Safdar et al., 2018), the personal Guruship period (1469–1708) ended (Kaur, 2018).

Sikhs revere their holy book known as ‘Guru Granth Sahib, which underpins the religion’s fundamental message of equality; hence, Sikh temples are considered ‘anti-caste,’ as distinctive from Hindu temples (Jodhka, 2004). Sikhs believe in the ‘unity of God, the brotherhood of man, the rejection of caste and the futility of idol worship’ (Safdar et al., 2018: 223). However, like Hindus, Sikhs too believe in the notion of Karma, a discussion of which reveals how death and dying are approached in India.

Generally speaking, religion is a powerful force in contemporary India, visible in cultural practices and built heritage. In other words, Indian life is dominated and shaped by religion (arguably far more so than in the West). As Vade (2002: 2) states, ‘religion in the Western sense of the term is rather conspicuously absent’. As religion is an integral part of India, it directs the way to deal with death and dying. Various studies have demonstrated that ‘Indian philosophical and religious concepts such as Karma, Dharma, Atman and the notion of rebirth have a considerable influence on Indians’ perception of the end of life’ (Inbadas, 2017: 320). In other words, for Indians, life is not deemed as the opposite of death; rather, birth is the opposite of death (Desai, 2008). In 1922, Dasgupta, in his book *The History of Indian Philosophy*, notes that despite the variations between the different Indian traditions, three main principles remain significant to all Indians, namely, Karma (actions or deeds), Mukti (escape from the cycle of birth-death-rebirth) and Atma (the inner self of a person) (Dasgupta, 1922). Inevitably, then, in India, religion lessens the fear of death by promising eternal life. Moreover, the context of the end of life in India is influenced by ‘philosophical and cultural meanings of death (Inbadas, 2017: 322).

According to Indian tradition, life and death revolve around the karma cycle and reincarnation, the two being inter-linked. This belief in karma and rebirth is that the ‘actions performed in one-lifetime bear fruit in a subsequent one, is widespread, some version of it being common among Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jains and some other religious traditions’ (Burley, 2014: 965). Max Weber, the German economist and sociologist, published a book in 1916 in German title in which he noted the idea of an unchangeable world comprising eternal cycles of rebirth. The English version of the book, published in 1958 under the title *The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism*, states that ‘Karma doctrine transformed the world into a strictly rational, ethnically-determined cosmos; it represents the most consistent theodicy ever produced by history’ (Weber, 2017: 121). Subsequently, Burley (2014: 1) states that ‘the idea that the doctrine of karma constitutes an impressive response to the existence of evil in the world has been

widely endorsed'. Similarly, White (2017: 1) observes that the karma is basically 'believed to be a supernatural force that keeps track of people's behaviours and metes out appropriate rewards and punishments'; it 'involves the sense that, in the long run, people get what they deserve, as karma is closely tied to the notion of rebirth or reincarnation'. And, it is perhaps this philosophy of karma that is linked to the concept of birth-death-rebirth within Indian culture, illustrates the most significant difference between Indian and Western mediation of death. As Kaufman (2005: 15) states, 'the doctrine of karma and rebirth represents perhaps the most striking difference between Western (Judo-Christian and Islamic) religion thought and the great Indian religious traditions (Hindu, Buddhist, Jains)'.

Karma can be explained more subtly by way of an example of how a Hindu person views the doctrine of karma. In Shweder's and Richard (1991) case study, an 80-year-old Hindu woman in the east of India, who had lost her husband, eldest daughter as well as her eyesight, explains the role of karma in her life (Burley, 2014). She narrates: 'I was born a woman. I gave birth to a daughter. My daughter died. My husband died before I did. Suddenly my vision disappeared. Now I am a widow – and blind.' She weeps: 'I cannot say which sin I have committed in which life, but I am suffering now because I have done something wrong in one of my births. All the sins are gathered near me' (Shweder, 1991: 159).

In this essential element of Hinduism (Karma), people believe that: 'each individual has lived through many lives and will go on doing so until his Atma (soul) finally unites and becomes one with and merges into God' (Sharma, 1990: 235), eventually alleviating an individual's fear when facing their own death. In Hindu philosophy, the notion of Atma refers to 'the doctrine of an eternal self that is said to be the life-force within all beings including the cosmos itself' (Sau, 2014: 34). In other words, the death of the body is not the end, as one continues even after death, as it is the Atma which leaves the body and enters into another form of life, be this a human or other living entity (Sharma, 1990). Sau (2014) notes, however, that when compared to the Western concept of soul, the notion of Atma is quite complicated. On the one hand, Hickman (2014) suggests that, within a Western context, the soul can be considered either immaterial, a liberated presence from the body, or as something that reflects the 'deepest core of living entities' that belongs to a more holistic tradition identified in the Hebrew Bible which uses the Hebrew term *nefesh*, the word traditionally translated as 'the soul' (Oomen, 2003: 380). On the other hand, the notion of Atma occupies a leading position

in Hindu philosophical and theological reflection as well as ethical thinking. Sau (2014) further explains that Hinduism teaches that 'moksha' (spiritual liberation) is attained through knowledge of the Atma (Sau, 2014: 35). Although the Vedas texts focus on the ritual reform of cosmic sacrifice (yajna), it is the later Hindu texts, known as Upanishads, which discuss the detail versions of Brahman (the supreme existence or the absolute reality) and Atma. According to these texts, Atma is neither born nor will it die; instead, it is everlasting, primaeval and eternal (Sau, 2014). According to Hindu philosophy, in each life, part of the individual's self is a part of Brahman. Moreover, when one dies, that part of the self does not vanish but subjugates itself to another reality (into another form). Hence, after death, individuals will take another identity (another life). This transmigration of the soul is referred to as 'reincarnation' or 'samsara' which depicts the endless cycle of birth-death-rebirth.

The following quote from Bhagavad Gita 2:22 (Bhagavad Gita is an ancient Indian Hindu text which is highly significant to Hindus, regarding both literature and philosophy) further illustrates that:

as a man casts off his worn-out clothes and takes on other new ones, so does the embodied soul cast off his worn-out bodies and enters other new.

Thus, this reality is based on an individual's action in this life, which becomes referred to as 'karma.' The word 'Karma' originates from early Vedic traditions found in ritual practices. Sharma (1990: 236) when observing the theory of karma, notes that it means 'that each action has its many reactions, many-side effects and that each reaction or effect, in turn, becomes the action or the cause of subsequent reactions and effects'. According to Hindu philosophy, karma's essential purpose is in the realm of rebirth, and humans are believed to produce karma in four ways, namely: thoughts; words; actions; and, actions performed by others under our instructions (Maheshwarananda, 2004). Alternatively, Warriar (2007: 5) states that 'one's actions, karma, in this life determine the course of events in future lives...Good action in this life leads to conditions conducive to happiness in a subsequent life, and bad action leads to suffering'. Hence, karma, which means 'deeds or acts' (Sau, 2014: 53), has become based on the cause and effect principle. Significantly, the effect which comprises the reward (or punishment) is received at rebirth, based on good (or bad) karma. Thus, 'karma in this life has a causal effect and determines the type of life you would have after rebirth' (Bajaj, 2015: 1).

Bajaj (2015: 1) notes that ‘if you are a Hindu, you would say that your body dies, but your soul is eternal and takes rebirth in a new body’. Hence, this concept of rebirth reduces the impact of impending death among Indians. Thus, for Hindus and Sikhs, it is the karma which ultimately determines ‘how and where’ one comes back as which is determined by the consequences of their karma; hence, the concept of reincarnation. A word derived from Latin, which means ‘again in flesh’ (Stokes, 2018).

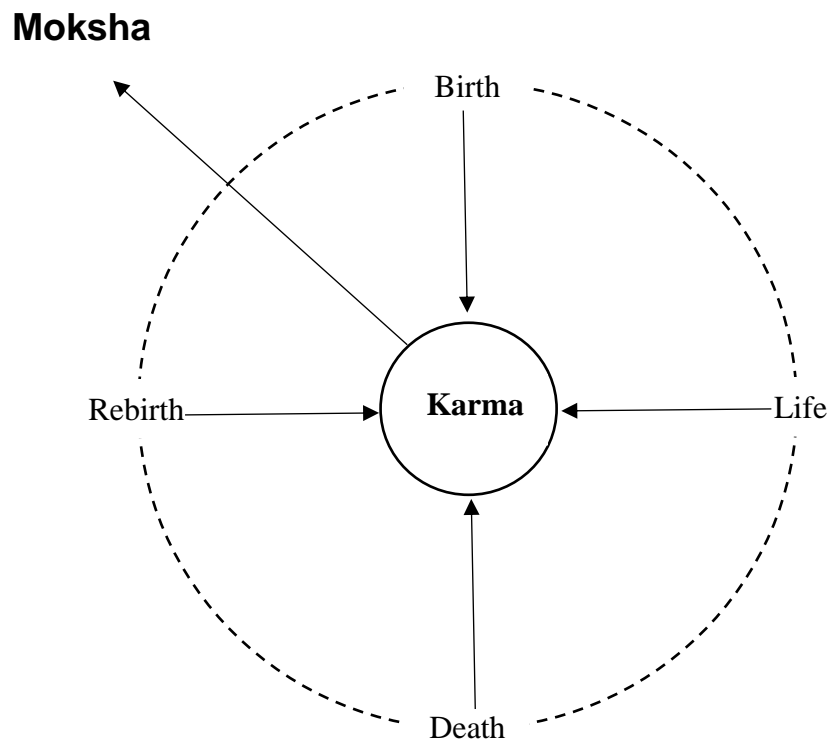
Sau (2014: 73) notes that ‘this doctrine is a central tenet within the majority of Indian religious traditions, such as Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism’. Hutchinson and Sharp (2008: 110) explain reincarnation as follow: ‘the spirit or soul survives death and is reborn into a new body, human or non-human’. Depending on the ‘bad’ karma or ‘good’ karma, individuals can be reborn in the form of animals, insects or human beings. That is, according to karma theory, an individual may experience a content and fruitful life if good deeds have been accomplished in a previous life; conversely, if someone suffers in life, this is the result of having done something bad. Similarly, the type of life one leads at present, dictates the nature of rebirth; having performed good deeds, one may expect rebirth in a higher status family, whereas someone who commits evil deeds will suffer in the next life. In the extreme, such evil deeds may result in rebirth, not in the form of a human but an animal. Overall, however, the emphasis is laid on karma towards the release of the soul (Atma) from the cycle of life and death, the eventual goal of Atma being to accomplish moksha (liberation) by escaping from the cycle of rebirth to become one with the universal soul. Moksha is also referred to as Mukti or Kaivalya, although many Western scholars mistakenly refer to ‘Nirvana’ when discussing the ultimate goal of an individual in Hinduism. However, ‘Nirvana’ is the final goal in Buddhism.

Sau (2014: 92) states that liberation means the ‘attainment of the state of Brahman and release from the life cycle, which is bondage due to karma’. Nevertheless, the liberation of the soul depends upon an individual’s ‘good’ or ‘bad’ karma. Thus, liberation (moksha) is the way to freedom from death, rebirth, fear, karma, as for Hindus, the eventual aim is to achieve the moksha (breaking away from the cycle of birth-death-rebirth). Prabhu and Bhat (2013) note that Moksha is described as the ‘final’ goal of a human being; it is moksha, which gets considered as the aim of existence. Cohen (2018: 160) also states that for Hindus, ‘the ultimate goal [is] an eternal stay in heaven’.

The concept of karma, rebirth and moksha can be conceptualised in the ‘Law of Reincarnation’ model in Figure 2.11 below. In the law of reincarnation, the pivotal point is Karma (good or bad actions). It is the Karma which determines what a person is

reincarnated as in his next birth as the soul is reborn. The cycle of birth and death are perceived as a continuation of the disintegrating force of creation, while transmigrating of the soul from one life to another gets viewed as reincarnation. The underlying philosophy of reincarnation is the continuity of the soul until it attains Moksha that becomes released from the cycle of Birth – Death – Rebirth (hence the incomplete circle) and the soul unites with the creator of the universe. Hence, the law of Karma, reincarnation and the ultimate attainment of Moksha is the most central belief of Hinduism and Sikhism.

**Figure 2.11:** Law of Reincarnation



As death is contemplated as an ‘inevitable part of life’ (Gupta, 2011: 252) in India, it is confronted without fear or mystery. As Vatuk (1996: 127) suggests, ‘in Indian society, death is spoken more openly’, and people appear to be better equipped to face the inevitability of ageing, dying and death (Vatuk, 1996). Moreover, according to Hindu and Sikh culture, it is the duty of children, the legal heirs to the family, to look after their parents. So, to some extent during the later years of life, people have a sense of security in expecting to fall back upon their children or their family, hence not suffering from

stress of the fear of death (Vatuk, 1996). In older men and women in India, the talk and dealing with death is even more outspoken, as they are mentally prepared to welcome death at any time of their life and are ready for their end.

### **2.3.3.2 Ways of Dealing with Death in India: Death on Display**

#### ***The Celebration of Death***

The concept of celebrating death in India occurs when a natural death of an adult above 90 takes place in the family (Gupta, 2011). Within the Hindu and Sikh community, this is believed to be a happy occasion; it is believed that the deceased has lived a full life and will be reincarnated into an even better life. As Gupta (2011: 252) notes, ‘when such a person dies, festivities are conducted to celebrate their life and death’. Family members and friends consider the death of an elderly relative to be normal, and the last journey of the deceased is to be carried out accompanying music to the funeral ground, decorated with balloons and flowers. After a mourning period of 13 days, sweets are distributed to family and friends in honour of the person who has died.

#### ***Southern Indian Death Dance***

The death of a person in southern areas of India, such as in Tamil Nadu, is carried out in rather unusual ways. For instance, when a person dies, homage is paid to the deceased in a form of dance before the actual cremation; the death is celebrated by a dance in front of the body which is laid in front of loved ones. As Parthasarathy (2014) observes, it is dance that has ‘has treated the subject of death continually throughout history and will continue to be used as a vehicle to express human fascination with this eternal unanswered question’. Hence, sending the soul of the person to its eternal world with happiness through dance and music (see Figure 2.12 below).

**Figure 2.12:** Homage being paid in the form of dance in front of deceased in Ahmedabad



**Source:** Singh (2017)

***Rudaalis: Professional Weepers, Who Sell their Tears***

In Rajasthan, a class of professional weepers makes a living by weeping whenever a death occurs; these women are known as ‘Rudaalis.’ When the family goes into a mourning period, these professional weepers are invited to the residence of a dead person to come and weep for the deceased (Bains, 2017) (see Figure 2.13 below). Rudaalis are dressed in black, come from a lower caste and are forbidden to have a family of their own. Rich women are forbidden to display their emotions, hence as Bains (2017) explains ‘their tears become something that a rich man can put a price on and when someone dies, they breathe a sigh of relief’. Thus, high-class women are relieved from displaying their emotion outside their homes. Kundalia (2015) notes that it is rather very usual tradition followed only in Rajasthan. The high caste women are barred from mourning publicly and Rudaalis who are victim of the caste hierarchy, step in to mourn on the behalf of these upper caste woman, representing their sorrow in public (Kundalia, 2015). Intervals between the mourning and crying only occur at a lunch break, provided by the deceased family (Kundalia, 2015). As the mourning period lasts for several days, this act performed



by Rudaalis describes the family's class domination. Kundalia (2015) also explains that the more the dramatic the act, the more it is spoken about in neighbours' homes.

**Figure 2.13:** Rudaalis: Professional weepers, weeping at a funeral



**Source:** Chang (2017)

### ***Lingayatism: The Hindu Sect which Bury their Dead***

Lingayatism is a sect of Hinduism founded by 'Bavasa,' a 12<sup>th</sup>-century philosopher, in the South Western part of India. The followers of this sect worship Lord Shiva, one of the three principle gods (with Brahma and Vishnu) of Hinduism. However, Lingayatism is distinct from the Hindu religion in as much as its followers do not believe in caste system followed by traditional Hindus; nevertheless, similar to Hindus, they do believe in the theory of reincarnation (Curta & Holt, 2017). Lingayats, however, reject the traditional Hindu practice of burning the body and, rather, opt for the burial of their dead ones (Asiaobscura, 2013) (see Figure 2.14 below). They consider that this life is their last chance of being born in the form of a human and believe that, after their death, it is necessary for their body to wear the Lingam (an ornament which is a symbol of Lord Shiva) in their right hand and, by being buried in a sitting and meditative position, they believe that their soul will be reunited with their god. In addition, it is not uncommon for both husband and wife to be buried in the same plot side by side (see Figure 2.15). The graves of the Lingayats, all have markers and are painted in vibrant colours (CremationInstitute, 2018) (Figure 2.16). The practice of burial followed by Lingayats

reflects their belief that the human body comes from the soil and should be returned to it, hence their rejection of cremation (Sinha & Saraswati, 1978).

When observing these death customs within India, it is apparent that while there is a raft of traditions in dealing with death, traditions which are by no means steadfast within either Sikhism or Hinduism but are open to regional variants. However, the diversity of India's culture is also in evidence, particularly with regards to how people demonstrate intimacy with the dying process either by celebrating in the form of music or dance or by inviting professional weepers. This suggests that death is considered not the end but a part of life in India (or part of the cycle of life, death and rebirth) and is dealt with openly. The following section will now move on to examine how both Sikhs and Hindus in general deal with death.

**Figure 2.14:** Hindu Burial Ground in Bangalore, India



**Source:** Asiaobscura (2013)

**Figure 2.15:** Graves of Lingayats husband and wife buried together in same burial plot



**Source:** Asiaobscura (2013)

**Figure 2.16:** Graves of Lingayats (Hindu Sect)



**Source:** Asiaobscura (2013)

## **2.4 Dealing with Death in India**

When confronting death in India, both Sikhs and, more generally, Hindus share the same cultural beliefs and rituals. More specifically, there is a cultural understanding that Hinduism and Sikhism not only foster inclusive cremation rituals but also foster a guide for the preparation of the journey for an individual from pre-death to post-death (Gupta, 2011). Vaishnav et al. (2018: 1) notes that ‘while death is the end of this life, it is also the beginning of a new cycle, and the concept of life extends beyond the two polarities of physical birth and death, and much consideration has been given to the latter.’ Interestingly, death in India is often considered to be good or bad (Gupta, 2011), a concept recognised within the sociology of death and dying more generally (Howarth, 2007). Good death is classified to have three characteristics. First, there should be enough time to inform the close relatives of the dead so that the dying person can be prepared for his end; second, the dying person should not have gone through any physical pain; and third, a final goodbye has been said to the dying person by his loved ones (Gupta, 2011). Conversely, bad death refers to that of children who predecease their parents or a death resulting from suicide, accident or murder (Thrane, 2010).

### **2.4.1 Pre-Death Practices**

Pre-death practices are performed on a person who is on the verge of death. These rituals include pouring drops of holy water (generally from the River Ganges) into the mouth of the dying person, conducting prayers by either the family or the priest and some money and food is donated to the poor on the behalf of the dying person. Then, in the end, the dying person is laid down on the floor from his bed, with his head facing towards the south (CremationInstitute, 2018). Besides these preparations, if some wish has been asked to be fulfilled by the dying person, that wish will be honoured by his family members. For example, many Hindus and Sikhs express the desire to abstain from food and not to be put on any life support system, so that they can die a peaceful death (Gupta, 2011). In contrast, in the case of bad death, there is no time for pre-death rituals. These arrangements made by family members towards the dying person are evidence that, in countries such as India, death is very much accepted; these rituals serve to lessen any feeling of unease of the death.

#### **2.4.2 Post-Death Practices**

Post-death, there are three ways of disposing the body in Hinduism and Sikhism, namely:

- (i) cremation, which is the most desired and preferred way of disposing the body;
- (ii) burial which, as discussed above, occurring only in the case of Lingayats (Hindu sect), as well as saints and children below the age of two (Hays, 2009)
- (iii) by setting it afloat on a holy river, such as the Ganges, covered in white cloth.

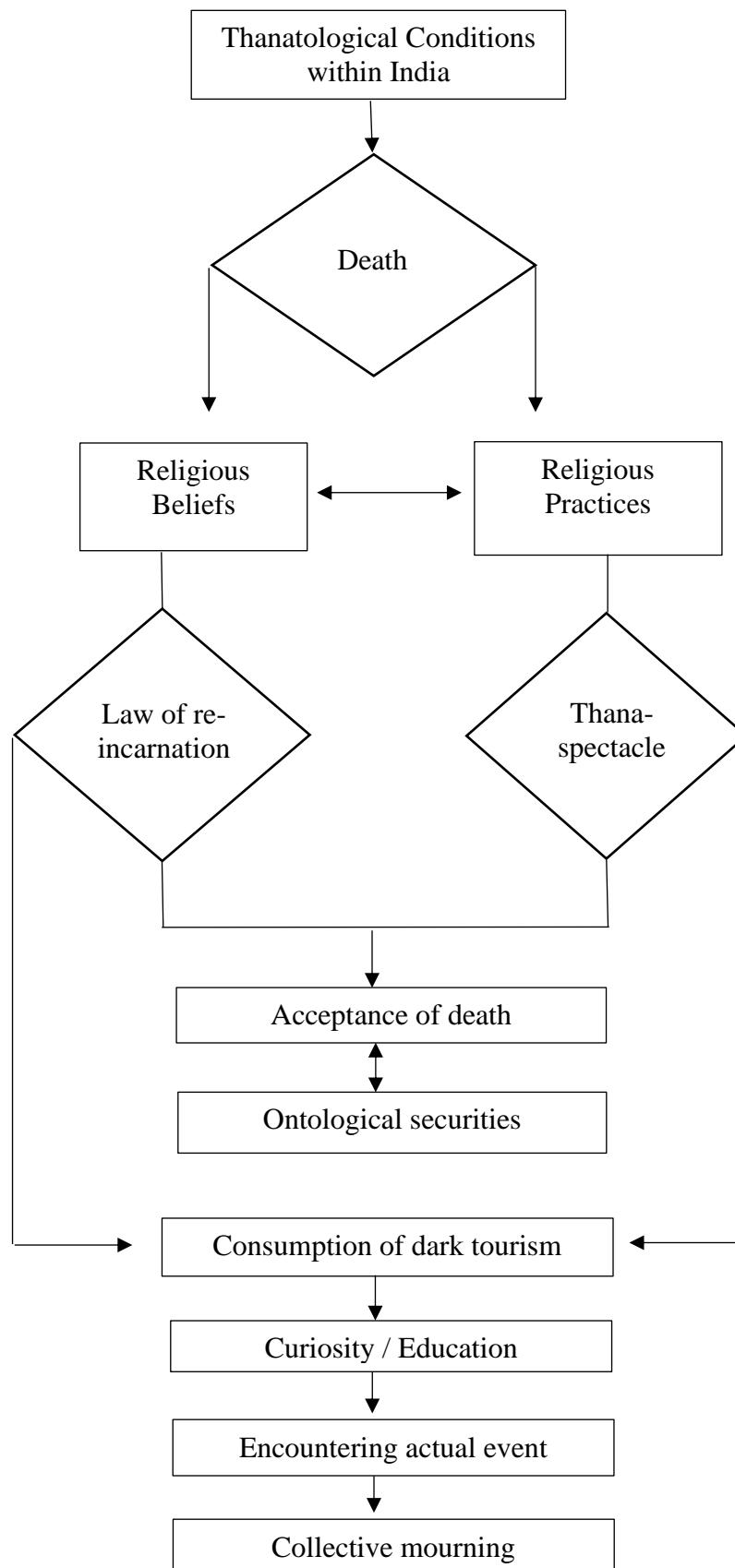
Of these, the most traditional method followed by both Hindus and Sikhs is cremation. Which involves the body been carried in a funeral procession to the cremation grounds traditionally by the son / sons or male relatives. Once at the place of cremation, the deceased is placed on a funeral pyre and is ignited by the family's eldest son. Tradition holds that this part of the funeral ritual follows three essential norms, including first the use of sandalwood, ghee and camphor. The priest performs the last rites in 'open air on a pyre made of wood,' and, drawing on religious values, it is an essential requirement that the cremation should take place within 24 hours of death (Arnold, 2017). It takes around three to four hours for a body to burn and, finally, the ashes are collected by family members and then scattered in any holy river. The whole procedure of the cremation being performed by the members of the family provides the comfort of serving the death personally and thus helps in relieving any anxiety or isolation involved when dealing with death in India. Rather, it is considered fortunate for the deceased to be cremated by his / her family members (Gupta, 2011: 256).

Overall, having examined issues related to dealing with death in India, it is evident that when examining dark tourism supply in that country, it is necessary to be aware of the concept of death and mourning. As for Indians, more emphasis is laid on the soul rather than the preservation of the body (as discussed in detail above). As Indians generally believe the soul lives on. Therefore, an analysis of the typologies of supply needs to be more rigorously undertaken to include the indigenous belief system of reincarnation.

Based on the above discussion, the conceptual model below (Figure 2.17) represents the Indian thanatological process linking death in India to both the religious tradition and the dark tourism spectacle of death consumption. The Indian Thanatological model represents the thanatological conditions in India that revolve around death, which in turn is divided between interconnecting elements of religious beliefs and religious practices. On the one hand, religious beliefs incorporate the laws of reincarnation, leading

to an acceptance of death and ontological securities. On the other hand, religious practices through death been ever-present in disposal rituals reinforces the Thana spectacle, which also facilitates the acceptance of death and reinforces ontological securities for Indians. Yet, when both the elements are drawn together, they create an opportunity for death to be consumed as dark tourism in India, thus providing a platform for visitors to engage in death as a tourism spectacle for either curiosity or education, to encounter the actual event or to witness collective mourning.

**Figure: 2.17:** Indian Thanatological Model



## 2.5 Dark Tourism in India: An Overview

There are undoubtedly innumerable dark tourism sites in India, many examples of which conform to Western ideas of dark tourism place. However, it should also be recognised that although the categorisations of sites may conform to Western ideas, they may also have characteristically Indian applications. In order to illustrate these points, a snapshot of the diversity of dark sites in India is presented in Table 2.6, utilising Stone's (2006) supply typology.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, in Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum, the lightest shade comprises, amongst other things, dark fun factories, whilst the darkest includes genocide camps. As is indicated in the table below, a full range of sites that represent each of Stone's typologies does not exist in India. However, some additions have been made to the typology, including dark terror sites, dark galleries, dark spiritual / ghost sites and dark places of mortality rites. Within many of the typologies listed, there is a wide range of accepted similarities between the West and Indian with regards to the level of darkness viewed (Verma & Jain, 2013). However, differences occur where there are sites dominated by an association with death or of actual death. These sites then can be uniquely interpreted from an Indian cultural perspective owing to the belief systems of Sikhism and Hinduism, as discussed above. The key difference comes when looking at the meaning of death, where in India, the mourning / commemorative process is governed by whether a good death or a bad death has taken place (Thrane, 2010).

When considering dark conflict sites in India, the Drass War Memorial is an important example in this category. The Indian Army constructed the site in the foothills of the Tololing Hill, a site associated with the Kargil war fought between India and Pakistan in 1999. The Drass War Memorial is dedicated to the soldiers who lost their lives during that war. At first sight, it appears to be similar to any other war memorial in the West (see Figure 2.18 below), comprising gravestones that provide details about the soldiers, such as their name and rank. The site also has a souvenir shop for its visitors and is located in the actual conflict zone where the Battle of Tololing was fought. This is regarded as one of the 'toughest battle ever fought' by Indian troops, which adds to its popularity as a visitation site (Indiatimes, 2015).



**Table 2.6:** Dark Tourism Supply in India

<b>Dark Factories</b>	Telangana prison, Telangana			
<b>Dark Exhibitions</b>				
<b>Dark Dungeons</b>				
<b>Dark Shrines</b>	Bullet Baba memorial, Rajasthan	Mahatma Gandhi's memorial, New Delhi		
<b>Dark Resting Places</b>	Skelton Lake of Roopkund, Uttarakhand	Taj Mahal, Agra	Saat Kabar (60 Graves), Bijapur	
<b>Dark Conflict Sites</b>	Tawang War Memorial, Arunachal Pradesh	Drass War memorial, Jammu & Kashmir		
<b>Genocide Sites</b>				
<b>Dark Terror Sites</b>	Jallianwala Bagh Memorial, Amritsar	2001 Parliament Memorial, New Delhi	Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai	Chabad House, Mumbai
<b>Dark Galleries</b>	Bhopal Gas tragedy museum, Bhopal	1984 Partition Museum, Amritsar	WoT memorial, New Delhi	
<b>Dark Spiritual / Ghost sites</b>	Ghost village, Kuldhara	GP Block, Meerut	Charleville Mansion, Shimla	Savoy Hotel, Mussoorie
<b>Dark place of Mortality Rites</b>	Tower of Silence, Mumbai	Varanasi Ghats, Varanasi	Haridwar Ghats, Haridwar	

However, while it has the appearance of a conventional Westernised war grave cemetery, there the similarities end. Specifically, no remains of the soldiers are buried on the site because, according to Indian tradition, the bodies of the soldiers once recovered after the war were handed back to their families for cremation. Hence, although the significance of visiting the memorial is to commemorate the fallen ones, the dead are not present whereas, in a Western war grave, the bodies (if recovered from the battlefield) would be ever present. Hence, the visitation would be only to commemorate the event.

**Figure 2.18:** Drass War Memorial, Tololing Hill, Jammu and Kashmir, India



**Source:** Facebook (2018)

Hence, the significance of the memorial as a dark tourism site is derived from its association with death as opposed to being a place of actual death / resting place of the dead. From an Indian perspective, the significance of repatriation of the bodies back to the family is the necessity of an appropriate cremation providing greater opportunity for the soul to achieve a better rebirth (Bajaj, 2015). Therefore, if a soldier were to be buried, an Indian visitor would hold the view that the buried would, in fact, suffer fate worse than

death as the deceased soul (Atma) would be in a perpetual state of torment as opposed to the Western concept as being laid to rest.

In comparison to the Drass War Memorial, which represents a dark conflict site, an example of a dark resting place comprising human remains is the Skeleton Lake of Roopkund (figure 2.19), an actual site of death and ‘resting place.’ The Skeleton Lake can, for the Indian tourist, be seen to fit best within the darkest shade of Stone’s (2006) spectrum, the very same reason that resulted in the repatriation of the dead soldiers of Drass War memorial.

**Figure 2.19:** Skeleton Lake of Roopkund, in the Himalayas



**Source:** Chalakoski (2017)

The Skeleton Lake of Roopkund, lying in a valley in the Himalayas, is a frozen lake where the skeletons of around 200 people from the 9th Century were found lying deep in the water (see Figures 2.19 above and 2.20 below). They are believed to be pilgrims who were passing through that area, and who were killed by heavy hailstorms and fell in the lake below. Every year when the snow melts from the Himalayas, the scattered skulls and

bones are visible to the visitors (Reese, 2015). Significantly, the bodies have not received any ritual cremation and are, therefore, considered by Indians to be in a permanent state of unrest having been denied rebirth. Moreover, the lake is seen as a bad death site.

**Figure 2.20:** Skeleton Lake of Roopkund, discovered in 1942



**Source:** Reese (2015)

In Table 2.6 above, the category (not included in Stone's typology) of Dark Places of Mortality Rites is included. This type of site is where the deceased are processed for their next life and, in India, include cremation sites and so-called 'exposer' sites where bodies are laid out for nature to claim. The three main such sites in India which attract international tourists are Haridwar, Varanasi and the Tower of Silence near Mumbai. The first two are actual places of cremation for Hindus, whereas the Tower of Silence belongs to the Parsee's community whose disposal rites revolve around exposing corpses to the sun and scavenging birds. From an Indian perspective, these sites are generally not recognised as places to visit but are viewed as religious venues, places of ritual significance where the actual cremation of the deceased takes place as part of their passage to the next life, thus, fulfilling the Karma and rebirth process.

Here, the significant difference between the West and India is that idea of visiting these sites as a tourist is, for an Indian, as much an alien concept as a Westerner would think of going to a cemetery as a tourist to gaze across at a stranger's funeral for a day out. However, it can be argued that, in comparison, some places of cremation and burial in the West are deemed as dark and are, in fact, commodified as dark tourism products through ventures such as graveyard tours of the famous and, more commonly, ghost tours.

This is largely due to the tradition in the West of people having grave markers / gravestone which act as focal points for family and as statements by the death of their presence once within the living. In contrast, in India, it is believed that once a person is cremated, they should not be given any presence among the living in a tangible sense such as a private plot of land with a grave marker. Rather, they are instead cast into a sacred river, preferably the Ganga (the Ganges) which is deemed a living Goddess and thus the dead are given to the care of Ganga. As such there is no need for the family to revisit the dead or for the dead to proclaim their presence to the living. This then further highlights the difference in the culture of death in India.

Nevertheless, referring back to tourism at the death Ghats of Haridwar and Varanasi over the past decade, there have been an increasing number of Indian tour operators selling tours to the Western market to these death Ghats. Manglam Travels is one such operator which deals in 'Heritage walks in Varanasi, walking tours in Varanasi, boat rides in Varanasi, Varanasi tours, Varanasi tours Package' (Manglam Travels, 2019). Although Manglam Travels are targeting a Western audience, they are not sensationalising the death Ghats; rather, they offer within their narrative, a range of packages to sites, focusing on heritage and history with subtle promises to the tourist of witnessing death rituals supported with a limited number of images on their websites (Figure 2.21 below). This then illustrates the growth in the commodification of the Ghats for tourism, confirming Stone's (2012: 1569) observation that death and dying in India involves a 'marketable live' event when it comes to private cremations to deal with death. However, as mentioned the focus of the Indian tour operators are Westerners and not people from India.

**Figure 2.21:** The death Ghats of Haridwar and Varanasi (Zara, 2015). These sites have all the trappings of the darkest of dark tourism site from the West perspective giving a Western tourist a first-hand encounter with unbridled real death and real disposal at its rawest



**Source:** Brancatisano (2016)

The Parsi's Tower of Silence in Mumbai also reveals a similar cultural belief to that of Hindus and Sikhs although, unlike the cremation Ghats of Haridwar and Varanasi, the Parsi rituals involves the exposure of the body to vultures (Figure 2.22 below). The Parsi believes that the (dead) body is a pollutant in the environment and is thus given up for vultures to consume. Also similar to Hindus and Sikhs, no visits are made to such sites other than to perform the rituals. However, as with the cremation Ghats, Western tourists view it as dark site to be visited. Hence, this once more illustrates the significant difference in the perception of visitation of Dark Place of Mortality Rites.

**Figure 2.22:** The Parsi's Tower of Silence in Mumbai, a dead body, is being brought to the tower for the vultures to feed on the dead



**Source:** Halkinsozcusu (2018)

## 2.5 Summary

Having examined a broad range of themes focusing on the foundation of dark tourism and its positioning within a South Asian (Indian) context, we have seen that there are a broad range of dark tourism typologies present in India, including the WoT which cannot be categorised as one but embraces the elements of dark shrines, dark exhibition and dark conflict sites. To an extent, the complexities involved in according a specific category to the WoT can be attributed to the limitations within the literature with regards to understandings of dark tourism within the South Asian / Indian context. Therefore, this chapter has presented an analysis of dark tourism within contemporary society with a specific emphasis on the difference between Western and Indian perspectives on the notion of dark tourism. To facilitate this, approaches to death and death rituals from a Hindu and Sikh perspective were compared with those from a Christian centric Western

perspective in order to illustrate the cultural differences in India. This has illustrated that, for Indians and unlike in the West, death is ever-present and, as a consequence, engaging in dark tourism for Indians does not have the same significance, or is not necessarily the same experience, as for Western tourists. For example, sites such as the cremation Ghats would not be viewed by an Indian as a tourist attraction; rather, they would be viewed as a common place for ritual. Specifically, they would view the cremation ceremony as a positive and spiritual experience for a deceased family and indeed, for the deceased, as it is through the cremation ceremony and the scattering of the ashes in the river that the soul of the person is freed for rebirth. Conversely, in the West, the process of public cremation may be considered alien and deemed macabre due to the process of privatisation of the death in the West. Thus, a Western tourist viewing the same site as an Indian tourist would be engaging in a totally different visitation experience. To conceptualise this difference, an 'Indian Thanatological' model has been presented in this chapter to illustrate death and the consumption of dark tourism in India. Based on an understanding of religious traditions and practices in India, the model demonstrates that death in India is ever present, thereby creating a platform for Indians to consume death for either curiosity or education, to encounter the actual event or to witness / engage collective mourning. Thus, this illustrates the significant difference in the perceptions of various dark tourism typologies which exist between India and the West.

Overall, then, this chapter has established that although there are places within India which can be defined as dark owing to their association with death and suffering, their significance varies not only because of distinctions between Western and Indian perspectives on death and dying, but also because of the Sikh and Hindu belief in what Indians see as a good or bad death. Moreover, the WoT has been shown to be a dark destination, but one where, as will be explored later, the existence of dissonance has the potential to challenge both visitors' experience and, in particular, its role as a memorial in the context of dark tourism in India. The next task, then, is to consider the role and purposes of memorials both in general and in India; this is the focus of the following chapter.



## Chapter 3

### Concepts of Memorials in India

#### 3.1 Introduction

The last chapter provided a foundation for this thesis by exploring the concept of dark tourism, both generally and in the specific context of India. This chapter now turns to a review of the roles of memorials in post-1947 independence India as a framework for the specific focus on the WoT memorial. This will be achieved by first examining the literature on memorials in general, their significant roles in society and what makes a memorial purposeful – that is, how a memorial might best achieve its purpose. Second, it goes on to illustrate and distinguish the role of memorials in India from that in Western culture within the context of dark tourism. In other words, as is evident from the discussion in the preceding chapter, dark tourism must be conceptualised and understood differently in India compared to in Western cultures and, hence, the opportunity exists to explore how people in India perceive memorials and what roles memorials play in that country.

#### 3.2 Definitions

In exploring memorial / monuments, this chapter is in effect concerned with dark tourism attractions. For the purposes of this chapter, the following definitions are adopted:

##### *Visitor attraction*

A visitor attraction, according to Hu and Wall (2005: 619) is ‘a permanent resource, either natural or human-made, which is developed and managed for the primary purpose of attracting visitors’. More broadly, Sharpley (2009: 145), when discussing the successfulness of destinations, surmises that ‘a wide variety of factors underpin the successful development of tourism destinations; an essential ingredient remains the provision of what are collectively referred to as visitor attractions.’ Additionally, Leask (2010: 157) holds a similar position, stating that visitor attractions play a vital role in the

development of a successful tourism destination ‘where they act as key motivators for visits and as resources for local communities.’

### *Dark visitor attractions*

Defining the concept of a dark tourism attraction / dark tourism, Sharpley (2009: 9) states that dark tourism attractions are made up from a ‘...subset of the totality of tourist sites associated with death and suffering’. Miles (2002: 1176) goes on to note that, to be successful, any dark touristic ‘attraction’ must evoke historical knowledge of the event (or events) to the tourist but also ‘engender a degree of empathy between the sightseer and the past victim.’ However, given the subset of dark attraction typologies which includes attractions denoted by Stone (2006) as fun factories, Miles (2002) statement should be viewed in relation to sites identified by Stone’s (2006) dark tourism spectrum belonging to the categories of dark, darker and darkest, as previously illustrated in chapter Two (section 2.2.1).

### *Memorials*

Memorials, too, continue to attract visitors to public spaces constructed not only to commemorate but also to contribute to the identity of cities and places (Burling, 2005). According to Bonder (2009: 62) ‘the word “memorial” corresponds to “commemoration”—“something that serves to preserve memory or knowledge of an individual or event”; but it also corresponds to “memento”—“something that serves to warn or remind with regard to conduct or future events.’ According to Murray (2008: 137), memorials generally address two audiences: ‘the private memories of those intimately associated with the memorialised activity or person and the historical consciousness and collective memory of the general public’. Murray (2008) states that the importance of memories and visitation level of the memorial site can change with time, a successful memorial will continue to contribute to a nation’s or individual’s understanding of cultural history. In addition, Murray (2008: 148) suggests that certain questions such as ‘Who first suggested the memorial? What were their intentions? How was the design of the memorial settled upon?; are all important aspects of significance of the memorialisation process. Therefore, in order to fully appreciate the significance of the memorialisation process, it is important to identify numerous factors that allow a (dark) memorial site to achieve its purpose or, in other words, to be purposeful. These are

discussed later in this chapter, but it is first necessary to consider the term ‘memorial’ in more detail.

### **3.3 Introduction to Memorials**

In his journal article *War and Thanatourism: Waterloo 1815-1914*, Seaton (1999) explicitly suggests that the study of memorials within the field of tourism falls under the umbrella of dark tourism. According to him, the site of the battle of Waterloo ‘is still Belgium’s second most important tourism site, marked by 135 separate monuments and memorials...It is thus a quintessential example of that form of attraction which has been variously called dark tourism or thanatourism’ (Seaton, 1999: 130-131). In short, memorials may be considered a specific category of dark tourism attraction.

Touristic visits to memorials or, indeed, dark attractions / destinations more generally, are not, of course, a new phenomenon. As noted in the preceding chapter, throughout history people have been drawn to sites associated with death, suffering, violence or natural / human-made disasters, such sites often being, or including, memorials (Sharpley, 2009b). However, it can be argued that not only do memorials, in particular, continue to be visited by tourists but also that, as dark tourism attractions, they are becoming increasingly popular. Certainly, as Burling (2005: 9) observes, ‘memorials continue to attract visitors to public spaces designed to commemorate as well as contributing to the identity of cities and places’. For example, in the United States, the city of Washington has come to be recognised widely as the home of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum which, as Lennon and Foley (2000) observe, has attracted around two million visitors annually since it opened in 1993. Indeed, according to the museum’s own website, more than 43 million people in total have visited it, including 99 Heads of State and more than 3,500 officials from 132 countries (USHMM, 2018). Similarly, since 2001, the site of the former Twin Towers in New York, widely referred to as Ground Zero, has long attracted both tourists and academic attention as a memorial site (for example, Lisle, 2004; Potts, 2012); the official memorial was opened in 2011, ten years after ‘9/11’, followed by the opening of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum (National September 11 Memorial & Museum, 2018). Equally, many other destinations around the world are associated with internationally known memorials, such as Hiroshima in Japan (Schäfer, 2016).

Moreover, Biran et al. (2011) claim that, in recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in touristic visits to sites associated with death and atrocities. For

example, the Berlin Holocaust memorial opened in 2005 has since received some five million tourists who visited the exhibition (DW, 2016). In addition, Biran et al. (2011) state that, to some extent, this growth can be attributed to the increased supply of new memorials. Such as the new Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, which explores the history of slavery and racism in America, and the associated National Memorial for Peace and Justice Alabama, dedicated to victims of lynching (Figure 3.1 below), both opened to the public on 26 April 2018 (EJI, 2018).

In addition, recent years have witnessed what Sharpley (2009b: 146) refers to as the ‘proliferation of such memorials, driven by an apparently increasing desire...to commemorate disasters, wars, atrocities, individual sacrifice or other events associated with death and suffering’. The purpose of many is simply to fulfil the basic function of a memorial, that is, to act as a reminder of a person, people or an event, although a distinction must immediately be drawn between those which commemorate people’s (perhaps influential) lives and those which commemorate untimely or violent attractions, such as the memorial to the victims of the Bali bombing in 2002 which tourists are more likely to encounter by accident whilst visiting the island (Figure 3.2 below).

Nevertheless, this proliferation of memorials serves to widen the horizons of dark tourism visitation, not only through the increasing diversity of types of memorials and the people / events they commemorate but also through their increasingly broad geographical spread. In short, memorials have become a fundamental and widespread feature of the dark tourism landscape. It is necessary then, to consider the nature and purpose of memorials in general before going on to explore their significance in the specific context of India.

**Figure 3.1:** First of its type, a racial terror Lynching Memorial commemorating African American men, women and children victims who were hanged, burned alive, shot drowned, and beaten to death by white mobs between 1877 and 1950



**Source:** EJI (2018)

**Figure 3.2:** Bali Bombing Memorial, Kuta, Bali



**Source:** Photo by R. Sharpley (2016)

### 3.4 Memorials: Definitions and Purpose

Young (1993: 3), in his book *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, suggests explicitly that memorials are a ‘special precinct, extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honour the dead’. According to him, memorials ‘ritualise remembrance and mark the reality of ends’ (Young, 1993: 3). Alternatively, Zittoun (2004: 2) defines memorials as ‘places where the need to write a national or community history coincides with the need to confer meaning on one’s life and on death’ whilst, more broadly, memorials may be thought of as landscaped spaces constructed by people to memorialise individuals and events (Svendsen & Campbell, 2005). In short, memorials/memorial sites depict ‘physical locations that serve a commemorative function’ (Williams, 2007: 8). More specifically, the commemorative landscape of a public memorial permits the ‘keep[ing of] past events alive in the common memory through physical representation in a public area’ (Gurler & Ozer, 2013: 858). Through memorialisation, societies are reminded of an often-violent history, ‘contribut[ing] to the city landscape in creating a respect culture regarding solving human rights problems and conflicts by peaceful settlement’ (Gurler & Ozer, 2013: 858).

In a more practical sense, Gurler and Ozer (2013) note that public memorials serve to convey information to their visitors, whilst also providing opportunities for tourists to establish an understanding of difficult events from the past which the society survived. However, memorials are not of course constructed solely for tourists but serve, as Stevens (2015: 39) states, ‘to provide a strong, visible, legible representation of national identity values, lending a nation both historical and conceptual grounding, and [to create] a stage for rituals that reinforce and extend national meaning’. Hence, the purpose of a memorial can be seen to be multi-faceted; ‘memorials can do many things’ (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018: 91).

Examining the purpose of memorials, Young (1993: 12), states that ‘the aim of memorials is not to call attention to their own presence so much as to past events *because they are no longer present*’ (*emphasis in original*). He adds that we do not visit memorials because they are beautiful or fascinating; rather, we do so to show respect for and share history. A memorial becomes the reference point taking us back in time to the events and people it commemorates. Young (1993) further explains that the motives for commemoration are seldom immediately evident, as there is always more to the creation of memorials than simply the desire to adequately recognise and commemorate someone’s life or a historical event. Nevertheless, in simple terms, memorials preserve

the memory of events and individuals, thus, serving to preserve and contribute to a nation's or people's collective memory. Moreover, Naidu (2004: 4) argues that although any kind of reparation can never compensate for human loss, suffering and trauma which victims suffer, memorials become a 'means of reclaiming an oppressed history... honouring those that have died or that have been victimised during the conflict, as well as reconstructing social identities in society'.

Ashton and Hamilton (2008: 3) suggest that memorials have considerably diversified in purpose, stating that 'there can be several reasons for the erection of a memorial: as a means of uniting or bringing a community together; as a focus for commemoration; for the purpose of sacralising – or creating sacred spaces; as an aide to remembering an event or person; and more recently to make a political statement or to claim political ground'. More specifically, a key aim of a memorial may be to enhance the process of reconciliation by 'acknowledging aspects of the past' (Batten, 2009: 88). In a similar vein, Gibson (2011: 150) suggests that memorials by and large serve a significant remembering function 'not because they restore living memory, but because they symbolically articulate and engage with the fragility and temporality of living memory's mortality'. Equally, whilst memorials often serve as a focus for mourning, some see them fulfilling a public educational role, while yet others view them as a manifestation of guilt (Harju, 2015). Moreover, it must be acknowledged that some memorials may be constructed for the simple purpose of attracting tourists. Whatever the case, however, memorials tend to concretise events; that is, they make events real, in so doing aiming 'to express social norms in a timeless manner' (Harlov, 2015: 46). They serve to ensure that both good and bad memories are passed down from one generation to another so that the present can learn from the past.

Opposing the multi-functionality of memorials, Eross (2017: 20) states that memorials have a 'seemingly clear function: by placing a physical reminder in the public space, they intend to enhance the recollection and integration of memories related to the subject of the commemoration and its narrative' although those memorials which mark death may become a bittersweet place of mourning. Nevertheless, people's relationship with a memorial site may be more complex, particularly when they are not directly connected to those being commemorated or when the trauma or loss being commemorated is not a one-off event but occurred over an extended period of time (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). In this context, so-called 'disenfranchised grief' (Atkinson-

Phillips, 2018: 82) may provide legitimacy to those who feel the necessity to mourn such events.

Overall, then, memorials are created to remember the past; moreover, they are a ‘form of public memory work that is often associated with the nation’ (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018: 77). They enable disenfranchised people to have their accounts acknowledged publicly, representing spaces for marginalised mourners, where they can have their grief legitimised (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). Through memorials, the memory and burden of a difficult past are shared among communities to help to reclaim spaces of pain (Sodaro, 2018). Nonetheless, memorials cannot repair the ‘brokenness of the past’ (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018: 91), and nor can one memorial accomplish everything. In other words, Atkinson-Phillips (2018) suggests that a particular event may need to be commemorated in more than one way. For example, a state or national sponsored memorial may be respected by victims as a way of acknowledging their difficult past and their experience but might fail to provide an appropriate focus for survivors to mourn (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). Friedrich et al. (2018) similarly claim that when memorials commemorate difficult heritage, a degree of dispossession amongst specific groups may be in evidence owing to the complexities of representation. That is, a memorial may often portray an event through a singular narrative, thus resulting in dissonance amongst stakeholder groups. Atkinson-Phillips (2018) further states that bureaucratic involvement in the development of a memorial can often constrain or bias the way the meaning of a monument is narrated to its audience.

Collectively, the issues discussed above demonstrate that in order to construct a balanced yet purposeful memorial, certain elements must be acknowledged which play a crucial role in enabling a memorial to achieve its function. To address this, the following section reviews the variety of factors that, in principle, facilitate the creation of a ‘purposeful’ memorial.

### **3.5 Constructs of a Purposeful Memorial**

Throughout the world, societies undertake memorial activities seriously in order to protect and preserve traumatic memories related to painful or difficult events (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007), although differentiating between an effective and non-effective memorial may be purely subjective. Nevertheless, the challenges involved in forming a purposeful memorial may broadly reflect the minds and the intentions of those responsible for the development or stewardship of a memorial. As Hite and Collins (2009)



claim, in a post-conflict society, memorials are all about process, a process which includes, for instance, decisions regarding which groups and stakeholders are involved in the memorial's design and development, who builds and controls it, and who funds it (Hite & Collins, 2009). Moreover, to some extent, this process inevitably involves both anticipated as well as unanticipated political involvement or intervention (Hite & Collins, 2009). In societies with autocratic governments, for example, memorials can be built exactly as the government desires (Stevens, 2015); in contrast, creating a commemorative landscape in capital cities enjoying multicultural democracies becomes more complex as it involves the engagement of various political elites, civil societies, stakeholders, experts in history, design experts, national government agencies, human rights groups and so on. In such circumstances, seeking consensus on, for example, a memorial's layout, location and utilisation (Stevens, 2015) may result in conflict between different groups. In particular, if a memorial is designed to appeal to a specific audience, dissonance may occur. Yet, memorials do become permanent places of remembrance (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018), and so it is vital for a memorial to address persuasive representational aspects of commemoration effectively. Hence, for a memorial to accomplish its purpose, it is important to recognise the elements that contribute to it doing so. Through analysing the literature, the researcher identified and constructed six challenges that enable memorials to achieve its purpose. The following section explores six different dimensions relevant to the development of a 'purposeful' memorial, the first of which is its broad role in reconciliation.

### **3.5.1 Role of Memorials in Reconciliation: An Introduction**

According to Hamber and Wilson (2002), the process of revealing the past through memorialisation allows a nation to develop a shared and common memory, in essence contributing to a sense of unity and reconciliation. Many agree that, in general, reconciliation is a means of improving relations between rival groups, facilitating the post-conflict healing processes between and within nations and peoples (Kriesberg, 2000; Lederach, 2000; Staub, 1998; Taylor et al., 2016; Wissing & Temane, 2014). Bar-Tal and Bennink (2004: 4) define reconciliation as a means of 'restoring friendship and harmony between rival sides after conflict resolution or transforming relations of hostility and resentment to friendly and harmonious one'. They go on to point out that reconciliation has the capacity to erase the divisions amongst individuals and communities. It can take place within divided multicultural societies or within inter-religious conflicts, both during

the conflict and post-conflict times. It can also occur in events such as communal riots or politically motivated violence that, resulting in fatalities and injuries, may lead to accumulated hatred and animosity within societies (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004). For both survivors and victims of political violence, coming to terms with the difficult past has both a social and psychological aspect (Hamber, 2004). However, through the process of engagement in strategies aimed to address the past, memorialisation, in particular, can be used as an instrument to encourage national efforts to 're-establish' society (Hamber, 2004).

In addition, Hamber (2004) argues that for societies to rebuild, additional strategies should be employed to facilitate the delivery of justice. These should include the adoption of mechanisms to address political accountability, assuring non-repetition and ensuring socio-economic equality and dealing with traumatisation, all of which are vital components in the assuring a just and equal process of reconciliation for the groups involved. Nevertheless, reconciliation is a long-term process involving many different factors which are fundamental to its achievement. Brouneus (2008) identifies six such factors, including socio-cultural, religious, psychological, political, economic and juridical factors, all of which are, according to Brouneus (2008), necessary areas in which to engage in in order to achieve a successful reconciliation process. More specifically, such factors are central for reconciliation in so far as they help support national initiatives that acknowledge past grief and function as strategies to help change negative attitudes amongst former adversaries (Brouneus, 2008).

It is evident, therefore, that reconciliation is an important element in bringing about post-conflict sustainable peace (Idris, 2016). Idris (2016) suggests that there are several approaches to achieving reconciliation, such as retributive justice mechanisms or truth commissions. However, amongst these, memorialisation provides a focal point for not only commemorative rituals or symbolic acts; Idris (2016) also holds the view that memorialisation is a particularly effective means of reconciliation given its potential to reach out on both at cultural and a personal level. Memorials for victims who suffered during the conflict 'can serve to acknowledge the suffering of victims, and act as a reminder to every one of the lessons of the past' (Idris, 2016: 11). On the one hand, memorials that commemorate the victims of a particular atrocity may elicit a psychological response or bring benefits to victims' families and communities (Idris, 2016). On the other hand, those memorials which focus on the wider tragedy of a conflict may stimulate reconciliation between divided groups by acknowledging the suffering of

all groups involved (Idris, 2016). Eross (2017) holds a similar position, stating that the principal purpose of any commemoration site is to foster a connection between the past and the present. This then provides a platform which invites related groups to interact in commemoration and, thus, reconciliation. However, Idris (2016) warns that ‘caution’ needs to be taken when engaging in the reconciliation process between conflicting groups, suggesting that due consideration is given in particular to timing. That is, appropriate timing with regards to both its construction and narrative needs to be at the forefront of any memorial if it is to be used as a tool for reconciliation. Specifically, when a memorial is constructed can either encourage reconciliation or can stimulate further conflict (Idris, 2016). Putting it another way, before the reconciliation process can commence, it is necessary to allow a period of healing to take place whereby victims are able to gradually overcome their sense of grief and loss and obtain a more balanced perspective. However, if too much time elapses prior to starting the reconciliation process, a memorial may play a less significant role than intended in that process (Idris, 2016). Indeed, as the next section now discusses, the issue of timing is fundamental to the development of a ‘purposeful’ memorial.

### **3.5.2 Timing**

The creation of memorials reflects ‘the time when they were initiated and the people who built them (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007: 8). As noted above, in the case of violent conflict, sufficient time should be first allowed for, such as transitional justice and truth-telling processes which nations seek to reconcile their societies (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007; Naidu, 2004). Typically, state-funded memorials commemorating national tragedies usually do not emerge until at least five to ten years have passed (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007).

With time, the meaning of a memorial may change, and the site may sometimes be appropriated for various other reasons. Nevertheless, the need for a permanent memorial site is essential for any post-conflict event in order to honour and remember the event and its people. However, the timing of the creation of a memorial in relation to its proximity to the events it commemorates is a key factor; the construction of memorial should not be repressed for too long as, with the passage of time, the survivors and the communities may form their own perspective of the conflict. That is, time might allow them to remember what ‘they’ want about the event (Idris, 2016).

Supporting the perception of chronological distance, Miles (2002) suggests that recent catastrophic events that may be carried in living memory by survivors are deemed perhaps darker than the other events that occurred in the more distant past. Similarly, Stone (2006) argues that the shorter time scale after the event, the heavier the emotions; conversely, the longer the time scale, the lighter the emotions get. In addition, dark events commemorated within a shorter time frame may evoke a greater sense of empathy as they can be validated by the living (Stone, 2006). Thus, the time frame can be highly influential in the way in which a dark site, such as a memorial, is perceived and consumed. However, time not only shapes the meaning of memory; it also plays a role in relation to the planning and decision-making process regarding the funding of a memorial, its location and its physical design, all of which may be lengthy and, indeed, contentious procedures which in themselves further lengthen the process (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007).

Another influential factor is that of authority or ownership. Whoever governs or has control of a memorial will have a controlling hand in these important decisions. Hence, the next element to be discussed is the ownership of memorials, and who governs the narratives of history.

### **3.5.3 Ownership**

The ownership of a memorial is considered an essential issue (Ashworth, 2002). In the case of conflicts which have affected the whole nation, memorials sponsored by the state endow the event and its victims with national recognition and legitimacy. Moreover, with state / nation-sanctioned memorials, relevant stakeholder groups such as charities, architects, social workers and designers become involved almost at the outset and work together in developing, designing and constructing a purposeful memorial (Spangler, 2010). At the same time, when the memorial's development is driven by state / nation, it ties in its citizens to form a symbolic national identity (Buckley-Zistel & Schaefer, 2014).

More generally, at any memorial site, it is the ownership group which allows or denies the participation of other stakeholders in the decision-making process. Thus, ideally, all stakeholders are permitted an active voice in the development of a memorial to the extent that it represents the people. However, where narratives and the knowledge of history are created by official power-laden groups, the representation of such history can be highly selective (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018; Sather-Wagstaff, 2016). As a consequence, memorials may serve the interests of those powerful groups who created them (Sather-Wagstaff, 2016). In other words, if any particular stakeholder group

becomes the sole proprietor of a memorial site, the interpretation of the event it commemorates can be biased.

An example of this is the memorialisation of Mrs Indira Gandhi in New Delhi, India. There are two main memorials in Delhi commemorating Mrs Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India (Chopra, 2010), one denoting her death at the actual site, her home in New Delhi where she was assassinated, the other where she was cremated on the banks of the Yamuna River (Chopra, 2010). Both are public memorials, created by Mrs Gandhi's family with the help of government agencies, each evoking a different perspective on Indira Gandhi in collective memory (Chopra, 2010).

Mrs Gandhi was assassinated on 31 October 1984 at her residence (Tully & Jacob, 1985) in the act of reprisal for her role in ordering the attack on Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a religious fanatic who developed the ideas for a separate nation (Khalistan) for Sikhs (Tully & Jacob, 1985). The military assault on the Golden Temple at Amritsar in 1984, carried out by Indian Army and known as 'Operation Blue-Star', resulted in 493 deaths with a further 1,180 people injured (Aurora, 2015; Malik, 2017). During the assault, the Akal Takht – the centre of the religious authority of Sikkism and, for Sikhs, their most sacred religious place (Mann, 2016) – was severely damaged. This represented the most significant hurt within the Sikh community (Chopra, 2010); in a sense, it created thousands of Sikhs 'orphaned, widowed and...homeless' (Mitta & Phoolka, 2007). It was this ill feeling amongst Sikhs that resulted in Mrs Gandhi's assassination by her own Sikh bodyguards (Chopra, 2010).

Analysing the two memorials dedicated to Mrs Gandhi, Chopra (2010: 128) observes that 'the double memorials for Indira move across an imagined landscape of ritualised remembering and forgetting' with one of the memorials suggesting 'a vulnerable woman slain by those who should have protected her, but also a transformation of the feminine 'in danger' to a regenerative and compelling mother, revitalised through the power of memory'. Chopra (2010: 128) goes on to explain that 'opposition between violent end and peaceful resolution are split over the two memorials; it is at the domestic site that Operation Bluestar remains the unstated'. This illustrates the failure to explain the cause of her death; the reasons are not explained, denying reconciliation as both memorials commemorate only the person and not the event that Sikhs hold her accountable for.

The 'owners' of a memorial are not only accountable for finalising its interpretation or authorising money for the memorial site. They also play a crucial role

by establishing the foundations for the future meaning or significance of the event it commemorates. Thus, as in the case of the Gandhi memorial discussed above, first, it has proved to be unsuccessful in providing any sort of reconciliation amongst relevant groups, failing as it does to welcome survivors of Operation Bluestar. Second, it overlooks the background events leading up to the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, hiding as much as is revealed by excluding the histories of Sikhs.

Generally, however, memorial sites may be considered stagnant places for people's contemplation, and the meaning of a memorial site is intended to change with time. As Spangler (2010: 76) states, 'ownership groups can set the foundation for meaning, but they cannot control it forever'. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the highly bureaucratic processes by which memorials are constructed constrain the way the story can be told (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018); history may be narrated in a controlled and selective way. Hence, another important element is memorial design, as it is through the design of a memorial that history is represented.

#### **3.5.4 The Design Factor**

The challenge of establishing a memorial lies not only in facilitating its role in reconciliation (as discussed above) and in commemorating the dead but also, for architects, civil actors and policymakers, in designing it appropriately according to its intended purpose (Moore, 2009: 47). Putting it another way, the process involved in developing and shaping a memorial is significant as its design and appearance help to connect its audience with the event. Memorials are physical representations of dark events, people and their experiences (Miles, 2002); they can be looked at or can be touched and, thus, it is the memorial design which allows visitors to share and experience the dark stories it represents. They are, in essence, structures 'that demand answers to charged questions: who should be remembered and how? Which events should be highlighted or disregarded? Should the message be clear, ambiguous or even absent? What, indeed, is its purpose – to mourn, console or propagandise? (Behuniak, 2012: 165). Also, the design of a memorial is, to an extent, a response to these questions.

Stevens and Franck (2015) observe that memorials become spaces of engagement which allow for the commemoration process to take place. Thus, a memorial becomes a space which allows contemplation and reflection. One such example is the Oklahoma City National Memorial. In 1995, two American nationals, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal building (Timothy, 2018), killing 168 men,

women and children. Within hours of the bombing, a temporary memorial had been established around the perimeter of the bomb site (Veil et al., 2011). Cards, flowers, personal notes, key chains and several other personal items soon accumulated on the chain fence and, as Veil et al. (2011: 164) note, the fence became ‘the first public memorial as individuals felt a need to “leave something of oneself” behind at the bomb site’.

Acknowledging the need for a permanent memorial site, a 350-member Memorial Task Force (MTF) was appointed by the then-mayor of Oklahoma City, Ronald J. Norick. This included members of victim’s families, survivors, and volunteers from departments of law, government, mental health, arts, business, fund-raising and communications (Veil et al., 2011).

**Figure 3.3:** The Oklahoma City National Memorial Outdoor Symbolic Memorial



**Source:** Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum (2018)

In less than a year, the MTF collectively approved the project. In a mission statement, it stated that ‘visitors to the memorial should feel, experience and encounter’ (Veil et al., 2011: 165). The resultant Oklahoma City National Memorial Outdoor Symbolic Memorial (Figure 3.3 above) comprises of a field of empty chairs that represent 168 lives lost in the bombing. These are in nine rows, representing each floor of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal

building. It was constructed and was dedicated on 19 April 2000 by the then U.S. President Bill Clinton.

An example of design for remembrance is found in the Field of Empty Chairs located within the footprint of the Murrah Building. Each chair represents an individual who died in the bombing. The 168 chairs are crafted from bronze, glass and stone, and each is inscribed with victim's name symbolising 'the empty chairs at the dinner tables of the victim's families' (Veil et al., 2011: 168). The Field of Empty Chairs signifies 'those lost in a manner that is both solemn and uplifting, as the delicate structures of the chairs memorialise the fallen in a simple and elegant way, without calling to mind the bleak image of gravestones' (Veil et al., 2011: 168). Hence, the memorial design creates an opportunity for visitors to the site to engage in a discourse of renewal. The Field of Empty Chairs displays a powerful, poignant message of the loss of life and how it happened without utilising any visual display. As Marschall (2006: 159) notes more generally, 'many memorials encourage remembrance of the dead or the painful event' through 'narrative' and visual forms 'of the past in an attempt to encourage the viewer to repeat then "live through" the emotional experience'. Yet, those memorials which encourage a greater emotional reliving, recreating the event through visual narratives, can appear lifeless and empty (Veil et al., 2011).

The Oklahoma City National Memorial Outdoor Symbolic Memorial, in addition, is accessible to individuals, allowing them to deal with their previous losses and providing them with space which grants freedom to experience, mourn and release their emotions. The design and the space given to the memorial project gives the memorial its symbolic significance and, thus, this process of shaping the memorial (should) encourage survivors to discover their contested memories related to the past event. It also provides a platform for critical thinking and supports learning and, thus, it 'facilitates ongoing cultural exchange' which is 'likely to advance social reconstruction' (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007: 2). In other words, the design and the practicality of a memorial should be such that it conveys its meaning to the people, while at the same time providing a public space that acts as a platform for social interaction.

However, just as memorial design is crucial to the effectiveness of a memorial, so too is the utilisation of the memorial space of equal importance. As Benton-Short (2006) points out, when looking at the large and complex social, cultural and political values of a memorial, location as well as design is essential for 'decoding' its iconographic images.



Therefore, the importance of the location of a memorial and its accessibility is the focus of the next section.

### **3.5.5 Location and its Accessibility**

According to Harrell (2012), 'We do not heal in isolation but in community'. Locations, where public grieving takes place, are increasingly becoming more important for communities that have experienced collective grief. Acknowledgement of that memory via the mediation of memorial spaces is one way to demonstrate the importance memorials play in the grieving process (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018).

As already noted, memorials are significant symbolic conduits which enable (a) an expression of a version of history and (b) some legitimisation of that history (Foote, 2003). Thus, in order to express that account of history successfully, the geographic setting of a memorial is fundamental in making that memory visible to the public. Scholars such as Foote (2003), Forest et al. (2004), Johnson (2004) and Rose-Redwood (2008) emphasise that geographers and historians have always demonstrated the importance of the landscape of commemoration in reforming the geographies of oblivion and memory. The location of a memorial is generally 'tied to where the event occurred, or the person was born (or died)' (Benton-Short, 2006: 300). As memory begins to take on greater meaning, this results in an increased sense in value for stakeholder groups and also for the nation (Light, 2004). It is, thus, the location of a memorial which provides a glimpse of the memory to its public (Benton-Short, 2006).

Dwyer and Alderman (2008) suggest that landscape and memory are conjointly constitutive of one another, further noting the important role that space plays in the process and politics of collective memory. For instance, the Chattri memorial in Brighton, England, is a memorial commemorating 53 Indian Sikhs and Hindu soldiers who fought for the British Empire during World War I (Ashley, 2016). It is constructed on a site where the bodies of the Indian Soldiers were cremated. Their ashes were collected and scattered in the English Channel, but the permanent Ghat (memorial) was built on a remote location situated on the South Downs above Brighton. It stands isolated and is only accessible by following a walking trail and, as a consequence has shed its past values representing a particular historical period and has taken on new meanings and uses (Ashley, 2016). With a new generation led by Second World War veterans, an annual ceremony of remembering soldiers and their sacrifices has been established. Hence, as Ashley (2016: 558) further notes, this has 'shifted the value of the monument from a very special colonial symbolic

function to a broader-based value as a place for the rituals of commemoration’, thus creating a new heritage for the local minority Asian community in Brighton. This demonstrates the changing values of the memorial resulting from its location and unconventional circumstances, evoking a completely different interpretation of the site.

In terms of accessibility, the memorial to the victims of the 2001 Indian Parliament attack (Figure 3.4 below) in New Delhi is one typical example. A terrorist attack by Pakistani nationals acting under the name of Lashkar E-Taiba attacked the Indian Parliament in 2001. Nine people were killed in the parliament building. Subsequently, a memorial was constructed within the confines of the building, which is the actual site of death. However, this memorial appears to serve only politicians rather than the relatives of the deceased and the public more generally, as evidenced by restricted visitation rights for relatives and others (stringent security measures restrict access to just one day per year). Specifically, while the memorial was built to commemorate the victims, its location is too restrictive to make it a viable memorial for their families to visit.

**Figure 3.4:** Memorial of 2001 Parliament attack inside Indian Parliament, New Delhi



**Source:** NDTV (2011)

This illustrates the key point that accessibility is crucial when establishing a memorial. In order for memorials to function appropriately for the victims and their families, it should

be in a space which needs to be both public and intimate, and in which the process of grieving can take place (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018).

### **3.5.6 Challenges: Dissonance**

When addressing the challenges in establishing memorials, issues of control may result in the re-emergence of historical dissonance and, in some cases, prolonged manifestations of dissonance. Indeed, Charlesworth (1994: 579) notes that ‘the very act of memorialisation, of capturing memory so that we do not forget, can by its exclusivity push aside the claims of others for their own collective rights and identities’.

Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) argue that the past – that is, what has happened, or history – may be subject to a selective approach in the way it is expressed and that heritage – a contemporary product which is shaped from described history – may become dissonant when it offers a selective interpretation of history. They suggest that the formal recognition given to sites of atrocity when marked by the erection of memorials means that such sites often become sites of national heritage. However, when the marked event crosses over a social / cultural divide, dissonance among various groups, such as descendants of victims and perpetrators, may occur. Such groups will inherently have their own interpretation of the event being commemorated and will not necessarily follow or agree with the message established by the site’s interpretation (Turbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Thus, in such instances, a site is liable to fall into the realms of contention and suffer what is referred to as dissonant heritage (Turbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

Ashworth and Hartman (2005: 253) define the term dissonant heritage as a ‘lack of congruence at a particular time or place between people and the heritage with which they identify’. Similarly, Sharpley (2009: 13) implies that ‘dissonant heritage is concerned with the way in which the past, when interpreted or represented as a tourist attraction, may, for particular groups or stakeholders, be distorted, displaced or disinherited’. This notion of tensions caused by opposing groups creates both the opportunity and the probability of potential dissonance among stakeholder as it revives differing memories resulting in different reactions to a memorial’s narrative. Therefore, it can be said that selective or misinterpretation of heritage may result in what Clinton and Singh-Mokha call the Dissonance Heritage Cycle ( see Figure 4.5, in Chapter 4, p. 164).

Dissonance and dissonant heritage are considered in more detail in Chapter 4. For the purposes of the chapter, however, it is now important to discuss the distinctions between memorials and monuments in order to clarify the nuances of the two terms.

### **3.6 The Difference between Memorials and Monuments**

Several scholars, such as Janson (1976), Jenkins (2007), Riegl (1903), Williams (2007), Young (1993), and Zittoun (2004), have attempted to distinguish between memorials and monuments. Some differentiate them based on their political functions, where memorials represent loss and mourning, whilst monuments indicate greatness (Williams, 2007). Conversely, others make more formal distinctions between the two terms. More than a century ago, for example, Riegl (1903: 117) stated that ‘a monument in its oldest and most original sense is a human creation, erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events [...] alive in the mind of future generations’. Janson (1976: 1) further classifies monuments into three categories: ‘funerary monuments, monuments to ideas (e.g. “Liberty”) or events (such as a victory or a peace treaty), and monuments to great men – rulers, military or political heroes, or “cultural heroes” who may be religious reformers, poets, musicians, etc.’. In contrast, Zittoun (2004: 2) defines ‘memorials as places where the need to write a national or community history coincides with the need to confer meaning on one’s life and on death’. Alternatively, Burling (2005: 8) states that whilst ‘monuments are built to help us remember; memorials are about helping us never to forget’. Benton-Short (2006: 299) adds to the discussion by observing that monuments have long been seen as ‘high symbolic signifiers’, whilst Bellentani and Panico (2016: 33), offering a perspective related to dissonance, state that ‘monuments necessarily focus on some histories while obliterating others’.

When considering these various interpretations, however, it is evident that there exist no precise definitions of each term. Rather, interpretations tend to be fluid, depending upon the cultural perspective the writings are drawn from. It is not the purpose here to explore the debates in detail, yet it is important to note that Williams (2007: 8) claims that ‘memorials signify an act of remembrance of a person or an event whereas sculptures or structures are created to memorialise in the form of monuments’.

Based on their generally accepted purpose, many concur that memorials symbolise history, mourning and the deceased. Stubbins (2002) claims that a memorial should cater as ‘national acknowledgement’ as well as educating future generations. However, Ashworth and Hartmann (2005), discussing dark heritage such as the WoT,

explain the role of a memorial in that human emotions should be ‘evoked by the memory of atrocity that renders [a memorial] so effective as an instrument in the pursuit of various political and social goals’ (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005: 3). Yet, Williams (2007: 7) broadens the field of defining memorials away from the politicising aspect to one that views the memorial as ‘an umbrella term for anything that serves in remembrance of a person or event’. Similarly, Bonder (2009: 62) links a memorial to ‘commemoration – something that serves to preserve memory or knowledge of an individual or event, but it also corresponds to memento – something that serves to warn or remind about conduct or future events’.

Thus, memorials enjoy an essential status in presenting a people’s or nation’s history. Moreover, with the purpose of commemorating, memorials attempt to enhance the process of reconciliation by ‘acknowledging aspects of the past’ (Batten, 2009: 88). However, by their very presence, they can (for some) inadvertently represent oppression. For instance, the new Stalin monument in Russia-occupied Crimea has divided the people of Russia. On the one hand, Stalin is for some an iconic figure while, on the other hand, the Stalin era represents one of the dark histories of Russia. As one anonymous Russian critic stated ‘erecting a statue to Stalin in Crimea is like putting one of Hitler up in Israel’ (Goble, 2015). In a similar vein, in 2017, Russian President Vladimir Putin inaugurated the ‘Wall of Grief’, Russia’s first national memorial to the victims of Soviet era of political repression situated in Russia’s capital Moscow. The memorial aims to promote a reconciliation process within Russia but, acknowledging and exposing the dark past by commemorating victims of political repression, the Wall of Grief has ‘angered those who viewed the overall contributions of Stalin and the secret police in a more positive light’ (Forest et al., 2004: 368). Thus, memorials which facilitate reconciliation, promoting forgiveness, can also (sometimes) fuel conflict.

Indeed, where national memorials become a ‘must see’ destination (Batten, 2009), the physical space commemorating conflictual past can act as a reminder which can often activate divisive ideologies among the masses (Jelin, 2007). As Dunkley et al. (2011: 867) point out, the act of commemoration is determined by a moral obligation to remember the dead and also to transmit memory from one generation to another in order to ‘preserve collective group memory’. However, in this context, it is apparent when exploring the concepts of memorials and monuments in India in particular, as the context of this thesis, that there is little evidence of moral obligation to commemorate national events. In order

to demonstrate this point (discussed further in Sections 3.8.4 and 3.8.5 below), it is first necessary to consider the terms ‘memorial’ and ‘monument’ from an Indian perspective.

### 3.7 The Distinction between Monuments and Memorials in India

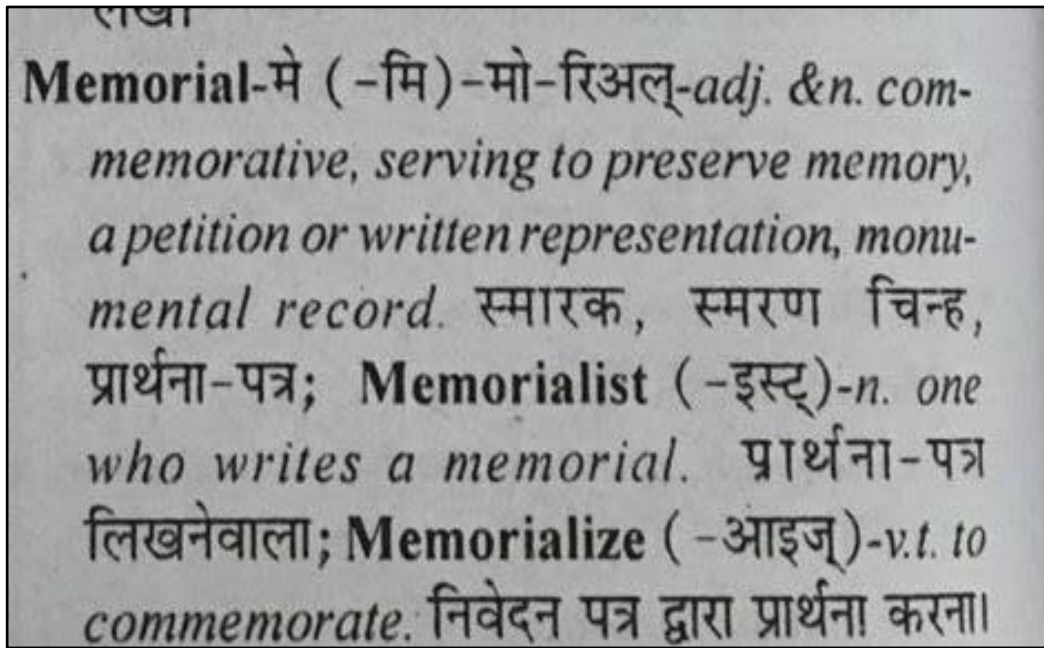
As discussed above, from a Western perspective, the terms memorial and monument can be used subjectively and distinctively. Generally, in West, the word ‘monument’ signifies a structure that commemorates a significant person or an event (Williams, 2007), celebrating great achievements or sacrifice, whereas a ‘memorial’ commemorates loss and trauma (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). Compared to this clear distinction, however, in the Indian context, it is fuzzier. Table 3.1 below summarises the differences between the terms from a Western and Indian perspective.

**Table 3.1:** Interpretation of memorial and monument from Western and Indian perspective

<b>Western Perspective</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Indian Perspective</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Memorial	‘Memorials represent loss and mourning’ (Williams, 2007)	Smarak (Memorial)	‘commemorative, serving to preserve memory’ (Kanwar, 2012)
Monument	‘A monument indicates greatness’ (Williams, 2007).	Smarak (Monument)	‘a memorial’ (Kanwar, 2012)

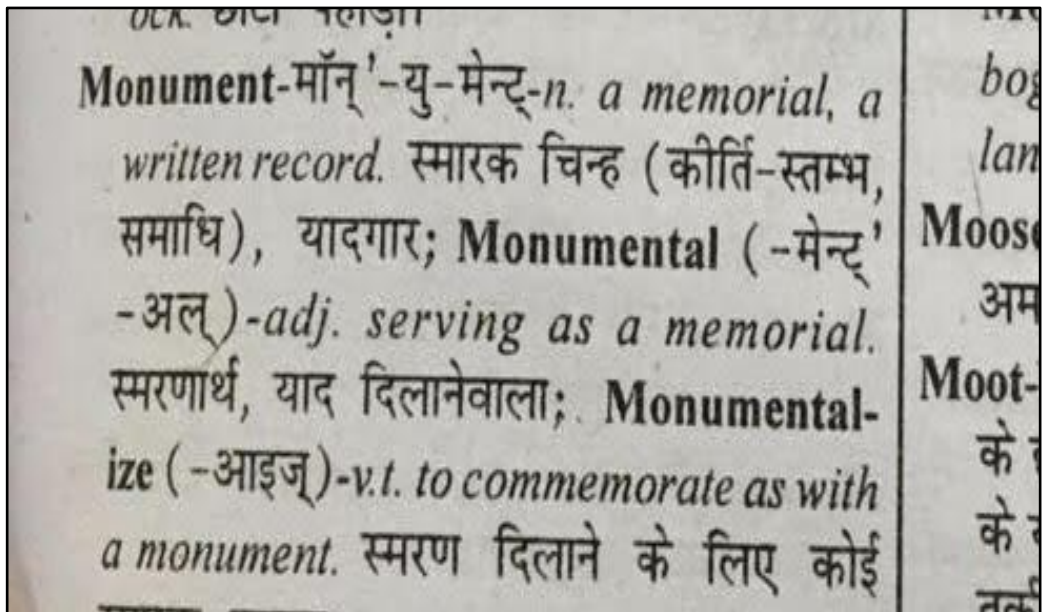
In India and within the Hindi language, the word for both memorial and monument is ‘Smarak.’ However, it becomes more confusing when looking at their meanings. When examining the definition for the term ‘memorial’ in the Hindi dictionary, the term is defined as ‘commemorative, serving ‘to preserve memory’ (Kanwar, 2012) (Figure 3.5), whereas monument is defined as ‘a memorial’ (Kanwar, 2012) (Figure 3.6).

**Figure 3.5:** Screenshot of the definition of the term ‘memorial’ from a Hindi dictionary



Source: Kanwar (2012)

**Figure 3.6:** Screenshot of definition for the term ‘monument’ from a Hindi dictionary



Source: Kanwar (2012)

It is evident, then, that not only do both terms translate into the same word in the Hindi language, but there is also no difference in their meaning. In contrast, in English, the two terms do have their subtle differences depending on the context in which each being used. This highlights a challenge within the Indian literature relating to distinguishing between

memorials and monuments, whilst it should be noted that Indian scholars who write on memorialisation in India tend to consider the topic from a Western perspective related to both terms.

Consequently, the debate surrounding the meaning of ‘monuments’ and ‘memorials’ within India can be confusing; for instance, when ‘Smarak’ is entered into a search engine, the list of sites includes both memorials and monuments. To further illustrate this point, in 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a war memorial in Bhopal by the name of ‘Shaurya Smarak’. However, a monument in the honour of a king belonging to Chauhan dynasty (1178–1192 CE) is also called ‘Prithviraj Smarak’. The ‘Prithviraj Smarak’ sculpture became promoted as a ‘memorial’ to Prithvi Raj III. However, it is not the site of his actual death, nor are his remains interned on that actual site. Hence, the sculpture is, in essence, a monument which signifies his greatness. However, in the Hindi language, it is addressed as ‘Smarak.’

In relation to dark tourism, it is clear that in many cases the interpretation of Indian (dark) sites is undertaken from a Western perspective by Indian writers who persist in using English terms that are conflicting in their definition. For example, Agra Tourism promotes the Taj Mahal as a monument; however, the site includes a grave and commemorates death. It is, hence, in principle a combination of both memorial and monument, although in practice it is unlikely that most visitors to the site are concerned with such semantic distinctions.

### **3.8 Placing the Concept and Role of Memorials within the Context of India**

The above section has highlighted the distinction between the terms memorial and monument. In India, cultural values render this distinction more complex. India is not only divided by its religion and its caste system, but also by its class system (Natrajan, 2005). Thus, if an event occurs and impacts upon lower or middle classes, the scale of the subsequent memorial reflects the status of those impacted upon, reflecting a system which constructs memorials according to the status of the impacted group (see Figures 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.15 and 3.18 as an illustration of class).

In contrast, however, military memorials in India tend to be on a grander scale. Whilst, rather than reflecting on the importance of the event commemorated, the more expensive memorials sometimes appear to emphasise politically influential people. The groundwork for any effective civilian memorial depends on the initial stages, which should incorporate factors such as justice, national recognition of the event and personal



compensation by the government for the victim's losses (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). However, when reflecting on contemporary memorials in India, Chhina and Chhina (2018: 1) note that 'modern India had not developed a unique culture or language of commemoration'.

### **3.8.1 India's Memorials: A Brief History**

As noted in its introduction, the overall purpose of this chapter is to explore critically the contemporary role of memorials in Indian culture; however, the concept of memorialisation is traceable back to early civilisations in India. The tradition of having memorial temples in India is evident in several ancient transcripts from the early civilisation of Harappan / Ancient India. The Harappan civilisation has its roots in 2500 BC (Higham, 2014) and several sites excavated by archaeologists reveal evidence of temple memorials (Gaur & Tripathi, 2007). With the spread of the Mughal empire (from early sixteenth to the mid-nineteen centuries) over South Asia, more sophisticated and larger tombs and memorials were constructed, mainly in Delhi and Agra, for example the Humayun Tomb and the Taj Mahal are the most famous, both being UNESCO sites (UNESCO, 2018) and amongst the most visited sites in India. The Taj Mahal, which is arguably symbolic of India's heritage, was commissioned in 1632 in the memory of Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan. This grand white marble building in Agra attracts around 7 to 8 million domestic visitors annually, with overseas tourists numbering 0.8 million (Tajmahal, 2017).

After the end of Mughal rule, the British Crown (1858-1947), following in the footsteps of the East Indian Company (1757-1858), introduced the custom of public memorialisation, constructing memorials, sculptures and public buildings in India to honour royalty and civil servants (Belli, 2014), such as the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata, India Gate in New Delhi and the Gateway of India in Mumbai, along with many other less distinguished memorials. All of these continue to act as major tourist attractions and are considered a part of India's rich heritage.

Following Indian independence in 1947, however, memorials commemorating revolutionaries and political figures who fought for independence became a more prominent theme within the memorialisation landscape in India, in so doing feeding India's national pride (Muthe, 2016). Indeed, following independence, public buildings were renamed (Belli, 2014) and many colonial-era statues were removed to be replaced with memorials honouring freedom fighters such as the Hussainiwala National Martyrs,

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru. In particular, the Raj Ghat memorial was built in the capital, New Delhi for Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. This post-colonial process of memorialisation has played a significant role in establishing the role and value of memorials to Indians in contemporary India.

Thus, India has had a history of memorialisation for more than 2000 years. Post-independence India has, however, been confronted with border instability, civil disturbances and industrial accidents which, collectively have influenced an evolution in the practice of memorial construction and civil commemoration. Table 3.2 below highlights those memorials commissioned by the state to commemorate significant events since Independence. The table is divided into five columns: typology; year; significant dark events in post-1947 independence Indian history to date; the number of deaths; and, the memorials commemorating those events. The categories in the table were formulated by the author by adapting themes from the literature from existing research. However, in the last category, 'political figures' in the table do not belong to any event, highlighting the significant role of political will and influence in commemorating those who were in power.

**Table 3.2:** A chronology by type of India’s memorial past – 1947 to date built by the state

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Number of Deaths</b>	<b>Memorial</b>
<b>Division Trauma</b>				
<b>Mass killing memorials, memorials for disappearance and memorials for Ethnic conflict</b>	1947	Partition of India	1-2 Million	None
<b>War / Battlefield Memorials</b>				
	1962	War with China	3,250	Tawang Memorial Polynational War Memorial Jaswantgarh War Memorial Bomdila Battle Memorial
	1965 1999	War with Pakistan	3000 527	Zojila War Memorial Asafwala War Memorial Victory at Sea Memorial Kargil War Memorial Drass War Memorial
<b>Acts of Mass Massacre / Civil Unrest</b>				
	1969	Gujarat Riots	512	None
	1983	Nellie Massacre	2191	None
	1984	Operation Blue Star	493	None

	1984	Anti – Sikhs Riots	3000	None by Government Wall of Truth by DSGMC
	1985	Gujarat Riots	275	None
	1987	Meerut Riots	346	None
	1989	Bhagalpur Riots	1000+	None
	1990	Hyderabad Riots	200+	None
	1990 - 2017	Ethnic Cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus	399	None
	2002	Gujarat Riots	1044	None
<b>Disaster – Manmade / Natural</b>				
<b>Manmade disaster</b>	1984	Bhopal Gas Tragedy	16,000	None by Government The Statue of Mother & Child by survivor
<b>Natural disaster</b>	1999	Odisha Super Cyclone	10,000	None
<b>Natural disaster</b>	2001	Gujarat Earthquakes	13,000	Smrutivan Memorial Park
<b>Natural disaster</b>	2004	Indian Ocean Tsunami	16,279	Tsunami Memorial Park
<b>Natural disaster</b>	2010	Ladakh Floods	255	None
<b>Natural disaster</b>	2013	North India Floods	5784	None
<b>Manmade disaster</b>	2016	Girish Park Kolkata Flyover Collapse	50+	None

<b>Terrorism Attacks</b>				
	1993	Bombay Bombing	257	Memorial for 1993 bombing
	2001	Indian Parliament Attack	7	2001 Parliament Memorial
	2002	Rafi Ganj Train Wreck	200	None
	2006	Mumbai Serial Train Bombing	209	Memorial at Mahim Railway Station Memorial at Matunga Road Railway Station
	2008	26/11 Mumbai Attacks	171	CST 26/11 Mumbai Terror Attack 26/11 Police memorial
	2015	Manipur Ambush	176	None
<b>Political Figures</b>				
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1948	Mahatma Gandhi	1	Raj Ghat
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1956	Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar	1	Ambedkar Memorial Park Ambedkar Mani mandapam, Chennai Chaitya Bhoomi Rashtriya Dalit Prerna Sthal and Green Garden Namantar Shahid Smarak

				Dr.Ambedkar National Memorial
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1964	Jawaharlal Nehru	1	Shantivan
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1966	Lal Bahadur Shastri	1	Vijay Ghat
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1984	Indira Gandhi	1	Shakti Sthal  Indira Gandhi Memorial Museum  Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1987	Charan Singh	1	Kisan Ghat
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1987	M.G. Ramachandran	1	MGR Memorial
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1991	Rajiv Gandhi	1	Veer Bhoomi
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1994	Giani Zail Singh	1	Ekta Sthal
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1995	Morarji Desai	1	Abhay Ghat
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1998	Gulzarilal Nanda	1	Narayan Ghat
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1999	Shankar Dayal	1	Karma Bhumi

<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	1999	Shankar Dayal Sharma	1	Karma Bhoomi
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2001	Devi Lal	1	Samgharsh Sthal
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2004	P.V. Narasimha Rao	1	P.V Ghat
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2004	Shankarrao Chavan	1	Shankarrao Chavan Memorial
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2012	I.K Gujral	1	Smirit Sthal
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2012	Bal Thackeray	1	Memorial Torch at Shivaji Park Bal Thackeray's Memorial at Kalyan
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2015	Dr APJ Abdul	1	Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Memorial
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2016	Jayaram Jayalalithaa	1	Jayalalitha Memorial
<b>Memorial for political figure</b>	2018	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	1	Sadaiv Atal Memorial

**Source:** Compiled by the author

The above table highlights the common categories of memorials in post-1947 independence India. It focuses on events that occurred post-independence, including those which were violent tragedies which witnessed numerous deaths. These include the Partition of India (1947) which resulted in an estimated maximum number of more than 2 million deaths with a further 14 million people being displaced (Monaco, 2016), as well as wars with other nations, acts of massacre, civil unrest and terrorist attacks. It should be

noted that the figures relating to the number of victims cited in Table 3.2, whilst drawn from a variety of credited sources, are not definitive. In the cases of high numbers of casualties, they are best estimations.

It is evident from Table 3.2 that India honours its 'great men' at war as reflected in its commemoration of its soldiers. However, remembering and honouring the nation's ordinary citizens who have died in tragic circumstance has not been a priority for the Indian government. To date, for example, no memorial has been constructed in India to commemorate those who died during Indian partition (Chowdhury & Mandal, 2017). Chowdhury & Mandal (2017) further observe that 'for almost seventy years after this cataclysmic event, no memorial, no designated space, no commemoration of any kind had been established'.

In contrast, other countries which fought for and gained independence typically pay respect to their common citizens who suffered through memorials (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). For instance, the National Heroes Acre in Harare, Zimbabwe, is a national monument that commemorates those people who lost their lives fighting for their independence. Yet, India has failed to identify and honour such people who, in large numbers, fought and lost their lives during India's independence movement in the mid-twentieth century.

Unlike the tragedy of partition, however, the Indian government has commemorated its soldiers at war with China and Pakistan. Pandit (2018) notes that the Amar Jawan Jyoti (Flame of the Immortal Soldier) which commemorates the 3,843 Indian soldiers who died in Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 while liberating Bangladesh, was constructed under the arch of India Gate. Quite adjacent to Indian Gate, another much awaited memorial has come up to honour soldiers of war. However, it took seven decades for India to commemorate its soldiers who laid down their lives in war and operations since independence, at National War Memorial in New Delhi which has been inaugurated in February 2019 (India Today, 2019).

Barsalou and Baxter (2007: 7) argue that, generally, 'memorials are used to promote a new, multicultural national identity after the conflict has ended and a democratic transition is underway'. However, when looking at the events and acts of massacre and civil unrest listed in Table 3.2 above, it is notable that very few national memorials have been established by the Indian government to commemorate and honour its citizens. The question to be asked is: does this reflect the (unlikely) argument that memorials cost more than an emerging nation such as India should be seen to be spending,



or does it (more likely) reflect a class-conscious and inward-looking elite focused on promoting their signatures on posterity?

### **3.8.2 Politician's Love for Memorials and Statues**

When analysing contemporary memorials in India, one genre above all seems to dominate the Indian memorial landscape, namely, memorials created to remember and commemorate the political elite. Almost every influential political figure, whether regional or national, has had a memorial established to their honour, either during their life or following their death. This trend can be traced back to the time of independence, commencing with the commemoration of India's leading independence activist, Mahatma Gandhi. Subsequently, it has become a tradition whereby all ex-Prime Ministers, ex-Presidents and Vice-Presidents of India are honoured after death with a memorial. For Prime Ministers and Presidents, memorials are built in the central areas of the capital New Delhi, in the same location as where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated: 'Raj Ghat.' Clustering these leaders' memorials within such a setting signifies their symbolic standing as national politicians, particularly through the association of their memorials been in close proximity to that of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. Similarly, chief ministers (those who are elected and serve as head of a state) will have memorials erected within the capital of the state they represent, thereby serving two key purposes: (i) re-enforcing their own status and (ii) re-enforcing their political party's importance to the electorate. In short, such memorials in India are substantially politicised.

The desire for political remembrance through memorialisation can be seen in the case of Rajiv Gandhi. On his death, the Gandhi family, in a quest for more land for the memorial to him, demolished 1,000 'jhuggis' (huts) overnight with the help of government agencies, instantly displacing around 8,000 people (Kidwai, 2018). Thus, as Kidwai (2018) comments, these political motivated memorials, while elegantly constructed by the government in the name of building a national identity, are constructed not only at great financial cost but also great social cost for which the poor seem to be increasingly paying the price (Kidwai, 2018).

Yet, as previously discussed, memorialisation is a highly politicised practice reflecting the will of those who are and were in power (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007), a phenomenon that is particularly evident in India. One powerful example is the Mayawati das Memorials. Mayawati das, an Indian scheduled caste politician (the lowest caste in Hinduism, also known as untouchables), served as a chief minister (from 2007-2012) of

the state of Uttar Pradesh (Khound, 2017). According to a report in the Indian Express newspaper (Verma, 2012), Mayawati has spent approximately 50 Billion (Rs 5,919 Indian crore rupees) of public funds on building memorials and memorial parks to herself and other Dalit (Dalit is another word for scheduled caste) politicians during her tenure (Verma, 2012). Of all the memorials, of which ‘The Ambedkar Memorial Park,’ which alone cost 7 Billion Indian Rupees (The Economic Times, 2008), were constructed under her supervision. Opened in 2008, the Ambedkar Memorial (Figure 3.7 below) comprises memorial statues and parks spread over a 38-hectare site and includes the enormous sculptures of 62 elephants carved out of sandstone, white granite and marble (Figure 3.8 below), as well as more than 60 life-sized icons of various Dalit leaders and herself (Sharma, 2008).

**Figure 3.7:** The Ambedkar Memorial park, inaugurated by Mayawati Das in 2008



**Source:** Trell (2019)

**Figure 3.8:** The main entrance to the Ambedkar Memorial is guarded by 62 white granite and marble carved life-size elephants, which are located in a row on both sides of the entrance way



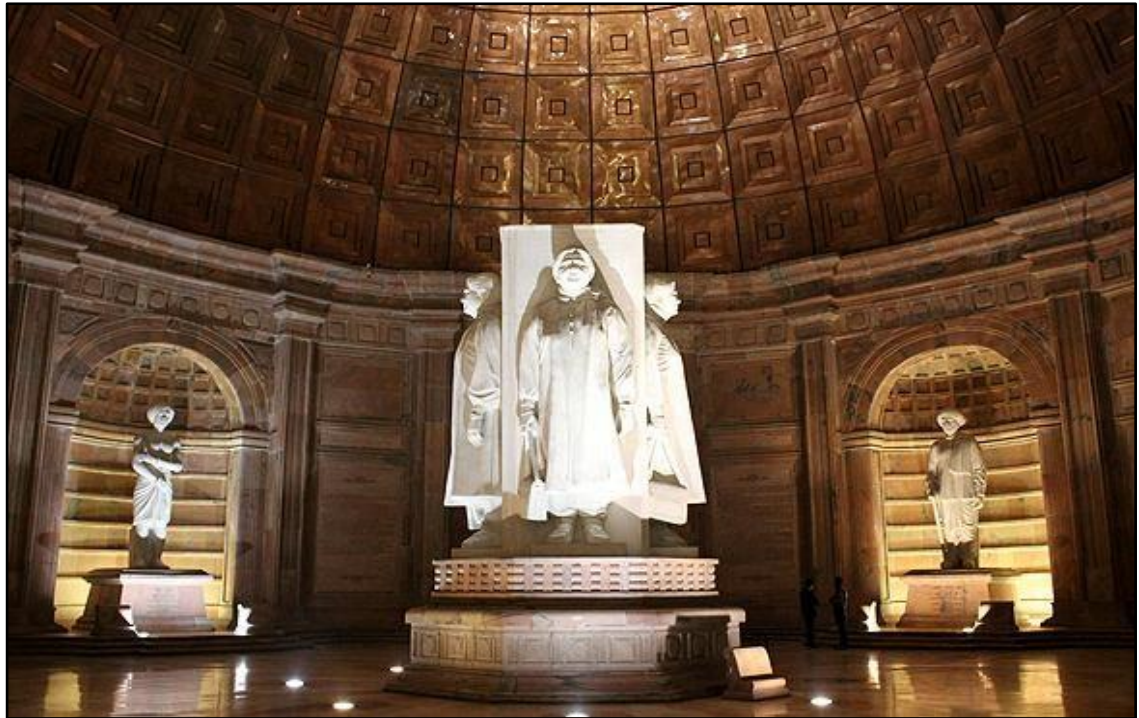
**Source:** India Today (2019a)

The main memorial building of the Ambedkar Memorial Park comprises not only a statue of Ambedkar (a social reformer and politician who fought for the rights of ‘untouchables’ in India) but also 12 huge statues representing other leaders (Sharma, 2011).

From a positive perspective, with its lavish landscape and large collection of memorials, ‘by reclaiming public spaces through Dalit symbols and iconography, Mayawati is not only asserting Dalit identity but also building collective memory, instilling pride in their past, and helping them gain self-respect’ (Sinha & Kant, 2015: 45).

However, when examining the Ambedkar Memorial, direct parallels can be made between the memorial and Mayawati das, positioning herself as an iconic and symbolised leader of the Dalit classes. In the memorial, the four colossal effigies of Mayawati (Figure 3.9 below) depict her with her signature handbag in a structure comprising two clusters of four statues standing back to back, built under a dome. It is an imposing sight, sitting in the middle of the dome and surrounded by other miniature statues of India’s famous social reformers (Arya, 2017).

**Figure 3.9:** This colossal effigy of Mayawati complete with her signature handbag is in the form of two clusters of four, back to back built under a dome. The Mayawati statue overpowers as it sits in the middle of the dome, which is surrounded by other miniature statues of India's famous social reformers



**Source:** Arya (2017)

**Figure 3.10:** National emblem of India



**Source:** Kala (2010)

It could even be speculated that the style of the statue is designed in such a way as to raise Mayawati to be the highest level in India. The reason for this is that the shape is a direct copy of the emblem of India (Figure 3.10 above) with the four Indian lions replaced with the statues of Mayawati. This could, perhaps, be equated in a Western context to the Archbishop of Canterbury having a statue of himself nailed to a cross.

Traditionally, famous political leaders or social reformers are cast in statues only after their death, as a tribute to their achievements. However, this is not the case with Mayawati Das, although for many of her supporters, the statue symbolises her rags to riches success, while for others it is simply fabricated heritage (Sinha & Kant, 2015). However, the rest of the population is contemptuous with regards to the Ambedkar Memorial. As Saeed (2014: 6) notes, ‘she wasted huge amounts of money on installing statues of Dalit leaders and herself as well as of elephants — the election symbol of BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) — at public places instead of spending on the welfare of the Dalit’s’. Khan (2012) similarly argues that ‘statues built in honour of India’s self-styled Dalit queen’ give rise to political scandal, while Sinha and Kant (2015: 56) claim that Mayawati abused her power by diverting state funds, ‘pushing the state institutions into service, and providing building contracts to Dalits’, which are illegal acts. At the same time, this appropriation of public space and of a collective memory for all Indians, not just scheduled castes, portrays a segmented, fractured Indian polity (Sinha & Kant, 2015), brought about by the self-interest of such individuals who attempt to consolidate their political power and influence through their urge to self-promote into Indian history for posterity.

Clearly, then, the Ambedkar Memorial is a highly politicised memorial; it is, as Sinha and Kant (2015: 43) observe ‘an expression of the political ideology’ of the respective political party ‘seeking to fabricate heritage for the historically disenfranchised Dalit community’. They go on to argue that the Ambedkar Memorial is ‘suggestive of power through monumental scale, visibility through prominent locations, use of expensive building materials and spectacular effect, and control over access’ (Sinha & Kant, 2015: 43).

This desire for political memorials may seem pragmatic to Indian political leaders but, when it comes to commemorating a specific type of violence and honouring those killed in the conflict, a significant void is in evidence. As already suggested Indians have struggled for centuries to have mass atrocities formally and eternally memorialised (Muthe, 2016), yet the Government’s perspective on memorialisation focuses on either

the politician(s) whom they believe should be remembered, or as a potential platform for political gain. This explains the upcoming 'Shiv Smarak' memorial in India, which will cost the country a reported 530 million dollars (36 billion rupees) (ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2016). The memorial, which is under construction in the Arabian Sea, will be the world's tallest statue (Lakshmi, 2016). According to the Prime Minister of India at the time of writing, Narendra Modi, the statue is being built to honour the medieval warrior king 'Shivaji' and will serve to unite the Indian people by providing a focal point of a shared heritage. However, for many Hindus, 'Shivaji' is portrayed as the ideal Hindu king and regarded as a symbol of Hindutva and Maratha power (Maratha refers to the kingdom founded by the Maratha leader Shivaji) (Jambhulkar & Krishnan, 2015). The Maharashtra government claims this ambitious structure will generate revenue for Mumbai and denies that the memorial is being used as a political stunt to help elevate the city of Mumbai above New Delhi as India's financial capital (Benwal, 2017). Generally, however, people have opposed the construction of the Shiv Smarak memorial by filing a petition against it. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that it will have the potential to stimulate economic benefits for the city by adding to its tourist product portfolio.

Hence, the heavily politicised nature of many of India's memorials not only challenges public memory but is also evidence of the politicisation of the country's history. Moreover, this process is clearly of political advantage to the ruling classes. With this dominance of politics over memorials in India, then, the question to be asked is: does the government pay equal attention to remembering and honouring difficult events in India's history or, conversely, does it try to render such events invisible to its public? The following section will now discuss the concept of contemporary memorials in India and how governments attempted to address this question.

### **3.8.3 Contemporary Concepts of Memorials in India**

Honouring and remembering an individual's death, particularly if killed in a violent struggle, is as prevalent as the pressure to repress those painful memories (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). Yet, the impact of memorial projects at a national level may contribute to social reconstruction by allowing victims and community members to engage in truth-telling and to examine the past as a basis for reconciliation. However, since independence, India has been reluctant to publicise cases of conflicts and violence. This point has also been highlighted by India's current Prime Minister who recently stated that: 'Past governments did not build memorials; God chose me for that noble task' (The Indian

Express, 2018). Rather, governments past and present have demonstrated political subjectivity in their selection of events chosen for memorialisation, mainly reflecting political alliances or party priorities. This can be illustrated by reference to memorials that have been unveiled since 2014. Since then, the Prime Minister of India has inaugurated three national memorials in India: the Kalam National Memorial in Tamil Nadu (2017), the Dr Ambedkar National Memorial in Delhi (2018) and the National Police Memorial in New Delhi (2018). The Kalam National memorial is built in the memory of the former president of India, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam (Lakshmana, 2017). Whilst, the Dr Ambedkar National Memorial, is in remembrance of the Dalit leader and social reformer Babasaheb Ambedkar (Dipananda, 2018). Whilst these two memorials represent political leaders, the National Police Memorial and museum commemorates 34,844 police officers who have died in the line of duty since India's Independence (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2018). And unlike the memorials dedicated to politicians, the National Police Memorial has been constructed as a part memorial, part museum complex, the first such complex dedicated to India's police force (Nair, 2018). However, its inauguration ceremony was appropriated for political purposes by the Prime Minister who took the opportunity to accuse the Congress opposition party of delaying the memorial's construction by stating that: 'Had the earlier government so wanted, the memorial would have been built several years ago..... Why it took 70 years after Independence to get the memorial into reality?' (India Today, 2018), referring to the fact that the Congress Party had ruled India for around 49 years prior to the current BJP term in office (Prime Minister's Office, 2019).

The points raised above, serve to illustrate that when it comes to interpreting these particular events, the narration and legal accountability processes tend to favour the sitting party or the Indian political system in general. To date, the Indian Government has tended to adopt the position of the victim of agitation rather than the catalyst of public malcontent. Thus, the particular events commemorated on a national level (see Table 3.2 above) have tended to be war-related, with memorials dedicated to soldiers killed in battles with China (1962) and Pakistan (1965, 1999). Moreover, the commemoration aspect of the memorial seems to be one of construction rather than active official visitation or promotion.

Furthermore, memorials to military events in India are 'inadequate in their purpose' (Chhina & Chhina, 2018: 7). More specifically, reflecting on Indian war memorials, Chhina and Chhina (2018) state that unlike other war memorials, such as those

in Europe which serve as sites for public and private commemoration, those in India lack the facility of space and, thus become non-purposeful. For instance, the Chandigarh War Memorial (Figure 3.11 below), is situated in the Bougainvillea Garden in Chandigarh and is, perhaps, the most prominent war memorial in India (Chandigarh Tourism, 2006). The memorial commemorates 8459 Indians who served in the Army Air Force and Navy since independence in 1947.

**Figure 3.11:** Chandigarh War Memorial



**Source:** Chandigarh City (2019)

It only commemorates soldiers, airmen and sailors from the states of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Union Territory of Chandigarh (Chandigarh Tourism, 2006), although, it was built and paid for by Chandigarh Administration and India's leading newspaper 'Indian Express' (Dutta, 2016). Chandigarh promotes its war memorial as one of its leading tourism destinations and also contributes towards the commemoration process. However, it lacks sufficient public space, despite being situated inside a public garden. As Dutta (2016: 35) points out, the problem with the Chandigarh War Memorial is not its architectural design but its 'lack of interface and interaction of public spaces with masses'. Dutta (2016) goes on to say that the absence of space does not allow people to connect at various levels. Hence, at sites such as this which reflect atrocities of the past, space should not only narrate the event being commemorated but should also allow for reflection and open discussions amongst members of the public.



Another genre of state-sponsored memorials in India are those commemorating terrorist attacks, such as the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in 2008. This attack resulted in the killing of more than 160 people (Lakein, 2018). 26/11 memorial(s) are situated in six different locations across the city including the CST (Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus) railway station; the Oberoi Hotel; the Taj Hotel; Cama Hospital; Nariman House – the Jewish community centre (semi-constructed); and 26/11 (Mumbai) Police memorial in south Mumbai. The two five-star hotels (the Taj and the Oberoi hotel) commemorate those guests and staff who fell victim to the Mumbai attacks, whereas, the Cama Hospital commemorates those victims brought to the hospital during and after attacks. The Nariman House memorial (semi-constructed), inaugurated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, commemorates Jewish community killed in 26/11 (Lakein, 2018). Together, these private organisational memorials can be seen as an attempt by each organisation to model and create a suitable narrative around the killings, thereby maintaining control of the message conveyed to contemporary guests.

However, on a national level, the central memorial for the Mumbai attacks, situated on city's landmark Marine Drive and built by Maharashtra state government, is solely dedicated to the eighteen Mumbai policemen who lost their lives (Bhatt, 2009). In the Kaylan region, the corporation built another martyrs memorial dedicated to five policemen. Both these memorials commemorate only the security and law enforcement officers and do not refer to the civilian loss of life during the attack; as such, they can be seen to raise the status of the officers as representatives of officialdom and victims killed in the service of the public. The public memorial commemorating civilian victims is at CST railway station memorial which, though constructed on the actual site of the mass shooting, commemorates 58 out of the 160 people killed in total (Shinde, 2015). Moreover, the memorial is designed on a smaller scale, and many have criticised what is considered to be its unsuitable location, as it does not offer opportunities for tranquil reflection on the part of victim's families who wish to visit. Specifically, it is located too close to refreshment stalls; people often leave empty drinks cartons (Muthe, 2016). Although, as a state-funded memorial, it does allow public access to a publicly funded memorial. Moreover, in Seaton's terminology (see Chapter 2), it can be seen as a thanatouristic site of actual death and suffering.

In comparison, the Taj Hotel memorial is a much grander (privately funded) memorial. Furthermore, although each memorial is located at an actual place of death and suffering, the Taj Hotel memorial is arguably social class-related in so far as the only

people who have access to it are the hotel's guests who pay room rates far beyond the reach of the common man and woman. This sense of exclusivity is heightened by the fact that the memorial was used as a backdrop for a photo shoot commemorating President Obama's visit to India and America's recognition of the victims of terrorisms (Figure 3.12 and 3.13 below as a comparison), demonstrating that, when backed by influential people, opulence within memorials can be experienced in contemporary India.

**Figure 3.12:** CST 26/11 memorial is located at the actual site of mass death; however, it is a simple memorial, crudely located in a corner between the station entrance and a convenience store



**Source:** Ansari (2010)

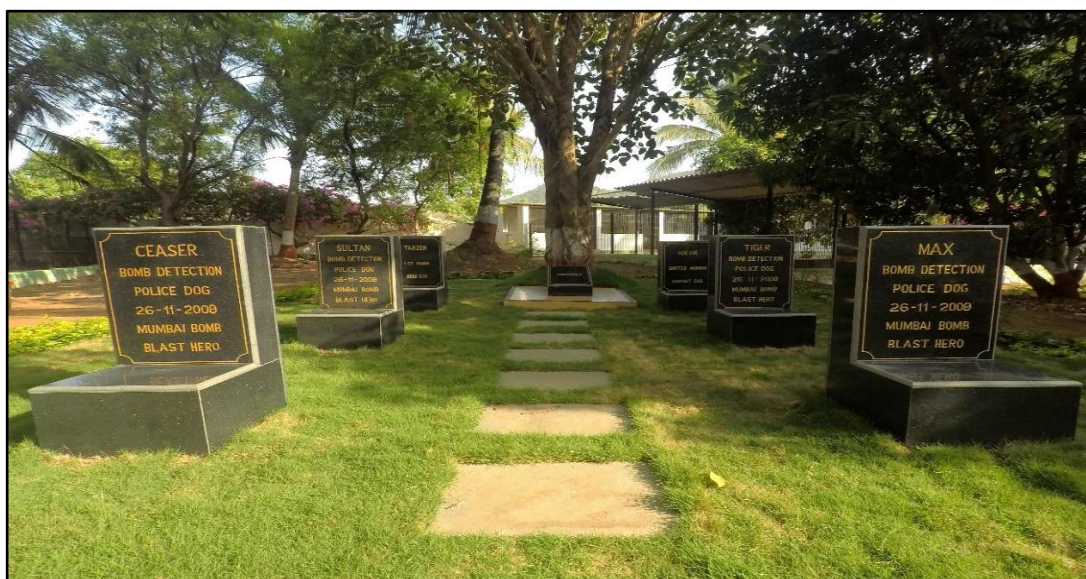
**Figure 3.13:** The Taj Hotel 26/11 memorial. Also, the site of actual death, this site is only chosen by dignitaries and VIP's to pay homage



**Source:** Lippe & Mcgraw (2016)

Curiously, although the state failed to commemorate all victims of 26/11 Mumbai attack at a single, large scale level, it does pay homage to the bomb squad's detection dogs in a memorial in Mumbai (Khandelwal, 2017). The site commemorates all four dogs, with bespoke marble plaques indicating the name and date of death of each dog (Figure 3.14 below).

**Figure 3.14:** Mumbai police bomb squad dog's memorial, in Mumbai, commemorating 26/11 Mumbai attack bomb detection dogs



**Source:** Khandelwal (2017)

This suggests that animals can sometimes be considered more important than humans, although it should be noted that, in India, the connection with some animals is revered.

In summary, then, despite the existence of both private and state-sponsored memorials, there is no main memorial to commemorate the horrific event as a whole. It is also apparent that there is a considerable disparity between the quality of the memorials commemorating law enforcement officer and civilians; that is, those memorials benefitting from political or commercial backing are larger and more opulent. Thus, although it is generally considered important for countries to commemorate and publicly document all those who died in violent events such as the Mumbai attacks, (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007), successive Indian governments have proved reluctant to make decisions about what and what should not be depicted publicly. Hence, the following section considers how India has yet to establish an official position in commemorating its difficult past.

### **3.8.4 The Vacant Space for Memorials in India**

Nations around the world commemorate difficult history through memorials to citizens who, for whatever reason, have sacrificed their lives for their country (Charlesworth, 1994). Such difficult and often complex heritage may be hard to present at a national level, yet it is an utmost necessity to preserve the memories of painful pasts and to honour those who suffered so that history does not repeat itself (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). In India, however, where memorials and monuments are scattered all over the country, only particular events are endowed with national significance.

For example, the partition of India in 1947, almost after two centuries of the British Raj, created two separate nations (Khan, 2017), one for Muslims (originally East and West Pakistan) and one for the Hindus. The allegedly ill-conceived plans for partition, created by Cyril Radcliffe (Chester, 2017), resulted in the deaths of around two million people and the displacement of a further 14 million people (Chowdhury & Mandal, 2017). However, although the event profoundly re-shaped the Indian subcontinent socially and politically, no memorial has yet been established to commemorate the tragedy (Greenberg, 2005; Barsalou & Baxter, 2007), a notable omission given the significant position of partition in the collective consciousness of Indians (Raychaudhuri, 2012). Only in 2016, did India's first partition 'museum' open its door to the public in Amritsar, Punjab (Jain, 2017); that is, it took nearly 70 years to showcase the suffering caused by partition in galleries featuring photographs and personal items donated by the victims.

The museum was built by the Arts and Cultural Heritage Trust (TAACHT), which works as a non-profit organisation, with the help of public donations (Partition Museum, 2016). The only contribution of the Punjab Government was the land on which to build it. In criticising the lack of a national memorial, the head of the Partition Museum has stated that 'If you look at any other country in the world, they have all memorialised the experiences that have defined and shaped them' (Jain, 2017). Nevertheless, as a dark tourism site, the museum attracts a large number of visitors, including both survivors and international tourists (Jain, 2017); it has also kept its entrance fee relatively low in order to attract more domestic tourists from all castes and backgrounds of society.

Since independence in 1947, India has suffered from both internal and external unrests and disputes. The northern state of Kashmir, for example, has continued to be ensnared in conflict with Pakistan and has been a frequent victim of terrorist activities, with more than 100,000 people estimated to have been killed since the 1989 riots (Tribune, 2011). Mumbai too has been prone to terrorist attacks, from serial blasts in 1993, car bombing in 2003 and a series of seven train bombings in 2006 to the previously discussed 26/11 Mumbai terror attack in 2008, all have claimed significant numbers of civilians lives, yet memorials commemorating the civilian victims of these attacks are either absent or are in a bad state of neglected.

Similarly, the Bhopal Gas tragedy in 1984, in which over 16,000 people died in an accidental release of 40 tons of Methyl-Isocyanate (MIC) gas, is regarded as one of the world's most catastrophic industrial disasters (Eckerman, 2005). It is believed that more than 500,000 people suffered from life-threatening injuries, and there are fears that the coming generation may well suffer from birth abnormalities (Mishra et al., 2009). Although more than 32 years have passed since the Bhopal tragedy, there has been no official national memorial commissioned by the government to commemorate its victims (Sharma, 2014), even though survivors demanded a memorial and a national day of remembrance. Consequently, the survivors of the tragedy have resorted to developing and funding their own way of commemorating the event. Some took the art of graffiti to the walls of the Union Carbide factory, while others, such as Ruth Waterman, a Dutch Holocaust survivor, sculpted the first and the only public memorial known as 'The Statue of Mother and Child' (D'souza, 2017) (Figure 3.15 below). Constructed outside the Union Carbide factory, it displays the message 'No Hiroshima, No Bhopal, we want to live' (Figure 3.16 below). However, as there is no formal stewardship of the memorial, its dedication plaque has fallen into a poor state of repair.

In 2012, a trust by the name of ‘Remember Bhopal’ was formed by survivors and activists who are still fighting for justice of Bhopal tragedy. Their official website discloses how the government failed in this mission:

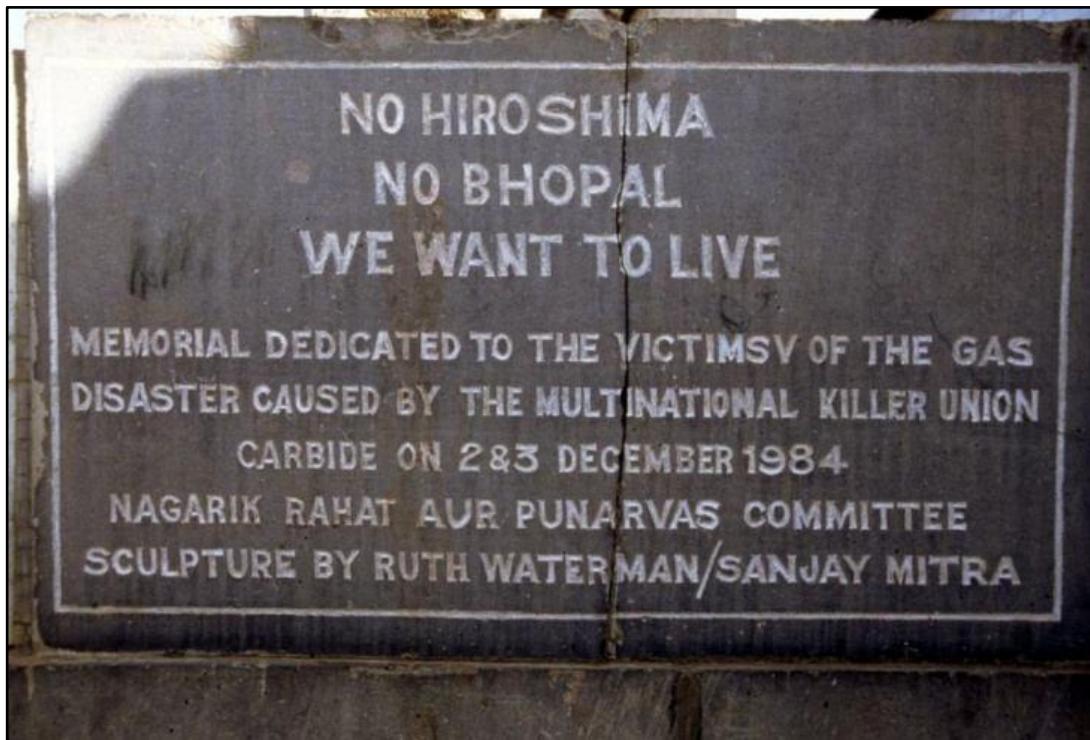
‘So far, the Indian State has done little beyond the ritual exercises to remember Bhopal or apply its lessons to avoid similar disasters. The government has shown little regard for survivors longstanding demand for a national day of remembrance’ (Remember Bhopal Trust, 2015).

**Figure 3.15:** The only public memorial to the Bhopal tragedy is ‘The Statue of Mother and Child’ sculpted by Ruth Waterman. Protesters surround the memorial demanding justice



**Source:** Mukherjee (2018)

**Figure 3.16:** Message from the survivors of the Bhopal Gas tragedy. The crack in the marble depicts the desertion of the memorial by its people



**Source:** Rai (2016)

Demands for a memorial were made immediately after the disaster and have been echoed by members of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly at various occasions ever since (Remember Bhopal Trust, 2015). In 1987, it was proposed that a state memorial be built at nearby Idgah hills, but no concrete action followed. Subsequently, in 1996, it was suggested that a memorial should be located within the Union Carbide factory premises and the state government finally took a decision to build a memorial on 1st December 2004 (Remember Bhopal Trust, 2015). A proposal was submitted to the national government in December 2005 to construct a memorial at the cost of Rs. 70 crores (£790,111 according to 03/01/2019 currency rate). The online report published by the Remember Bhopal Trust (2015) further stated that ‘the Planning Commission then approved one-off additional central assistance of Rs 10 crore to be provided during 2006-07 to the Madhya Pradesh government which, in 2005, had organised a nationwide competition for the design of the memorial. A New Delhi-based architect, Space Matters, won the contract to build the memorial and give a complete makeover to the factory site. This involved opening the contaminated site to the public on the ‘25th anniversary without proper clean up’ (Remember Bhopal Trust, 2015). However, survivors have resisted the government’s attempts to symbolically sanitise the contaminated Carbide

factory site, claiming the government has no moral right to build the memorial. Hence, they decided to set up their own people's museum to demonstrate the kind of museum they want to have (Remember Bhopal Trust, 2015). The 'Remember Bhopal' website also reveals the role played by the Indian Ministry of Tourism, which had plans to build a National Amusement Park at the Union Carbide factory itself. It was only when survivors voiced their disapproval in Bhopal, protesting against the move, that the Ministry of Tourism sought alternative other options (Remember Bhopal Trust, 2015).

This highlights how successive Indian governments have failed to act as a pivotal mediator to deliver reconciliation to the Bhopal tragedy's victims and its survivors. Just as it took some 33 years to build the WoT, some 33 years elapsed before the Madhya Pradesh government announced their plans in 2016 to build a memorial for world's worst industrial disaster (Dangwal, 2016). However, there is still no evidence of construction.

More generally, it is apparent that successive Indian governments have been prejudiced towards the type of memorials to be constructed in contemporary India. It is also evident that Indian governments have failed to recognise and commemorate atrocities and conflicts of the past at the national level, pointing to the fractured structure of the concept of memorialisation within India.

### **3.8.5 A Fractured System of Memorialisation in India**

Barsalou and Baxter (2007: 8) observe that:

Regardless of what type of conflict a society experiences – a civil war, a war between states, genocide or other conflicts – the urge to publicly document who died, by what means, and why appears to be nearly universal. Societies want to be able to say definitely how many died and under what circumstances.

Nevertheless, constructing memorials can take time owing to costs, the process of consultation and design, and the political component. However, to help repair societies that have suffered from violent conflicts, it is necessary for any country to address those conflicts at a national level and provide a platform for public mourning. As Friedrich and Stone (2018: 263) note, for example, 'sites dealing with the extreme trauma and pain of genocide should represent a dignified public space of mourning and remembrance for survivors and victims'. Such sites should be spaces that facilitate putting the wrongs of the past right and making perpetrators accountable whilst, simultaneously, offering the



potential for peacebuilding initiatives (Buckley-Zistel & Schaefer, 2014). However, although dark tourism may play a significant role in post-conflict sites, a major challenge is that it can become an important yet ethically burdened phenomenon; that is, dark tourism sites influenced by political ideologies often become intertwined with ideological interpretation and meaning (Stone et al., 2018). Nevertheless, dark tourism may contribute to reconciliation and the rebuilding of societies.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, reconciliation is a ‘multilevel process that involves national-level responsibility but also requires coordination and a holistic approach to promote social reconstruction at many levels of society’ (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007: 5). It also becomes more achievable, if numerous processes involving social, economic, political and legal issues function collectively, whilst truth-telling and justice (holding perpetrators into account) are deemed critical components of reconciliation (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). Both, if achieved at the national level, not only allow the public to have a better understanding of the conflict but also generate a momentum to remember and honour the dead (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). They endow the event with national identity and provides a platform for the event to be worth memorialising (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018).

Memorials and transitional justice have their own potential social and political challenges, yet the need to remember and commemorate is vital to any nation for pragmatic social reconstruction. However, as already noted, national memorial projects in India commemorating either mass killings, civil unrest or ethnic conflict, are notably absent, not least because memorialisation is a highly politicised process in India. Death and tragedy tend only to be marked in memorials for reasons of political expediency or when external authorities are to be blamed for the catastrophe. In contrast, internal disputes and violence between civilians, such as the Nellie Massacre (1983), anti-Sikh riots (1984), Bhagalpur violence (1989) or Gujarat riots (2002), all of which were allegedly either government-fuelled events or the result of failure at official level to stop the uprisings, are not commemorated. Similarly, human-made catastrophes, such as the Bhopal gas tragedy discussed above, are neglected from a commemorative perspective. Yet, such cases of difficult pasts arguably demand not only national memorialisation and recognition but transitional justice (Light & Young, 2015). As Barsalou and Baxter (2007) note, memorialisation and transitional justice should go hand-in-hand, yet in India the government’s role in truth-telling and processing legal accountability remains unresolved, evidenced by continuing for justice (Figure 3.17 below).

Some argue that nations are sometimes hesitant to showcase their difficult history and that a ‘collective amnesia’ may be as prevalent as collective memory (Ashworth, 2008; Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). In such cases, there are typically no intentions to promote those places for (dark) tourism.

**Figure 3.17:** In chronological order, victims demanding justice



(i) Bhopal gas tragedy



(ii) Anti-Sikh Riots



(iii) Gujarat riots

**Source:** (i) King (2014); (ii) Saxena (2016); (iii) Lakhani (2015)

However, where events which are pending transitional justice and where victims still struggle to survive, and if revenue is generated from tourism that does not help its victims, then resentment may be in evidence (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007).

Moreover, it is not only death and suffering from events related to political unrest / violence that are not commemorated in India. Where natural disasters have resulted in mass casualties, again the Indian government rarely recognised or commemorated the victims. For example, memorials to the victims of disasters such as, the Uttarakhand Flash floods in 2013, in which death toll was more than 5000 (Phukan, 2015), or Kashmir floods in 2014, killing more than 500 people, (Phukan, 2015), are none existent. Memorials are considered as a powerful means of narrating history and, hence, they are often selective and controlled. As Dwyer and Alderman (2008: 4) note, ‘memorials typically reflect the values and worldviews of government leaders and members of the dominant class—who else has the social capital to install such costly tokens?’ Hence, those in power tend to eliminate the histories of minority groups or use these histories for selected purposes (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008; Monk, 1992; Peet, 1996). In summary, therefore, it is apparent that the absence of memorials to many tragic events in India reflects the government’s lack of desire or will to commemorate difficult pasts.

### **3.9 Memorials: The UK and India Compared**

It is evident from the preceding discussion that there are significant differences in the way in which Western nations and India view the value or purpose of memorials and memorialisation. In the West, memorials are a (mostly Christian) tradition, often developed by public bodies, as part of a ‘practice of symbolic reparations within a transitional justice framework’ (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018: 88). In India, however, reparation, or healing those affected (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018), is not an apparent consideration on the part of the government when commemorating those affected by conflicts and violence. In India, memorialisation is either politically driven, religiously driven or, in some cases, driven by private or community will, disregarding the reparation and transitional justice process. Thus, in order to understand the ways in which both cultures adopt concepts of memorialisation, it is useful to explore the different perspectives on memorialisation within the UK and India.

Little, if any academic attention has been paid to such a comparison. Nevertheless, adopting a case-study approach reveals distinctions between memorialisation in the two countries. Certainly (and sadly), both India and the United Kingdom are no strangers to acts of terrorism. India has witnessed attacks such as the 11/7 (2006) bombings in Mumbai, which resulted in the deaths of 209 people, known in India as the Mumbai Serial Train Blast (The Hindu, 2015). Similarly, in 2005, London also witnessed an act of terrorism, referred to as 7/7, in which 52 people died, 39 of whom were passengers on the London Underground, and remaining 13 were passengers on a London bus (Mullin, 2018). In both cases, Islamic terrorist organisations were involved. Both events comprised a series of blasts carried out on the city’s public transport system and in both cases, there were multiple casualties; moreover, there are memorials to these in the respective cities.

There are two separate memorials to the 11/7 bombings in the city of Mumbai, one at the Mahim Railway Station and the other at Matunga Road Station. The 11/7 attack consisted of a series of seven bomb blasts in the areas of Matunga, Khar, Mahim, Jogeshwari, Borivali and Mira Road in Mumbai, with all attacks occurring during a period of eleven minutes. Five bombs were located on moving trains while the remaining two exploded at railway stations. With regards to the memorials, that at Mahim Railway Station consists of a shiny black granite plinth with a granite plaque commemorating the event (Figure 3.18A below) which was inaugurated by the then President of India, APJ Abdul Kalam (Ansari, 2010). The other memorial at Matunga Road Station is a simple

plaque fixed to the wall commemorating the victims of the 11/7 blast (Figure 3.18B below).

**Figure 3.18:** Memorials commemorating the 11/ 7 Mumbai serial train blasts in Mumbai at (A) Mahim Railway Station, on a platform, and (B) Matunga Road Station, Plaque fixed to the wall at next to garbage bins



**Source:** Ansari (2010)

Both memorials (Figure 3.18 A and B above) are located at the site of the actual event and sanctioned by the government. Both, however, lack any real presence or interest / support from members of the public and station management and, as a consequence, suffer neglect, as does the memory of the event by those travellers who now use the very infrastructure which was attacked. A report carried out by DNA (an English language newspaper in India) criticised the locations of these memorials, observing that the memorial at the Mahim Railway Station is often disrespected by children as a ‘slide to play on,’ while other passengers use the memorial to rest (Ansari, 2010). The report also argued that the memorial at the Matunga Road Station has become little more than a sideshow of the event, the space it occupies having been taken over as a place to store ‘garbage bins’ (Ansari, 2010). To quote, the report states that the treatment of the commemorative plaque is an ‘insult to the 209 dead and 700 injured, this spot is used as a public spittoon and garbage dump’ (Ansari, 2010).

Conversely, the 7/7 London bombings are commemorated in two memorials, one known as the 7 July Memorial located at the east side of Hyde Park (Figure 3.19A below)

and the other, The Tavistock Square Gardens memorial, which commemorates thirteen people who lost their lives nearby when a bomb was detonated on a bus (Figure 3.19B below).

**Figure 3.19:** Memorials for 7/7 London bombing: (A) The 7 July memorial and (B) memorial 7/7 at Tavistock Square Gardens



**Source:** (A) Fairs (2009)

(B) The Bedford Estates (2018)

It is quite apparent that while the Indian memorials are located within the hectic confines of the railway stations where the event happened, the London memorials are located within a quieter and calmer setting of a park and in a square which is a communal garden environment. Given these distinctive environments in which the memorials are to be found, it can be seen that the London memorials offer the visitor a more private encounter for contemplation. Specifically, for the Tavistock Memorial, the architects came up with the design through working in close cooperation with the bereaved families and in collaboration with the development of the Hyde Park Memorial. The memorial is managed by the 7/7 Tavistock Square Memorial Trust which places the management in private hands. The Trust has two critical objectives; first, ‘to promote human rights, conflict resolution, reconciliation, religious and racial harmony by educating the public in such subjects through the conduit of an annual memorial lecture’ (Tavistock Square Memorial Trust, 2012), and second, to secure the memorial for the 13 victims of the bus bombing. The Hyde Park Memorial comprises 52 stainless steel pillars representing each of the 52 victims. These pillars are grouped together in four clusters which represent each of the four locations of the bombings. Each pillar is unique, reflecting the individuality of each victim. Visitors are free to walk through the memorial and read the inscriptions

upon each pillar which are marked with the date, time and locations of the bombings. The memorial design architects, Carmody Groarke, who were also responsible for the Tavistock Square Memorial, worked in close consultation with the bereaved families and consultants from the Royal Parks and the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) (The Royal Park, 2018). It is a national memorial, constructed and managed by the national government (The Royal Park, 2018).

Unlike the Mumbai memorials, those in London convey a sense of presence and compassion and are constructed and located in a way in order to draw visitors to them. Thus, whilst the memorials in India are located where the atrocities occurred, this does not necessarily make them more fit for purpose. Moreover, the style of the Indian memorials is more akin of a gravestone, whilst those in London appear to be more ‘user-friendly.’ Also, from a political perspective, while the Hyde Park memorial was constructed with public funds, there is no political inference; both the memorials are apolitical. In contrast, the Mahim Railway Station memorial is implicitly political, dominated as it is by a picture of the then Indian President. These differences are summarised in Table 3.3 below.

**Table 3.3:** Differences between the 7/7 (London) and 11/7 (Mumbai) memorials

<b>Applications/purpose of memorial</b>	<b>U.K. 7/7 memorial</b>	<b>India 11/7 memorial</b>
State/Nation Sponsored	✓	✓
Location: Proximity of memorial to the actual event		✓
Design: Presence of memorial	✓	
Space for contemplation	✓	
Quality of construction	✓	
Role as reconciliation	✓	
Political Interference		✓

Different cultures generate different forms of memorials, and different types of events are commemorated in different types of memorials (Foote, 2003). Nonetheless, it is necessary for any nation to address its painful history at a national level by providing places where

their society can focus their remembrance. Muthe (2016: 45) notes that ‘Indians have had to either struggle for years to have mass tragedies formally, physically and permanently memorialised, as in the case of Bhopal gas tragedy or have never had the chance to discuss permanent memorialisation amidst the din of anger and diplomatic discussions after terror strikes’.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence of a shift in attitudes towards memorialisation in India. For instance, relatives of the 2001 Indian Parliament attack have voiced their demands for a separate memorial to be constructed outside the confines of parliament, allowing them access to a focal point for commemoration (Indiatimes, 2013). Equally, in recognition of the people’s desire for the commemoration of those killed in a war and other armed conflicts, the Indian government has after 72 years of sustained pressure established India’s first National War Memorial in New Delhi on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019 (India Today, 2019); in the honour of the 25,942 soldiers killed in conflict post-independence. In addition to the memorial, there is an adjoining National War Museum (India Today, 2019). Although, this memorial is located in close proximity to India Gate which commemorates those Indians soldiers killed in service while India was under British administration, the new National War Memorial is the first truly Indian war memorial built by Indians. In short, while in the past, the development of public memorials in India has been painstakingly slow and fraught with political positioning, times are beginning to change under the driving force of public opinion.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter has established an analytical lens through which the concept and role of memorials in India have been explored. It first examined the literature on memorials in general, defining and considering the role memorials can play in society, such as commemoration and contributing to national memory, national identity and reconciliation. The chapter also reviewed the factors which enable memorials to achieve their purpose, to be ‘purposeful,’ including appropriate positioning and accessibility; effective planning and construction within an appropriate and sensitive post-event timeframe; design that reflects the role of both commemoration and reconciliation; and, effective stewardship of the memorial to ensure its narrative meets the needs of all stakeholders, thereby avoiding dissonance.

In addition, the chapter also discussed the distinctions between the terms memorial and monuments from both Western and Indian perspective. While, in the West,

there is a subtle yet clear difference between the two, in India, the terms appear to be interchangeable. Significantly, within the aim of this thesis, the chapter also sought to address the cultural understandings of memorials and memorialisation in India. In so doing, it revealed that while India has a long tradition of memorialisation, in post-1947 independence India, contemporary practice favours elite-dominated commemoration of political figures past and present, the commemoration of victims of political upheaval, terrorist atrocities and even natural disasters not only remains rare, but where such memorials exist, they are politically and / or commercially motivated and typically are designed and located in such a manner that the broader social objectives of memorialisation cannot be achieved.

Against this background, the next chapter reviews stakeholder groups and the concept of dissonance as a framework for the subsequent analysis of the WoT.



## Chapter 4

### Conceptual and Analytical Framing: Dissonance and Stakeholders

#### 4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the concepts of memorials and memorialisation in contemporary India. In so doing, it revealed significant potential for dissonance to be manifested at sites associated with violence and atrocity, not least because such memorials in India tend to be heavily politicised. In addition to this, it became evident in the chapter that where the stewardship of a memorial presents a contentious narrative, this, in turn, is also liable to create a situation in which dissonance may occur. Building on this introduction to dissonance in Chapter 3, the purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to consider the concept in further detail, relating it in particular to the WoT in New Delhi, the dark tourism / heritage site that is adopted as the case study in this thesis. It then goes on to discuss stakeholders, both conceptually and as specific by identifying groups relevant to the WoT, who might be affected by dissonance at the site.

#### 4.2 Dissonance in Heritage: An Introduction

The concept of dissonance or, more precisely, dissonant heritage, first emerged in the literature around the same time that the concepts of dark tourism and thanatourism were also first proposed. The notion of dark heritage had already been considered in the context of the interpretation of sites of war and conflict, with Uzzell (1989) putting forward the idea of 'hot interpretation' that conveys the true sense or meaning of the event. Subsequently, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), who had previously introduced the concept of dissonance within their analysis of the historic city landscape, published their book *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, coinciding with the publication in the same year of the special issue of the International Journal of Heritage Studies in which the terms dark tourism and thanatourism were first presented to an academic audience (Foley & Lennon, 1996; Seaton, 1996). In so doing, they established an important conceptual framework for understanding how dark sites may be managed or mismanaged, arguing in particular that dissonance is fundamental to

or evident in all forms of dark tourism / heritage which can, thus, can be defined as dissonant heritage (Hartmann, 2014; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

More specifically, they propose that dissonance can be a characteristic of a place that is dependent on its past and the existence of differing social heritage users. By way of illustration, they list three distinctive sources of dissonance: (i) dissonance embedded in commodification; (ii) dissonance embedded in place products; and (iii), dissonance embedded in the context of the message (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). These will be referred to later in this chapter when exploring issues related to stakeholder groups within the conceptual framework of Seaton's (2001) 'heritage force field' model.

Dissonance, then, may be considered a central theme within dark tourism studies as well as a common characteristic of dark tourism sites, particularly those that are susceptible to political influence. As Sharpley (2009: 147) observes, 'tragedies, atrocities and disasters have the potential, through their representation and commemoration, to be exploited not only for commercial gain through tourism but also to convey political messages', leading to questions about who should have the responsibility for interpreting memory and how it should be interpreted (Williams, 2007). Indeed, many, though not all, dark sites may be considered or fall under the umbrella of dissonant heritage (Ashworth & Hartmann 2005; Harvey Lemelin et al., 2013).

In order to define more precisely the concept of dissonant heritage, it is first necessary to understand its constituent elements. Heritage, according to Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996: 6), is broadly 'a product of the present, purposefully developed in response to the current needs or demands for it and shaped by those requirements'. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) argue that dissonance is a feature that is intrinsic to all 'heritage', although the degree to which it is in evidence and the reasons for its occurrence may vary. Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996: 15) point out that 'all heritage is someone else's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's... any creation of heritage from the past disinherits someone else'. However, it is important to note that Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) also argue that in cultures and societies where people are not crucially dependent on each other and where various groups are regarded equals, the dominance of identity-based heritage founded on one group does not necessarily create a sense of personal heritage in others. In other words, such settings within societies do not create a feeling of dissonance within various groups.

Seaton (2001: 125) states that heritage is 'as much a product of present perspectives as past events', while Smith (2006) states that heritage is vital and alive.

Smith (2006: 83) also notes that heritage ‘is something that is done at places, these places become places of heritage both because of the events of meaning making and remembering that occur at them, but also because they lend a sense of occasion and reality to the activities occurring at them.’

Timothy (2018: 382) suggests that ‘heritage comprises elements of the past that we inherit and utilise at present...[it]... lies at the foundation of personal and national identity [causing] ‘societies to coalesce in solidarity or collapse in disunity’. More generally, heritage may be thought of as what is or can be inherited, including a society’s traditions, cultural practices or material features, such as buildings, the emphasis being on a past that still exists in the present. Significantly, however, history and heritage are distinct; that is, heritage is history interpreted according to particular needs and circumstances (Hewison, 1987) and, hence, potentially subject to dissonance.

Thus, Ashworth and Hartmann (2005: 253) claim that the dissonance emerges through the ‘lack of congruence at a particular time or place between people and the heritage with which they identify’. In a similar vein, Smith (2006) states that dissonance occurs when two or more communities or groups generate their own distinctive discourse around a shared cultural heritage landscape or site. Smith (2006: 81) further states that ‘all heritage is uncomfortable to someone, not only because any meaning or message about a heritage place may ‘disinherit’ someone else, but because heritage has a particular power to legitimize – or not – someone’s sense of place and thus their social and cultural experiences and memories’.

Consequently, Sharpley (2009: 13) argues that ‘dissonant heritage is concerned with the way in which the past, when interpreted or represented as a tourist attraction, may, for particular groups or stakeholders, be distorted, displaced or disinherited’; more broadly, Ashworth (2017: 5) states that it is a ‘condition that refers to the discordance or lack of agreement and consistency as to the meaning of heritage’.

There are, according to Ashworth (2017), two principal reasons for the occurrence of dissonance, which are fundamental to the nature of heritage. First, many (dark) tourism landscapes are places consecrated by people or stakeholders who have a particular connection with an identified space or site, giving rise to heritage contestation which, in many instances, may have universal implications. Secondly, dissonance may develop because of the zero-sum character of heritage, which ‘belongs to someone and logically; therefore, not to someone else’ (Ashworth, 2017: 5).

Generally, then, dissonant heritage is based on the assertion that not only is heritage a product of contemporary interpretations which are shaped by the narratives of the history (Ashworth, 2017), but also that these contemporary interpretations of the past contribute to potential discordance as they revive both memories and reactions. Consequently, they stimulate dissonant heritage and, where relevant, may impact negatively on the process of reconciliation. However, Ashworth (2017) also notes that although dissonant heritage can be damaging, it can also be seen as a positive condition as dissonance can be turned around in the productive conception of identity that hinges on the very lack of consistency implicit in the term. Nonetheless, Farmaki and Antoniou (2017: 176) argue that ‘where memories become associated to conflict or events of violence and death, it is likely that narrative discord will arise, as perceptions among members of a society are diverse’.

To summarise, then, dissonant heritage is not only prevalent within the dark tourism phenomenon but also, as Friedrich et al. (2018) observe, dissonance and disharmony are amongst the challenges inherent in the development and management of dark tourism sites of former violence. Yet, as Hartmann (2014) notes, and as with the study of dark tourism more generally, the study of dissonant heritage has, to date, been undertaken from a primarily Western perspective.

#### **4.2.1 Dissonant Heritage: A South Asian Illustration**

Dissonant heritage in a South Asian context can be seen when considering the Indian National Army (INA) memorial in Singapore (Figure 4.1 below). The INA memorial is located within Esplanade Park and, arguably, demonstrates dissonance in its most acute form. The memorial is one of eleven markers of World War II erected in Singapore and was (re)established in 1995 to commemorate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary (Singapore Tourism Board, 2019). The original memorial had been constructed by the Japanese to commemorate the INA role in their struggle to liberate India of colonial control (specifically, British rule) and, as a consequence, was destroyed by the British at the end of the war, the purpose being to erase evidence of the INA and, hence, challenge British rule in India (Singapore Tourism Board, 2019).

For contemporary Indians, the (new) INA memorial represents a phase in India’s past where India was both a colonial state of the British Empire and also a (colonial) state with desires for its own independence. Consequently, the INA memorial offers two perspectives on India’s role in the Second World War and continues to be seen as a

contentious part of India's heritage, reflecting the fact that Indian nationals were, in fact, fighting on both sides, some with the British (the colonial power) and some alongside the Japanese (the potential liberators) (Blackburn, 2009). This conundrum was manifested in Indians fighting Indians, to which the Japanese gave due recognition with the construction of the INA memorial. However, this action was highly politicised as the memorial was initially built in July 18, 1945, just two months before the Japanese surrendered, and could be seen as Japan attempting to prolong the conflict between the INA and the British, encouraging the INA to maintain its struggle for independence and thus, maintaining instability in the region for colonial powers. It was for this reason, referred to above, that Lord Louis Mountbatten, the British commander in the region, ordered the destruction of the INA memorial which he saw as an attempt by the Japanese to stifle reconciliation between the Indian independence movement and the British (Fujitani et al., 2001).

However, in 1995, the memorial was rebuilt in its original location and now serves to commemorate the unknown soldiers of the Indian National Army (Singapore Tourism Board, 2019). Since then, it has served as a focal point for the political elite from India, including the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi (leader of the BJP party in India) and others belonging to the Indian National Congress Party (INC) (Dhar, 2015). This, in itself, raises issues of dissonance as those very soldiers of the INA who fought against British Indian troops are commemorated at the new National War Memorial in India in an attempt to forge a political reconciliation between the two groups. As Singh (2017) notes, the 'INA fought with the army of fascist Japan against the British Indian Army, but within years, both forces were seen to epitomise the highest ideals of patriotism in an independent India'.

**Figure 4.1:** Indian National Army memorial in Singapore



**Source:** Tann (2013)

However, the point to be noted here is that although the Singapore government commemorates the INA, it does not celebrate its role; the INA is barely mentioned in the official Singapore independence history (Lebra, 2008). Moreover, such accounts neglect the role of the INA soldiers fighting for the Japanese forces, under whom the Chinese population of Singapore had experienced great hardship at the hands of the Japanese and their allies (Blackburn, 2000). Hence, a potential political problem arises when the Prime Minister of India and other Indian political dignitaries travel to Singapore and commemorate by laying a wreath at the site of those Indians soldiers who fought with Japanese. Yet, on the other hand, there is no memorial in India which commemorates Indian soldiers, fighting with British in World War II, resulting in many families commemorating the war in private (Gupta, 2017).

The INA memorial, therefore, displays complex dissonance. The site has many stakeholders from India, including, on the one hand, relatives of those who served in the British Indian army and, on the other hand, relatives of those who served in the Indian National Army. In addition, the memorial is located in Singapore whose population suffered under the Japanese occupation and, conceivably, INA aggression. Hence, it embraces many competing histories. Perhaps, for this reason, the Singapore government views the memorial as part of history, not as a focus for commemoration, thus re-

enforcing the point that the heritage (and dissonance) is a product of contemporary interpretations which are shaped by the narratives of the history (Ashworth, 2017). And yet, it also serves to illustrate that while dissonant heritage can be damaging, it can also play a positive role in the creation of identity because both the soldiers who fought for the British and those who fought for independence can equally be seen as the victims of colonialism.

With regards to victims more generally, Ashworth (2002) argues that the dissonance created by atrocity is not only peculiarly intense and lasting but raises particularly complex issues of interpretation for those who associate with victims, perpetrators and observers. Victims may use atrocity heritage for the purposeful nurturing of group unison, place identification or ethical legitimisation (Ashworth, 2002). The memorability of atrocity generates a strong medium for those who distinguish themselves as victims. It is, nevertheless, more challenging to comprehend just why perpetrators would choose atrocity to be memorialised (Ashworth, 2008). Furthermore, Ashworth (2008) notes that perpetrators, whether individuals or nations, would appear to have a clear awareness in evading the making of heritage likely to be decidedly dissonant to them as it could lead to internal problems and external disadvantages and finally states that; ‘those not directly identifying with either victims or perpetrators may argue that they have an interest in memorialisation to prevent the reoccurrence of similar atrocities, inspired by the well-meaning intention that lessons can be learned from the presentation of previous events’ (Ashworth, 2002: 363).

This points to the fact that it is necessary to give recognition to the fact that different perspectives may be held by individual stakeholder groups, all of which may consider that they have an element of ownership over the memorial through the events, they have directly or indirectly experienced. Hence, the following section reviews the concept of stakeholder groups.

### **4.3 Stakeholders: An Overview**

When analysing the key stakeholder groups associated with a memorial site, two significant issues require attention; first, the need to identify stakeholder groups and second, the need to identify the role they play in the development of dark tourist sites. This can be achieved through the application and discussion of Seaton’s (2001) heritage force field model which facilitates the identification of the possible multiplicity of stakeholders involved and their particular interest in given dark tourism / heritage sites.

However, before looking deeper into identifying key stakeholder groups, it is essential to address the question: what or who are stakeholders?

#### **4.3.1 What are Stakeholders**

The term 'stakeholder' was first coined in 1963 by the Stanford Research Institute (a non-profit American independent hub for examining projects for economic development) which defined the term, in a corporate context, as 'those groups without whose support the organisation would cease to exist' (Freeman & Reed, 1983: 89). It was Freeman (1984) who then introduced the theoretical aspects of 'stakeholders' and provided an analysis of stakeholder theory in his book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*. Nonetheless, the concept of stakeholders and stakeholder theory remains confusing and vague (Beach, 2009; Friedman & Miles, 2006; Jones & Wicks, 1999; Miles, 2012).

The foremost problem with stakeholder theory lies in the actual definition of stakeholder. In 1997, for example, Mitchell et al. (1997) identified more than 38 definitions of stakeholders that had been established in the literature whilst, in 2006, Friedman and Miles (2006) revealed 55 definitions and the existence of more than 30 theoretical perspectives on stakeholders. Then in 2008, Laplume et al. (2008) evaluated 179 definitions of stakeholders whilst, more recently, Miles (2012) pointed to a decreasing likelihood of consensus, identifying over 435 various definitions proposed in 493 articles and estimating that a new definition is published every 1.13 articles (Miles, 2012). This lack of definition of the stakeholder concept reflects the complexities related to stakeholder issues, resulting in contention and confusion within the literature and limiting progress in developing stakeholder theory (Beach, 2009).

Generally, however, the term stakeholder has been defined and evaluated from two perspectives: broad and narrow (Freeman & Reed, 1983). The broader perspective acknowledges the nature of the relationship between the stakeholder and the organisation. Therefore, from this perspective, Freeman (1984;2010) defines a stakeholder as a person or a group of people who favour an organisation's objectives. Conversely, from the narrow perspective, definitions are based on any attributes of either the stakeholder or the organisation (Friedman & Miles, 2006). Regardless of the different aspects of the context applied, however, the stakeholder approach is theoretically broad (Agle et al., 2008).

As already noted, numerous definitions of stakeholders have been proposed, with many scholars endeavouring to deliver a distinct definition of the term 'stakeholder' that



comprises the dynamic and essential association of relevant stakeholders with their organisation. According to Aas et al. (2005: 31), for example, a stakeholder within the 'tourism industry is deemed to be anyone who is impacted on by development positively or negatively, and as a result, it reduces potential conflict between the tourists and host community'. Subsequently, Friedman and Miles (2006) further developed two concepts with regards to theorising stakeholders: the 'affect or be affected' and the 'achievement'. These concepts not only enable the categorisation of relevant key stakeholders but also allow those groups in agreement, those who have the potential to influence the validity to form and sustain an organisation's norms, values and ability, to resolve the related critical issues associated with decision-making (Amar, 2017; Friedman & Miles, 2006; Mitchell et al., 1997).

Nevertheless, with so many definitions, the potential for developing a clear, agreed theory of stakeholders remains limited; as Parmar et al. (2010: 6) observe, 'others have suggested that there is just too much ambiguity in the definition of the central term for it ever to be admitted to the status of theory', going on to suggest that with so many versions of definitions and perspectives on stakeholder, it is impractical to combine all of them to create a 'correct version'. Therefore, for the purpose of this thesis, the definition of stakeholders is 'any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives' (Freeman, 1984: 46).

Generally, Sharpley (2009) notes that at any heritage site of atrocities, tragedies and disasters, there are multiple stakeholders involved. These include victims, perpetrators and contemporary independent visitors (those not identifying either as victims or perpetrators). Hence, the following section will discuss briefly the classification of stakeholder groups associated with the case study, the WoT, in accordance with Objectives 3 and 4 of this thesis.

#### **4.3.2 Stakeholders: An Inclusion Analysis**

To understand the complexity of stakeholder's groups linked to the case study, the WoT memorial in New Delhi, it is important to note that some commentators have suggested that stakeholder analysis offers a method or a tool for identifying key stakeholders by their characteristics, interrelationships and through an evaluation of their interest associated with the organisation (Ramirez, 1999; Swiderska, 2002). Moreover, as mentioned above, at any commemoration site, several stakeholder groups will be involved (Sharpley, 2009), each of which may have a different interpretation of the event

and, hence, may challenge the extent to which theirs and other stakeholder groups' perspectives are represented within the projected narrative of the memorial. However, when looking at the WoT memorial, the research aims to explore the diversity of potential stakeholders associated with the 1984 riots memorial and their relationship with it.

Memorials that commemorate events such as the massacre, with which the WoT is concerned, stakeholder analysis can be utilised to help identify those groups who were impacted by the massacre. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, dark sites are often relatively complex and involve several dimensions of authenticities which may co-exist at an any given dark tourism site (Sharpley & Stone, 2009). Therefore, for the purposes of this thesis and in order to achieve a vital balance of reality and a correct identification of a range of potential stakeholders involved, Seaton's (2001) heritage force field model is adapted to facilitate the identification of potential stakeholder groups who either have power or interest in the memorial site's development and its tourism aspect.

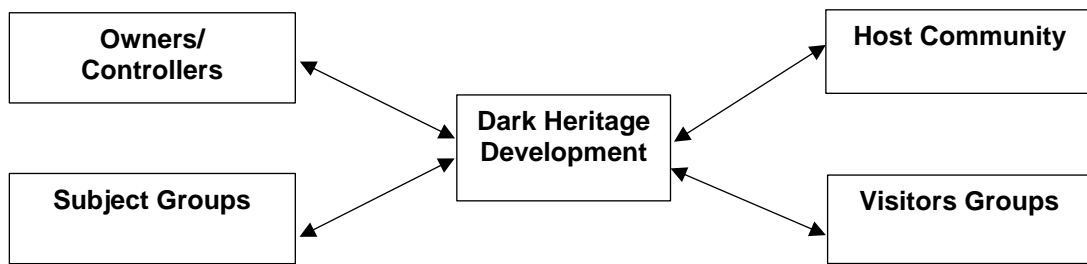
### **4.3.3 Types of Stakeholder Groups**

This section will focus on stakeholder inclusion, identifying the categories under which stakeholders can be identified. Seaton's (2001) heritage force field model, which identifies stakeholder groups with a legitimate attachment to a given site, will be utilised as standard criteria for inclusion / categorisation of persons with relation to the WoT memorial, in New Delhi.

Seaton's (2001) model identifies four distinctive groups; he acknowledges that, within this model, any one group may have more power and interest than others (Seaton, 2001: 123). The model also illustrates the potential for dissonance, which may occur among the four groups who share an interest in heritage development (Sharpley, 2009).

The four groups in Seaton's (2001) model (Figure 4.2 below) comprise 'owners / controllers of the development; the subject groups (the focus or subject of the heritage narrative; the host community (the residents located within the proximity of heritage site) and the visitors' groups' (Sharpley, 2009: 162).

**Figure 4.2:** The heritage force field model



**Source:** Adapted from Seaton (2001)

These four distinctive groups are now applied to the specific context of the WoT in order to identify the variety of stakeholders with interest in the site.

#### **4.3.3.1 Owners / Controllers**

According to Seaton (2001), this group comprises those representatives or agents who have control and authority over the heritage development and accomplish allocative and operational acts (Seaton, 2001). These agents may or may not share these two roles; however, if they are separated, the allocative controllers are financial benefactors, whilst operational controllers are concerned with the management of the site. In some instances, where owners and controller are distinct with potentially divergent objectives for the heritage site, then this group might be divided into separate groups rather than one within the heritage force field model.

Applying this model devised by Seaton (2001) to the WoT memorial, the owners / controllers group comprises the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC). The DSGMC was responsible for the construction of the memorial and takes full control of the financial affairs; it also administers the site (see interview response MC1, p. 252). Hence, DSGMC can be located firmly within the owners / controllers group.

#### **4.3.3.2 Subject Groups**

These groups include those individuals who are the focal point of the dark tourism product and whose narrative forms the basis of the product. These subject groups are typically the victims of the ‘dark’ event, a victim being defined as ‘as a person who incurs harm or even death’ (McDowell, 2009: 1). Seaton (2001) states that their share of contribution and participation determines (precisely) the manner in which victims become structured

within the heritage accounts. This account may be depicted in either an unprejudiced or a prejudiced way, 'not just by what "is" included but through silences' (Seaton, 2001: 124). As the subject group involves the victims' account, in the case of the WoT, the subject group includes both Sikh and Hindu eyewitnesses who suffered a personal injury, loss of family members and friends during the 1984 riots. It should be noted that, as discussed shortly, the subject group may also implicitly include perpetrators, dependent on the event / context and the role of the site.

#### **4.3.3.3 Host Communities**

This group includes the residents situated within the proximity of the heritage site. Host communities are perhaps likely to be expected to support and approve the site if they are able to have some degree of involvement in or contribution into the site's development and, in particular, if they support the subject group and their narratives and have no problem in accepting the site's visitor group (Seaton, 2001). The host community in the case of the WoT comprises the residents of Delhi.

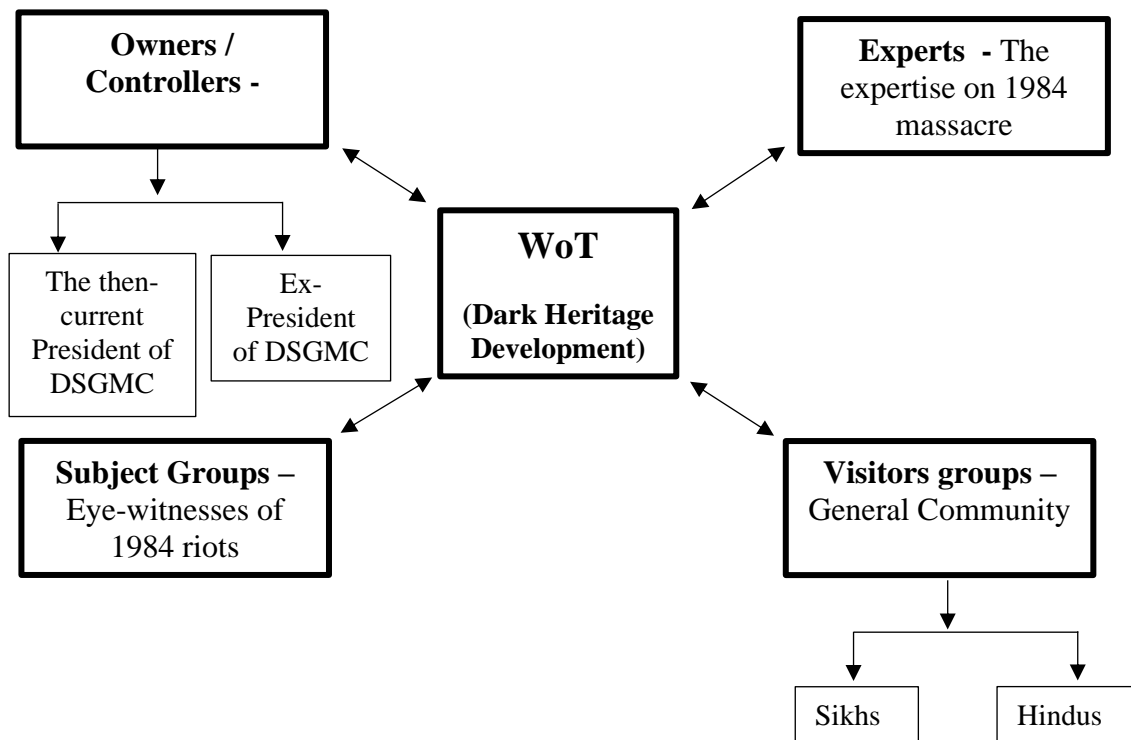
#### **4.3.3.4 Visitor Group**

As stated in Chapter 2, it is claimed that dark sites are in general becoming increasingly popular as tourist destinations, although it remains uncertain whether this reflects growing interest or fascination in dark sites or, more simply, the continuing growth in participation in tourism as well as the in the number of such sites. Either way, as noted in Chapter 3, for any tourist attraction site to be successful, it first needs to command or dominate a market. Moreover, as Seaton (2001) suggests, although it is the power of the market that shapes heritage development, this is 'often ignored in the more puritanical critiques voiced by custodians of 'authenticity' opposed to any form of popular translations of heritage stories' (Seaton, 2001: 124). The visitor group for WoT includes eyewitnesses to the event it commemorates, as well as members of the wider Sikh and Hindu communities. In addition, as the memorial is located within the temple grounds, daily or occasional visitors visiting the historical Sikh temple will also be potential visitors to the memorial site. Hence, the visitor groups are equal to the subject group, including those directly and indirectly associated with the event.

For this case study, visitor groups and host communities are combined into one stakeholder category, while an additional stakeholder group is added as a key candidate; the expert group. The expert brought with them an alternative insider's view of the

development of the memorial which will provide useful information on issues related to the WoT. Based on Seaton's (2001) heritage force field model, Figure 4.3 below highlights the identified stakeholder groups for the WoT memorial.

**Figure 4.3:** Stakeholder model Adapted from Seaton (2001) for WoT memorial



### Limitations

One of the limitations to be acknowledged within the model relates to the subject group which, typically, comprises victims but in which, in certain circumstances should include perpetrators. This suggests that the model should allow for sub-groups within the main ones or, perhaps, it should include a separate additional group which solely classifies perpetrators in order to have a clear and balanced account of identifications of stakeholders. In addition, a further limitation of the model is that it does not include stakeholders with an indirect but nevertheless potentially influential interest in a site. For instance, one potential group of stakeholders in any tourism site, including dark sites / memorials, comprises tour operators and other sectors of the tourism industry who have

the power to influence the demand for as well as the supply of the tourism site depending upon levels of tourists' interest (Mamhoori, 2015). Moreover, it must be noted that Seaton's (2001) model is in all likelihood located within a Western cultural perspective whereas, with regards to potential stakeholder groups at a dark Indian site, reconciliation or dissonance are primarily orchestrated and controlled, as discussed in chapter three, by politics. Hence, when considering dark sites in India, where those in power often influence the development and nature of a site, it is unlikely that only the four groups identified in the model play an essential role in dissonance; that is, all may be subject to external political influence.

However, the advantages with Seaton's model is that it illustrates, there exist unlimited 'permutations of interactions within the force field' (Seaton, 2001: 124). In other words, he suggests that potential conflict may occur only as a result of, for example, disagreements between subjects and controllers but also between communities and controllers. Implicitly, this also suggests that potential conflict may occur to differing extents and according to different dynamics not only across but also within the membership of the four groups. At the same time, Seaton's model does suggest that the size and dynamic of the given four groups can change over time (Sharpley, 2009).

#### **4.4 Stakeholder Groups Perspective Analysis: The WoT**

Within tourism studies, attention paid to stakeholder theory 'has been fairly recent and relatively limited' (Nicholas et al., 2009: 392), with the majority of research focusing on the identification of stakeholders. Some studies focus on multiple stakeholders when determining the interpretation of a particular dark event (Frew, 2012; Light, 2017), while others emphasise the conflicts among the various stakeholder groups. Hence, only limited research has explored the perspectives of (several) stakeholders involved in a dark tourism site (Light, 2017).

Nevertheless, having identified the composition of the four categories of stakeholder groups at the WoT utilising Seaton's (2001) model, it is essential to explore relevant stakeholders' perspectives and the emotions they may experience when commemorating a dark event. When visiting sites of commemoration, for example, Hupka et al. (1999) state that people may experience various types of emotions which are, by and large, universal. Ashworth and Isaac (2015) propose a list of emotions which can be triggered among tourists while visiting a dark site and which may indeed potentially discourage them from visiting other such sites. They list six emotions which,

they claim, are generally experienced by visitors to dark tourism sites. These include: (i) curiosity, which relates to having significant interest in the event /site; (ii) shame, equating to a sense of embarrassment about the history which led to the event; (iii) empathetic grief and a sense of loss, particularly sorrow for the human loss, and the reality of mortality which can be experienced by the visitor; (iv) psychotic disturbance, experiencing evidence of what can be regarded as an abnormal behaviour in a contemporary society; (v) offence / anger, an emotion can sometimes trigger acts of violence and a sense of rage; and (vi), fear, a mixture of apprehension and anxiety, a belief that bad may sometimes happen (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015: 320).

These emotions may vary amongst visitors; equally, any visitor may experience some or all of these emotions at different stages during their visit. For example, curiosity about unknown facts may later develop into sympathetic grief and then into anger. And it is extremely likely that different visitors will experience entirely different emotions while visiting the same site (Ashworth & Isaac, 2015). Nevertheless, recognising these emotional responses may contribute to the further understanding of the potential cause of dissonance within the stakeholder groups in dark tourism development.

The following section now considers the identified stakeholder groups perspectives associated with the WoT.

#### **4.4.1 The Owners / Controllers: DSGMC**

As indicated above, DSGMC is one of the main stakeholder groups associated with the WoT; the committee is the sole controller of the site. Hence, the role of DSGMC and the perspectives of its members are crucial to the case study. When linking Seaton's (2001) owner-controller group to Tunbridge and Ashworth's (1996) characteristics of place, it is apparent that all three drivers of dissonance may be in evidence: (i) dissonance embedded in commodification; (ii) dissonance embedded in place products, and (iii) dissonance embedded in the context of the message. The role of DSGMC (which is both a religious and political body) assumes significance as claimant of ownership of the memorial and constructing it within the grounds of the Rakab Ganj Sahib Sikh Temple, has endowed it with a monopoly over Sikh commemoration within the Sikh community. So, in effect, the WoT becomes a political tool. It allows DSGMC to portray Sikhs as victims for being a minority group within a Hindu nation. In addition, the memorial has the potential to become a revenue stream either through pilgrimage or from general visitation by victim groups, locals and other domestic and international tourists, particularly NRI Sikhs (Non-

resident Indians). Visitors to the WoT may experience many emotions which may vary and may be influenced by either the memorial's design, its location or the platform used for several reasons by DSGMC.

#### **4.4.2 The Subject Groups: Eyewitnesses**

Focusing on the subject groups, the victims / eyewitnesses and the descendants of both Sikhs and Hindus involved in the event demand a new perspective on the WoT. When looking at the relationship between Sikhs and Hindus, it is apparent that while the then Congress Party encouraged anti-Sikh sentiment (Mehta, 1996), not all Hindus were in agreement, with many Hindus finding themselves on the side of Sikhs (Bhatt, 2005). Subsequently, WoT does commemorate three Hindus who lost their lives while saving Sikhs, resulting in themselves becoming victims of the violence. Thus, the memorial provides a place of homage as it gives recognition to the suffering and pain of all victims; it offers a focal point where loved ones are commemorated and held with some status within the holy grounds, thus potentially evoking emotions of grief, psychotic disturbance, anger or fear, amongst this group of stakeholders. For the victim's subject groups, then (Sikhs and Hindus), Tunbridge and Ashworth's (1996) driver of dissonance would be (ii) dissonance embedded in place products owing to the fact that the location of the memorial is not representative of the actual sites of the killings but rather associated with it. That is, visitation may be difficult for some Hindus who may feel awkward entering the grounds of a Sikh temple which commemorates the killing of Sikhs by Hindus.

#### **4.4.3 The Host Communities: Delhi Residents**

The Host Community group may have conflicting perceptions or emotions with regards to the memorial. On the one hand, their city is home to an important memorial that recognises and commemorates part of the domestic trauma of India's recent past and which, therefore, be seen as a progressive statement of India going forward. However, on the other hand, it is a memorial constructed not by the state but by the private owners of Sikh Temple. This could be viewed by the host community as a political statement. Moreover, for the host community, the Sikh Temple might also be seen as a focal point for Sikh nationalism, which could have implications if such divisions or conflicts between the Sikh and Hindu communities were to emerge again in the future. This group might experience shame while visiting WoT, but, at the same time, they are likely to feel grief



or fear as well. The characteristic of their drivers in dissonance (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996) would again be (ii) dissonance embedded in place products.

#### **4.4.4 The Visitor Group: Domestic, International and Religious Groups**

For domestic, international and religious group visitors, all three drivers of dissonance are likely to apply. For example, depending on different visitors' intentions and perspectives, the memorial can act as a place of education, showcasing the dangers of inter-community conflict. Equally, as with the victim group, it can provide a place for pilgrimage for Sikhs from all over the world owing to its connection with Rakab Ganj Sahib Sikh Temple. However, some domestic and international visitors might be discouraged from visiting the memorial owing to its location in a Sikh Temple which might make them feel uneasy. Indeed, Light (2017) identifies an equally significant group which plays a significant role, namely, the non-visitor group, suggesting that that 'non-visitor' groups that choose not to visit dark sites have many reasons / perspectives as well. This then leads to the question: can the 'non-visitors' perspective play a substantial role in dissonance at the WoT?

Attention now turns to the concept of what dissonant signifies, especially within its relevant stakeholders in the context with WoT.

#### **4.5 Dissonance: An Analytical Framework**

As noted above, in an ideal world, any place commemorating a dark event will involve various stakeholder groups (Sharpley, 2009). Often, these stakeholder groups related to sites / events may feel that their argument is not fully or appropriately represented within the interpretation presented to the visitor. At the same time, however, not all stakeholder groups will agree on what message is important or appropriate with regards to the heritage being commemorated (Laing & Frost, 2013). That is, for stakeholder groups, the significance of events varies; issues surrounding the event may often be complex and contentious, rendering its commemoration equally complex and contentious. As a consequence, there may exist higher levels of dissonance, which may prove difficult to resolve (Laing & Frost, 2013). Therefore, it is important to recognise the varying perspectives of stakeholders as a basis for understanding and managing dissonance at dark heritage sites and, subsequently, encouraging the process of reconciliation.

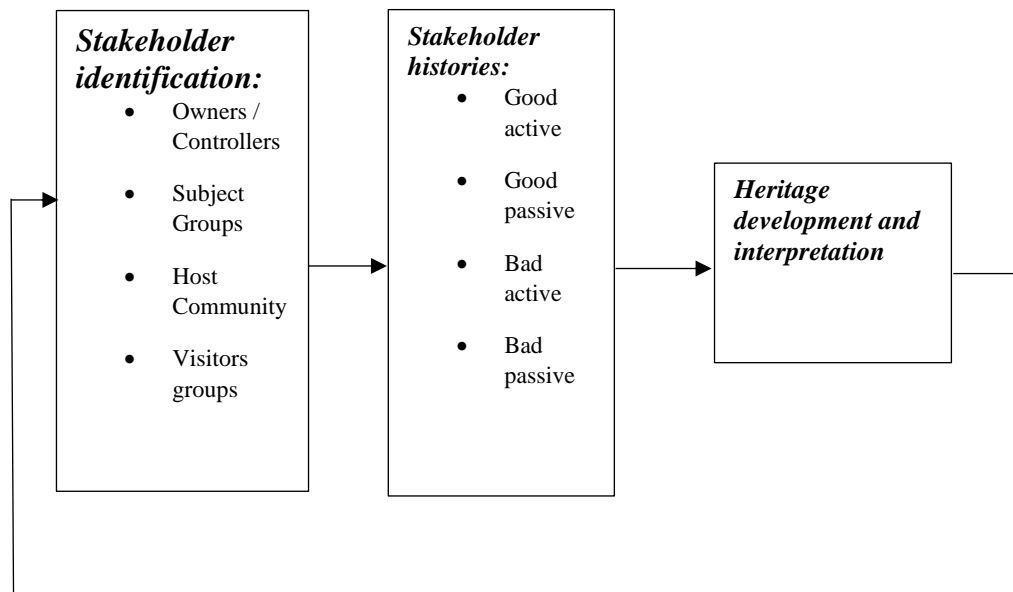
Sharpley (2009) notes that, depending on the type of heritage development, the power relations between given groups can change or vary over a period of time.

Moreover, it can be possible for the four stakeholder groups in Seaton's (2001) model to generate a transformation in the relations between them. On the one hand, they may develop a form of harmonious alignment reflecting a common interest; on the other hand, increasing anger and animosity may be in evidence as a result of unresolved conflict and disagreement with regards to a heritage development, ultimately even damaging or destroying the actual development (Seaton, 2001).

Seaton (2001) identifies the critical differences between the least and most contentious nature of heritage with regards to the role of stakeholders at a heritage site. For him, the least contentious heritage is 'where the allocative / operational controlling group behind the development is itself the sole subject of the narrative' (Seaton, 2001: 124). Conversely, heritage may be most contentious when the allocative / operational controllers represent secondary groups not directly related to the event / site and formulate narratives which do not represent the views of the subject groups (Seaton, 2001). Hence, Poria (2001) argues that at any dark site, the (re)interpretation should be 'based upon the formation of a new narrative for that site. That new narrative should, in turn, be, based on a conceptual framework that links a particular event or occurrence to all stakeholders feeling associated with the event; including (shame or pride) and the degree of involvement (good or bad)' (cited in Sharpley, 2009: 162).

Poria (2007) also suggests that bad active histories (the bad histories of a stakeholder group) are generally not incorporated in heritage interpretation. Such events might be then formally managed through authorised collective amnesia (Timothy & Boyd, 2006) or, as Foote (2003) puts it, through obliteration. Hence, in order to address this possible dissonance or to regulate potential political influence, new narratives should be formed by 'embracing all four histories [good and bad histories of 'my' group and 'other' group]s within a more cooperative approach to interpretation' (Sharpley, 2009: 163). Sharpley (2009) then proposes a model representing dark heritage governance (see Figure 4.4 below) by combining Seaton's (2001) model of the heritage force field and Poria's concept of stakeholder narrative.

**Figure 4.4:** A model of dark heritage governance



**Source:** Sharpley (2009)

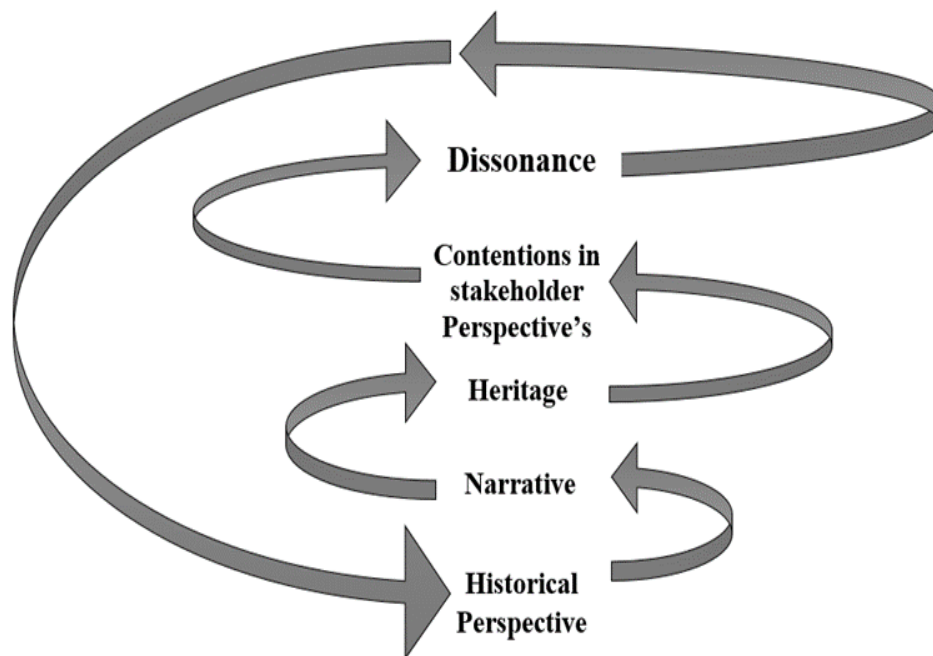
Sharpley's (2009) model maps out the theoretical extent to which the WoT memorial might address the concepts of dissonance and stakeholder's representations. The concept of *shame or pride / active or passive* relates to good history and bad history; it becomes centred upon a 'continual, sequential process of stakeholders identification, the determination of the histories of each stakeholder, and the negotiated or cooperative writing or re-writing of the heritage narrative for the site' (Sharpley, 2009: 163). Moreover, as new data or information unfolds, or as the cultural and political context progresses with time, the pre-constructed narratives should be re-evaluated, and the new narratives should be further reviewed (Sharpley, 2009). Sharpley (2009) also suggests that whether good or bad, all relevant histories of all stakeholders should be accorded due recognition in order to form the basis for co-operation in heritage interpretation.

Certainly, the extent to which this potential approach to dark tourism interpretation is possible is reliant on various factors, and not only on the nature of the site and the political ideology or the dominant power of the owners / controller's group (Sharpley, 2009). For example, if the government intends to create a new identity or decides to deny the old identity, it is likely to eliminate any demand for greater recognition of all stakeholders and their personal histories (Sharpley, 2009). Nonetheless, the model does deliver a basis for 'encouraging harmony, reconciliation, understanding

or learning (or reducing the potential for dissonance) through a more inclusive memorialisation and interpretation of the dark or tragic pasts’ (Sharples, 2009: 163).

It seems evident, then, that dark heritage sites inevitably include an element of dissonance for whichever market the heritage is created and promoted. That is, it is through interpretation that a specific heritage is created; this, in turn, implies the existence of focal message being presented to the audience, which can result in dissonance for others. In short, it can be said that it is the heritage’s interpretation results in dissonance. This can be conceptualised in a ‘dissonant heritage cycle,’ which illustrates how dissonance occurs (Figure 4.5 below).

**Figure 4.5:** Dissonant Heritage Cycle



**Source:** Devised by Clinton and Singh-Mokha (2019)

#### **4.5.1 The Dissonant Heritage Cycle**

The dissonant heritage cycle helps to illustrate the complexities when focusing on interpreting contentious histories. When curators and historians develop heritage for public consumption, they should instinctively be aware of the risk that their representation or interpretation may give rise to criticism from various affected stakeholder groups. The common belief that history is written for and by the victor instantly raises the matter of perspective for, if there are winners, there will inevitably be losers. The dissonant heritage

cycle (DHC) (Figure 4.5) thus, represents the problematic nature when devising an accurate representation of the history.

The model commences with the historical perspective of an event, which then leads to a narrative. This narrative then materialises as a heritage / heritage product which, in turn, leads to contentions amongst stakeholder perspectives, thus resulting in dissonance. This dissonance then leads to a review of a historical perspective. However, with multiple stakeholders, this dissonance can get caught up in a repeated cycle until an agreement is achieved which in itself may well result in either a compromise in representation or a representation forged by a dominant group, thus perpetuating dissonance. The difference between dissonant heritage cycle (DHC) and dark heritage governance (DHG) model is that the DHC illustrates the process by which dissonance in interpretation happens, whereas DHG model illustrates how to manage the process of removing dissonance or, more realistically, reducing its presence.

Positioning the three models in the following order: the heritage force field (HFF), dissonant heritage cycle (DHC) and dark heritage governance (DHG), may help to unravel a significant conundrum. That is, within any dark site, stakeholders become involved and, with HFF model, it is possible to identify potential stakeholder groups and, subsequently, where dissonance is likely to occur. The DHC then facilitates the illustration of the process by which dissonance in interpretation occurs, with the aim of reducing the dissonance within interpretation; the DHG then aims to manage and, ideally, reduce the potential for dissonance. Hence, it is apparent that with each step, dissonance may be avoided; an accumulation of strategies becomes necessary in order to adequately address the need to limit dissonance.

#### **4.6 Dissonance Implicit in WoT**

The WoT memorial commemorates the massacre of 1984 and its victims. However, owing to the manner in which it was eventually constructed, there are several windows through which dissonance can emerge. Drawing on the ‘success’ factors for memorials reviewed in Chapter 3, the key points underpinning the existence of dissonance at the WoT are as follows:

*Location and accessibility:* There are contentious issues related to the location of the WoT memorial. Specifically, its location potentially limits the process of reconciliation whilst causing dissonance within the Sikh community itself. For Sikhs, a temple is a place

‘where Sikhs come together for congregational worship’ (Faith Communities Navigator, 2007) and, hence, the memorial may impact negatively on this. At the same time, the location of the WoT may also potentially influence political Sikh elites who, for self-political gain, could use the platform for their own benefit.

In addition to domestic and religious visitors, the WoT also attracts international Sikh tourists. Consequently, potential dissonance is more likely to result from the responses and intervention of Non-resident Indian’s (NRI). For instance, when analysing 1984 Sikh riots, the Defence Minister of Canada, Harjit Sajjan (a Sikh Canadian) stated that ‘my personal viewpoint on this is that Canadians have a direct reason to be concerned’ (CBC, 2017). This ‘concern’ fuelled by frequent campaigns for recognition of the 1984 ‘anti-Sikh riots’ as ‘genocide’. Indeed, Canada’s opposition party, the New Democratic Party (NDP) which is led by a Sikh Canadian Jagmeet Singh, appealed to the Canadian government to recognise the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 in India as genocide (Bhattacharyya, 2017). This appeal, in effect transforming the nature of the event through the use of stronger and more emotive terminology, was subsequently supported by the current president of DSGMC in India who publicly referred to the event as genocide and has appealed to the government to recognise the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 as ‘genocide’ (Singh, 2017b). Thus, the interpretation of the event raises the potential for dissonance with the domestic audience.

*Design:* The design and construction of the memorial led by the management committee raise the question as to what extent the WoT’s design represents the views of stakeholder groups. In other words, the lack of real representation of victims within the memorials representation can create the potential for dissonance.

*Ownership:* The owners / controllers group aim for people to reflect upon a history (heritage) created by emphasising a specific interpretation of the past (Laing & Frost, 2013). Hence, for those with personal connections with the event and the site, whether victims or perpetrators, the interpretation of the event by the owners and managers can cause possible discordance. As Laing & Frost (2013) note, history is not that straightforward; there can be disagreements over what happened and when. Owners / organisers who apply past narratives in order to achieve objectives of the commemorative site may discover that their interpretation of history is contested by other stakeholders who hold a different view (Laing & Frost, 2013). This process can result in debates and

argument or even in dissonance (Laing & Frost, 2013). This raises the question as to whether or not the DSGMC took it upon themselves to develop the memorial to reflect their own interpretation of history, in so doing implicitly deciding not to represent other stakeholder's groups in order to maintain / control and represent their own subjective narrative.

It is important to note that those commemorative sites which are 'planned with a strategic outcome, often provoke multiple, contested meanings' (Laing & Frost, 2013: 11), resulting in sites not only being contested but also potentially becoming the focus for further conflicts. Although the WoT was developed by DSGMC, its location was eventually decided upon by the president of the DSGMC (see interview response MC1, p. 220). This then begs the question: was the WoT strategically planned to achieve political gain? Did DSGMC, when developing the memorial, consult the appropriate stakeholders with regards to its location in a Sikh temple?

*Media:* According to Asgary et al. (2006), the media can act as a possible stakeholder group, with both domestic and international influence. An example of this was evident during Operation Blue Star in India. The Indian government imposed a total media blackout; their tight control over the media meant that even foreign correspondents were not allowed to capture the horrific events (Ahmed, 2010). In addition, Ahmed (2010) notes that, with regards to the role of media in the 1984 riots, the local media did not support the Sikhs; indeed, prior to the riots, media involvement led to public misinformation. Specifically, also, 'The Times of India, one of the leading national dailies, and The Hindustan Times did more to incite hostility between Hindus and Sikhs than perhaps any other national English language newspaper' (Ahmed, 2010: 105). Therefore, the media can also influence the peacebuilding process and impact on tourists' visitation to a particular site, again encouraging possible dissonance between the owners and relevant stakeholders.

All of the above questions are explored and discussed in detail in the empirical research in this thesis.

#### **4.7 Summary**

Overall, this chapter has considered the stakeholder groups associated with the WoT memorial, in particular exploring the extent to which their relationship with the memorial is defined by dissonance. First, therefore, chapter reviewed the relevant literature on both

dissonance / dissonant heritage and stakeholders. The purpose of the subsequent identification of stakeholder groups relevant to the WoT was to examine the concept of dissonance, particularly from the perspective of these groups. Hence, drawing on Seaton's (2001) HFF model, the chapter identified the key stakeholder groups with interest in the 1984 Sikh massacre memorial. It then explored, within the framework of appropriate models, the extent to which each group influences or experiences dissonance at the WoT. In so doing, the chapter not only revealed, in theory, significant potential for dissonance at the site but also raised a number of questions demanding attention. These questions, and the conceptual framework within which they were established form the basis of empirical research. First, however, it is necessary to discuss the methodology employed for that research; thus, is the focus of the next chapter.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Methodology**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Following the first chapter of this thesis, which sets out its aim and objectives and introduced the case study of WoT memorial in New Delhi. The following chapters have first established the conceptual foundation of the research, specifically considering the notion of dark tourism and heritage in India (Chapter 2), before going on to review critically the theories and debates that are fundamental to the central focus of this study (Chapters 3 and 4). Thus far, therefore, the thesis has explored the conceptual underpinnings of the research, thereby providing the framework for empirical research. The purpose of this chapter is now to establish and explain the philosophical approach adopted in that research and, in particular, to define and shape the research methods employed to meet the aim and objectives of the research as established in Chapter 1.

As will be discussed, overall, the research adopts a qualitative method within a case study approach employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews as a means of generating primary data. Before discussing this, as well as considering the broader philosophical underpinnings of the research and the specific methods of data collection and analysis, the chapter commences by revisiting the aim and objectives of the thesis followed by a diagrammatic summary of the research methods and processes employed.

#### **5.2 Research Aim and Objectives**

As established in Chapter 1, the overall aim of this thesis is to apply the concept of dissonance to a ‘dark’ site in India, thereby exploring both dissonance and the wider concept of dark tourism within a context that, as argued in Chapter 2, has to date benefited from only limited academic scrutiny.

In order to meet this aim, the thesis has the following research objectives:

- i. To explore critically the concept of dark tourism from a non-Western perspective, specifically within the context of socio-cultural perspectives on

death and dying in India, as a framework for the analysis of the development of and potential for dissonance at the WoT.

- ii. To consider and critically compare the concepts of memorials and memorialisation from both a Western and Indian perspective, thereby establishing a foundation for appraising the development of the WoT memorial.
- iii. To identify and critically review the stakeholder groups relevant to the 1984 Sikh massacre and the WoT memorial.
- iv. To apply and critically analyse the concept of dissonance within the context of the WoT and, in particular, from the perspective of different Sikh and Hindu stakeholder groups.

The overall philosophical and methodological approaches to the research, as well as the specific methods of data collection and analysis, are discussed in the following sections. However, for convenience, the overall research process adopted in the thesis is summarised in Figure 5.1 below.

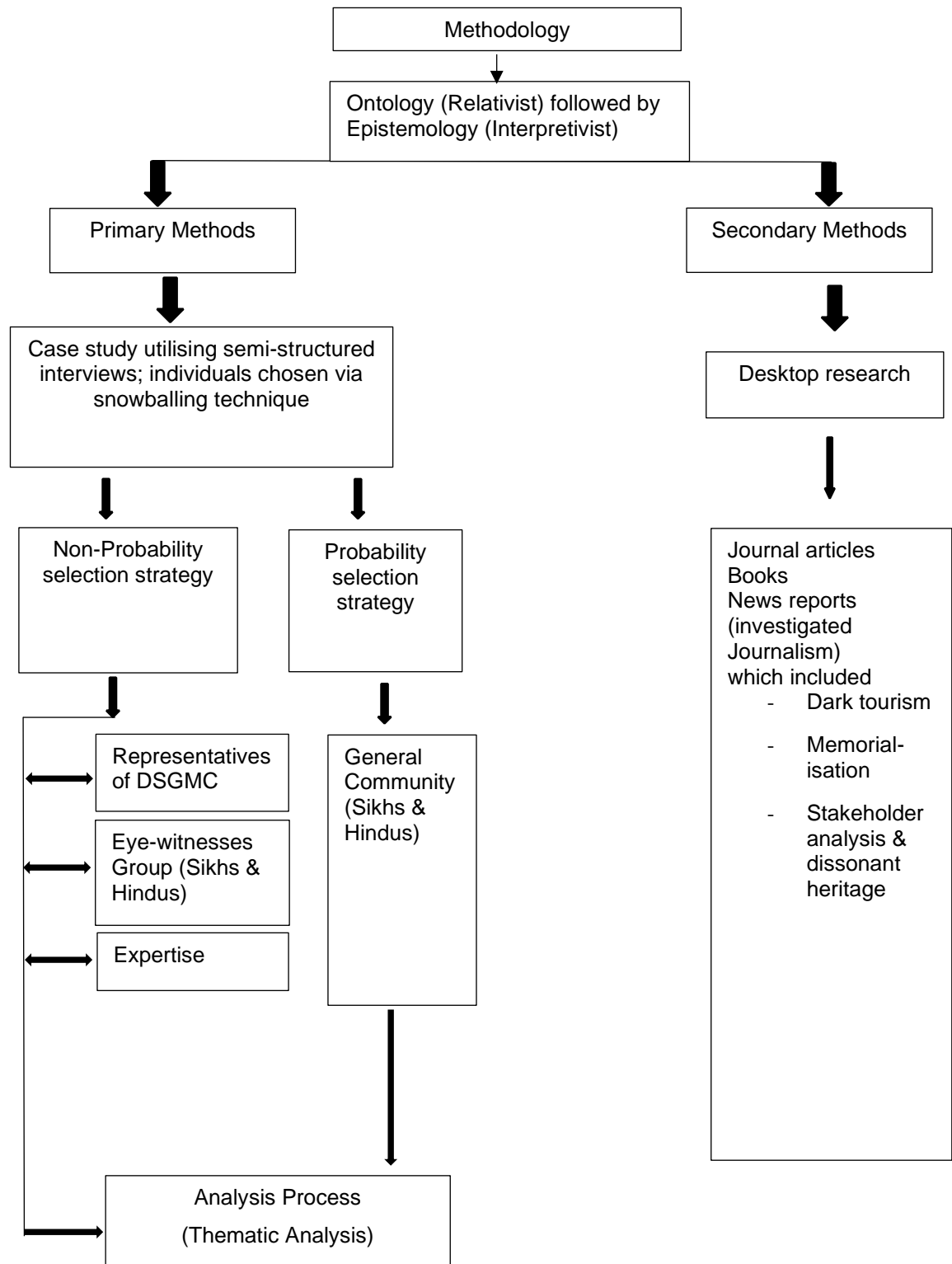
### **5.3 The Research: Philosophical Underpinnings**

The fundamental purpose of the research is to provide an answer to a question or questions, to establish facts and to come to new conclusions. More precisely, it is a systematic process through which data is gathered and analysed ‘to provide explanations, establish relationships, carry out experimentation or test hypotheses to generate new knowledge’ (Durberry, 2018: 4; Walliman, 2016). There are generally five stages within the research process (Gratton & Jones, 2010):

- The stage before data collection, where the researcher decides upon the research question, the aim of the research and the research objectives.
- The stage of designing how to collect the data to answer the questions, deciding which methods to use and with what sample or, more precisely, establishing the methodology.
- The actual data collection stage, where the data are collected by one or more research methods.
- The analysis of the data – either with reference to the theoretical framework adopted or to generate theory – to achieve the overall aim of the research.

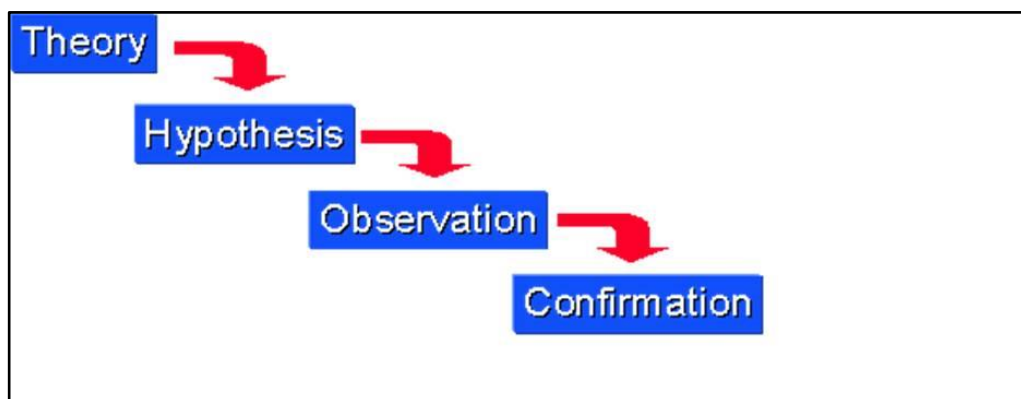
- The reporting of the research to communicate the findings to others (Gratton & Jones, 2010: 5).

**Figure 5.1:** Overview of Research Methodology



Within the overall research process, two broad approaches may be adapted to the analysis of knowledge, namely, deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Deductive reasoning (see Figure 5.2 below) follows what may be described as a top-down approach, starting with a theory focused on a particular topic then narrowing it down into a more specific theory which can be tested (Feeney & Heit, 2007; Heit & Rotello, 2010). Thus, research guided by deductive reasoning might begin with establishing a *theory* related to the topic of interest. That theory is then narrowed down into more specific *hypothesis* which can be tested. It is then further narrowed down when the researcher starts gathering *observations* in order to address that hypothesis. This finally allows the researcher to examine and test the hypothesis with precise data, permitting a *confirmation* (or not) of the original theories (Trochim, 2006). Thus, in deductive reasoning, an argument established on deduction commences with a general statement and, through logical argument, the researcher reaches a specific conclusion (Walliman, 2016).

**Figure 5.2:** Deductive reasoning

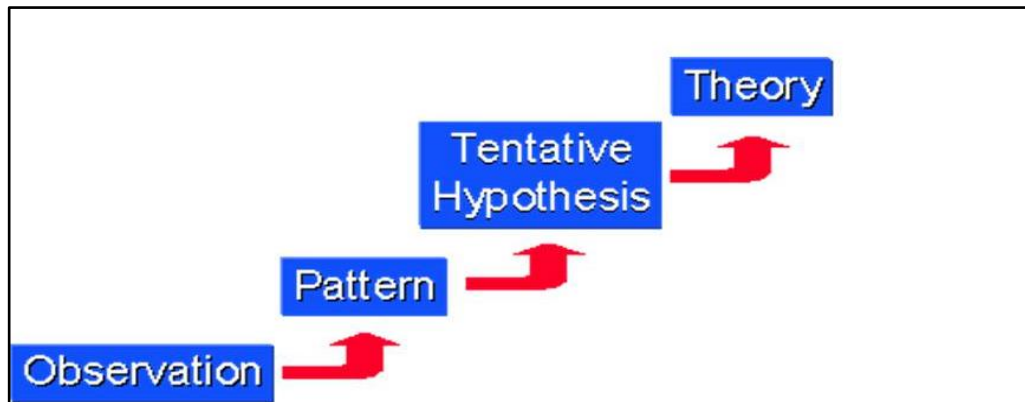


**Source:** Trochim (2006)

In contrast, inductive reasoning (Figure 5.3) adopts a bottom-up approach. That is, it commences with specific observations and, as it begins to identify patterns and uniformities, some tentative hypothesis may be created which the researcher can investigate, ultimately leading to the development of some overall conclusions or theories (Trochim, 2006). Thus, inductive reasoning or research is a ‘process of constructing theories from empirical data by searching for themes and seeking to make meanings from the evidence’ (Somekh & Lewin, 2007: 346). Inevitably, given the distinctions between these two approaches, very different methods are typically employed when conducting the research. Deductive reasoning, due to its very nature, is more narrow and is concerned

with testing or confirming hypothesis, whilst inductive reasoning is more open-ended and exploratory (Trochim, 2006).

**Figure 5.3:** Inductive reasoning



**Source:** Trochim (2006)

For the research in this thesis, the inductive approach would immediately appear to be more suitable as it provides a platform for broader generalisations, ideas and theories to be developed (Trochim, 2006). That is, following the process of identifying themes and patterns from the data, tentative hypothesis might emerge that ultimately allow the researcher to come to relevant conclusions. Specifically, observations will be made relating to the WoT memorial as a basis for analysing such as location, its ownership, the manner in which it interprets the dark event (the Sikh massacre). Thereby, conclusions to be drawn with regards to the potential dissonance at the site.

Importantly, the guiding influence on any research is the research paradigm. A research paradigm may be described as a group of associated beliefs that represents a conceptual and philosophical framework for structured study (Hassard & Kelemen, 2002). Alternatively, Bryman and Bell (2007: 25) define a research paradigm as a ‘cluster of beliefs which can dictate scientists in a particular discipline and even influence what should be studied, how research should be done and finally, how results should / could be interpreted’. Hence, a research paradigm provides a primary platform and a systematic system that directs the research; it is, simply stated, a basic belief system that directs the researcher’s actions whilst undertaking an investigation. Therefore, the chosen research paradigm is the starting point for any research.

All research paradigms embrace three inter-related concepts. As Guba and Lincoln (1994: 107) summarise, a ‘paradigm, as a basic belief system, is based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions’. Putting it another way, a

paradigm consists of three fundamental sets of questions that are interconnected with each other in such a way that the answer to anyone question determines answers to the others. These questions are as follows:

**The ontological question:** Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that ontological questions include: What is the nature of ‘reality’, ‘truth’ and the ‘real’?; How are things really? And, what can be understood about reality? Answers to such ontological questions are essential in research (Willig & Rogers, 2008) as it is an ontology that is concerned with the expression of ways through which ‘reality’ can be viewed (Carpentier, 2018).

**The epistemological question:** According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), epistemological questions must include: What is the nature of the link between the potential knower and the known? And, what can be comprehended? Bailey (2007: 50) describes epistemology as the ‘relationship between the knower and the known’ or, putting it another way; epistemology is a ‘branch of philosophy concerned with the study of knowledge’ (Birks & Mills, 2015: 178). Thus, epistemology is a representation of how one recognises ‘reality’ or, more simply, how we know what we know (Carpentier, 2018).

**The methodological question:** The methodological question asks: ‘how should the researcher go about finding out about social reality?’ (Bailey, 2007: 51). In other words, guided by their ontological and epistemological position, the researcher must select the most appropriate overall approach to the research to meet its objectives.

Generally, then, the research paradigm largely dictates the methods by which data are collected and analysed within a particular research project. Hence, it is important to understand the relationship between the ontological, epistemological and methodological elements of each paradigm to explain the paradigm adopted in this thesis.

**Table 5.1:** Research Paradigms

	<b>Positivism</b>	<b>Post-Positivism</b>	<b>Critical Theory</b>	<b>Constructivism</b>
<p><b>Ontology</b></p> <p>The nature of reality</p>	<p><i>Realist</i></p> <p>Reality is objective.</p> <p>Reality exists out there and is driven by unchallengeable natural laws and mechanisms.</p> <p>Context-free, Generalisation of findings.</p>	<p><i>Critical Realist</i></p> <p>Reality exists.</p> <p>It is driven by natural laws but can never be completely understood or uncovered.</p>	<p><i>Critical reality</i></p> <p>Reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, ethnic, and gender values.</p>	<p><i>Relativist</i></p> <p>Reality exists in the form of multiple mental representations.</p>
<p><b>Epistemological</b></p> <p>Nature of the relationship between the inquirer and the knowable</p>	<p><i>Objectivist</i></p> <p>Knowledge is scientific. The inquirer adopts a detached, non-interactive position.</p>	<p><i>Modified objective</i></p> <p>Objectivity remains an ideal but can only be approximated with special emphasis place on external guardians such as critical community.</p>	<p><i>Subjectivist</i></p> <p>Values of inquirer influence inquiry.</p>	<p><i>Subjectivist</i></p> <p>The findings are the fused interaction process between the inquirer and the inquired.</p> <p>Personal experiences.</p>
<p><b>Methodology</b></p> <p>Whole process of collecting and interpreting data</p>	<p><i>Experimental / Manipulative</i></p> <p>Deductive and reductionist. Hypothesis is stated in advance and subjected to empirical tests under careful control.</p>	<p><i>Modified Experimental / Manipulative</i></p> <p>Redress imbalance by doing inquiry in natural settings.</p>	<p><i>Dialogic / Transformative</i></p> <p>Eliminates false consciousness and facilitates emancipation.</p>	<p><i>Hermeneutic / Dialectic</i></p> <p>Inductive and interpretive.</p>
<p><b>Methods</b></p> <p>Specific techniques of data collection</p>	<p>Quantitative methods i.e. questionnaires.</p>	<p>Mixed methods through quantitative methods are often used.</p>	<p>Some mixed methods with care taken to permit views of respondents to be expressed.</p>	<p>Qualitative methods, i.e. interview, texts, analysis of cases.</p>

**Source:** Adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985); Guba (1990)

Four research paradigms are typically recognised among researchers, namely, positivism, post-positivism, constructivism and critical theory. These are summarised in Table 5.1 above. Each of these four research paradigms is now briefly reviewed as a basis for justifying the approach adopted in this research.

i) Positivism: Positivism, sometimes referred to as ‘scientific method or science research’ (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: 2), is based upon a realist ontology that believes that truth exists and, hence, it is concerned with revealing the true nature of reality. The positivist researcher believes that there is only one truth, that an exact truth that can be discovered by testing the hypothesis and, in the social sciences, through the utilisation of statistical and mathematical methods. Hence, the positivist paradigm is generally adopted by quantitative researchers (Bailey, 2007) who maintain an objective epistemology. Despite its widespread application, however, there are several criticisms of positivism. For example, it is assumed to be unbiased whereas many argue that all investigation is, to varying extents, subject to researcher bias whilst, in particular, and as Pritchard et al. (2011) argue, just one (social) truth or reality does not exist and, hence, this paradigm represents a limited interpretation and perspective.

ii) Post-positivism: Within the post-positivist paradigm, the central focus remains on establishing reality. However, researchers are critical about their work, accepting that they cannot constantly remain unbiased while undertaking research (Guba, 1990). Thus, to remain as far as possible unbiased, the post-positivist adopts a critical realist ontology and modified objectivity. This is typically manifested in the application of triangulation and a mixed methods approach which allows the researcher to exercise a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 2009). Thus, one of the benefits of post-positivism is, as O’Leary (2004: 6-7) suggests, that it is ‘intuitive and holistic, inductive and exploratory, with findings that are qualitative in nature’. However, Mackenzie and Knipe (2006: 3) suggest that positivist and post-positivist research is ‘most commonly aligned with quantitative methods of data collection and analysis’ and is unable to explore multiple truths or realities that might benefit from qualitative research methods.

iii) Critical theory: The critical theory paradigm represents an ideologically-influenced approach to research that views society as suffering from conflict, inequality and power



struggles (Smith, 2010). Critical theorists acknowledge there is no true reality (Bailey, 2007) and that the paradigm reflects the values of researchers; they view reality through the lens of their own beliefs and values. Thus, critical theory researchers adopt a subjectivist epistemology which, in turn, reflects the principal limitation of the paradigm, in as much as researchers undertaking research from this paradigmatic perspective believe that ‘the scholar is not independent from what is researched’ (Bailey, 2007: 55).

iv) Constructivism: Constructivism is also known as interpretivism (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The constructivist paradigm represents a distinct shift in terms of ontology, epistemology and methodology, based as it is on the relativist ontological belief that there exist several (social) realities that people might construct in an environment (Savenye & Robinson, 2004). The epistemological position is subjective as the researcher unearths reality through personal interactions with participants, seeking to uncover their varying understandings of reality. Methodologically, constructivists favour hermeneutics (that is, the interpretation of human understanding) and dialectics, or the comparison of differing positions and views (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), whilst Mackenzie and Knipe (2006: 3) note that the constructivist researcher ‘is most likely to rely on qualitative data collection methods and analysis’.

#### **5.4 Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives in Dark Tourism**

As noted above, ontology refers to the researcher’s ‘beliefs about the nature of reality’ (Killam, 2013: 7). The researcher’s ontological position is significant in the field of tourism, particularly in dark tourism, given the complex and varying interactions between dark places and their visitors. Carpentier (2018) observes that, through the adoption of appropriate ontological and epistemological positions, it is possible for the researcher to recognise the ‘darkness’ and ‘construction of places’. The ontological perspective follows a continuum from *realism and relativism* (Carpentier, 2018). On the one hand, realism reflects the belief in an ‘absolute truth about the world’ (Carpentier, 2018: 8); on the other hand, relativism posits that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Rather, there can be multiple truths constructed, both socially and psychologically (Carpentier, 2018). As Carpentier (2018) accepts, however, a limitation associated with relativism is that it does not, of course, enable the researcher to clarify ‘an absolute truth about the real world and meanings’, hence differing epistemologies.

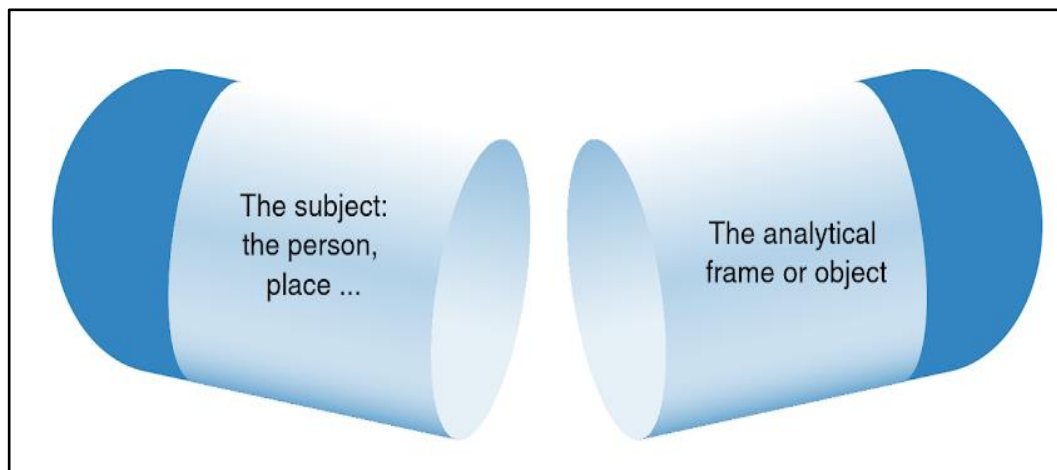
There are two broad epistemological approaches: *positivism and interpretivism* (Bahari, 2010). Walliman (2016) notes that the positivist approach is based on realism, and seeks to discover one truth of the world; specifically, it ‘aims to establish cause and effect’ (Walliman, 2016: 239). In contrast, interpretivism seeks to ‘reveal interpretations and meanings’ (Walliman, 2016: 237). Research conducted within an interpretive epistemology contributes to building an understanding of multiple realities, not least because it discards the assertion that ‘human behaviour can be codified in laws by identifying underlying regularities’ (Walliman, 2016: 237). The interpretive emphasis on human behaviour allows the researcher to understand the meaning, belief or feelings attached to a particular object or place. Given its aim and objectives, specifically, the identification and analysis of competing stakeholder views with regards to the development, management and interpretation of the WoT, the constructivist paradigm, following a relativist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, is deemed the most appropriate to be adopted for the research in this thesis. In other words, this approach is most suitable as the research will involve eliciting the views of different stakeholders with potentially different opinions on the WoT; the interpretive approach will allow the researcher to understand the different attitudes and feelings of given stakeholder groups towards the memorial.

### **5.5 Case Study Approach**

As established in Chapter 1, the research in this thesis is based upon the case study of the WoT in New Delhi. A case study methodology is particularly useful when there is a need to gain an ‘in-depth appreciation of an issue, event or phenomenon of interest, in its natural real-life context’ (Crowe et al., 2011: 1). The case study approach is commonly used across various disciplines and fields (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2016). According to Yin (2018: 286), a case study as a ‘research method, [is] generally used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth and its real-world context’. Within tourism studies, the case study approach is widely utilised as a research methodology (Beeton, 2016; Stevenson et al., 2008). A case study provides an opportunity to gain an in-depth and intensive insight into real-life and complex situations, by utilising various sources of evidence that can have a wider application (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Hewitt-Taylor, 2002). More specifically, the case study enables the researcher to answer questions such as ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Alternatively, Gratton and Jones (2010: 107) suggest that ‘the use of case study research is based upon the argument that understanding human

activity requires analysis of both its development over time and the environment and context within which the activity occurs’. Thus, a case study is like a capsule with two halves; one as a subject and the other as an analytical frame (Thomas, 2016) (see Figure 5.4 below). Hence, both parts need each other, as one will not work without the other (Thomas, 2016). In short, the use of case studies can be utilised to explain, describe or explore phenomena or events in which they occur (Yin, 2018). Hence, for the research in this thesis, a case study is deemed the most appropriate in order to explore the concept of dissonance within the context of the WoT. Referring back to Thomas’s (2016) concept of a case study being in two halves - the subject and the analytical framework – here, the *subject* is WoT, and the *analytical framework* or *object* is the potential dissonance surrounding the WoT as experienced by its stakeholder groups. As Thomas (2016: 16) states, each half ‘is necessary in order for the other half to work’ and, hence, a case study approach facilitates the investigation of potential dissonance at the WoT by providing a context for the researcher to consider the broader political framework within which choices are made by positioning stakeholders at the core of the investigation (Stevenson et al., 2008).

**Figure 5.4:** Case study as a capsule



**Source:** Adapted from Thomas (2016)

Meyer’s (2001: 349) table of choices and steps in case study design (Table 5.2 below) illustrates ‘a wide range of decisions that need to be made in the context of a particular case study’ and, subsequently, ‘the methodological considerations linked to these decisions’. The design choices include the selection of cases, sampling time and selection of data collection procedure.

**Table 5.2:** Choices and Steps in Case Study Design

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1. Selection of cases	Single or multiple sampling	
	Unit of analysis	
2. Sampling Time	Number of data collections	
	When to enter	
3. Selection of data collection procedures	Interviews	Sampling interviewees Structured versus unstructured Use of tape recorder Sampling documents
	Documents	Use of documents Choosing method When to enter How much
	Observations	Which groups

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Source: Adapted from Meyer's (2001)

According to Meyer (2001), case studies can involve single or multiple cases. However, the research in this thesis is based upon a single case study, the WoT in New Delhi. The second step / choice in case study design as stated by Meyer (2001) involves the sampling time. Meyer (2001: 334) states that when conducting a case study, there are numerous important issues to select when sampling time, such as how many times data should be collected. For this research, data was only collected once. All participants were contacted prior to the interview process, and dates for interviews were finalised either by email or by phone. The third step involves selection and choices regarding data collection procedure. Meyer (2001) states that there are number of choices of methods for collecting data such as interviews, documents and observations. The data collection tool selected for this study was individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews and the principal questions were open and non-directive. The selection strategy utilised for this research is discussed in more detail in section 5.7 and 5.8.

There are several advantages associated with the use of case studies (Denscombe, 2010; Zainal, 2007). First, they allow for the generation of detailed and in-depth qualitative accounts in real-world contexts, thus facilitating the examination of the complexities of actual situations and revealing data may not be acquired through a survey or experimental research (Zainal, 2007). Second, the use of case studies allows the

researcher to engage with relationships and social processes in a holistic way that is rejected by survey approaches (Denscombe, 2010). Third, the case study approach offers the opportunity to gain significant insight into a particular case, enabling the researcher to ‘gather data from a variety of sources and to converge the data to illuminate the case. (Baxter & Jack, 2008: 556).

Inevitably, however, the case study approach is not without its limitations (Zainal, 2007). Case studies are often labelled as lengthy processes that produce a large amount of data over a period of time that might not be managed and organised systematically (Zainal, 2007). In a similar vein, Yin (2003;2018) criticises the case study for lacking rigour and presenting little base for generalisation. In addition, Yin (2003;2018) also considers the case methodology to be ‘microscopic’ owing to typically to small sample sizes. Although, in defence, Zainal (2007) argues that ‘parameter establishment’ and ‘objective setting’ of the research are much more significant in the case study method than a big sample size. Moreover, Crowe et al. (2011) note that there are several ways to address this concern by including the use of theoretical sampling and transparency throughout the research process. Despite these challenges, however, the case study method is widely deployed in research that explores social phenomena within actual settings (Thomas, 2016; Zainal, 2007) and, if thoughtfully conceptualised and carefully undertaken, it can generate powerful insights into many significant aspects of the phenomenon under investigation.

Generally, a variety of terms are employed to define different types of case study. Stake (1995;2006), for example, categorises case studies as intrinsic, instrumental and collective, whilst Yin (2003;2018) distinguishes between explanatory, exploratory or descriptive case studies. Table 5.3 below summarises the different types of case study.

For the purpose of this study, the case study is intrinsic as it focuses on a unique, specific context: the WoT. Moreover, it is also intrinsic in nature, as the researcher has a genuine interest in the case study not only because of its character as a heavily politicised memorial reflecting the nature of the event it commemorates but also because of its theoretical links as a memorial to the notion of dark tourism in India.

**Table 5.3:** Definitions of case studies

Stake (1995;2006 )	Yin (2003;2018)
<p><b>Intrinsic</b> - The term intrinsic suggests that researchers who have a genuine interest in the case should use this approach when the intent is to better understand the case. It is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because in all its particularity and ordinariness, the case itself is of interest. The purpose is not to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomenon.</p>	<p><b>Explanatory</b> - This type of case study would be used if you were seeking to answer a question that sought to explain the presumed causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies. In evaluation language, the explanations would link program implementation with program effects.</p>
<p><b>Instrumental</b> - Is used to accomplish something other than understanding a particular situation. It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else. The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, and because it helps the researcher pursue the external interest. The case may or may not be seen as typical of other cases (Stake, 1995).</p>	<p><b>Exploratory</b> - This type of case study is used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes.</p>
<p><b>Collective</b> - Collective case studies are similar in nature and description to multiple case studies.</p>	<p><b>Descriptive</b> - This type of case study is used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred (Yin, 2003).</p>

**Source:** Adapted from Baxter & Jack (2008)

To support the research into the WoT, the researcher has undertaken a collective approach whereby a number of similar case studies are examined in order to draw

comparisons and to help construct a general overview of the position of commemorative memorials within contemporary Indian society (see Chapter 3).

The memorials selected were broken down into five memorial typologies, namely, Division Trauma memorials, war memorials, memorials for acts of mass massacre / civil unrest, memorials for terrorist attacks, memorials for disasters (manmade / natural) and political memorials. Clearly, the WoT aligns with the acts of mass massacre / civil unrest typology. Applying a collective approach permits a comparative analysis exercise whereby similarities can be identified, thus enabling a more holistic interpretation with regards to the WoT, its typology, and its links to dark tourism. Thus, the collective approach also illustrates the value and use of the instrumental approach, which plays a supportive role by facilitating an understanding of the process by which memorials are developed in India.

Having provided an outline of the main research paradigm and case study approach adopted in this thesis, the following sections now turn to the specific methods and processes employed in the research.

## **5.6 The Qualitative Research Approach**

Generally, within research strategies, there are two broad categories of research methods; quantitative and qualitative. Both are regarded as legitimate tools by researchers (Walle, 1997), although for studies such as this that follow a constructivist and interpretivist approach, qualitative methods are generally considered to be more appropriate. As Abawi (2008: 10) notes, qualitative research offers ‘much richer, in-depth data, which often provide insights into subtle nuances that quantitative approaches might miss’. Nonetheless, the roots of both qualitative and quantitative research methods lie in the philosophy which structures valid research by adopting best or most appropriate methods for a specific study (Descombe, 2010; Mazanec, 2005; Yin, 2003).

Qualitative research assumes that reality is subjective, whereas quantitative research uses ‘measurements and statistical analysis of observable behaviour’ (Gratton & Jones, 2010: 286) based on the assumption of one objective reality or truth. The decision to generate data through the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods depends upon the nature of the question and objectives of the research; thus, Gratton and Jones (2010) state broadly that if a researcher is interested in measuring a particular objective phenomenon, then data are collected by using a quantitative approach. However, if the

researcher is interested in the feelings / opinions of people, then a qualitative approach is more appropriate (Gratton & Jones, 2010).

Quantitative methods have been argued against on various grounds (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), not least their inability to uncover deeper, underlying meanings within research (Amaratunga et al., 2002). They are unable to provide an in-depth narrative of human perceptions and beliefs (Choy, 2014), nor answer various questions within the research (Bryman, 2016). In short, quantitative methods may reveal the ‘what’, but not the ‘why’. Thus, Walliman (2016) acknowledges that in order to fully explore the extent of a problem, quantitative methods are suitable; however, to examine the nature of that problem, qualitative methods are more appropriate. In other words, quantitative methods produce results that are lacking in subtlety and nuanced explanation, and outcomes can only be possible through the qualitative method (Walliman, 2016).

**Table 5.4:** Comparative analysis of quantitative and qualitative research

<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
Pursues a linear research	Pursues a non- linear research
Follows Positivism	Follows interpretivism
Uses numbers as the unit of analysis	Uses visual images or words as the unit of analysis
The research lean towards analysing specific variables.	The research leans towards holistic perspective.
Emphasis on causes and effect	Emphasis on perception and meaning
Research count on collecting data based on numerically	The research relies on language and analysing and interpreting its meaning
Orientation: Utilises a deductive approach to test theories.	Orientation: Utilises an inductive approach to test theories.
Epistemology: It is based on a positivist approach inherent in natural science.	Epistemology: It rejects positivism by relying on the individual interpretation of social reality.
Ontology: Objectivist in that social reality is regarded as an objective fact.	Ontology: Constructionist, in that social reality seems as a constantly shifting product of perception.

**Source:** Bryman (2016); Denscombe (2010); Walliman (2016: 32)



However, it is important to note that qualitative research also has its own limitations. Choy (2014), for example, criticises qualitative methods for being more time-consuming than quantitative methods. It is also perceived that research based on qualitative data is subjective, inevitably suffers from researcher bias and lacks generalisability. Nevertheless, in order to minimise the subjectivity of research, Jensen and Rodgers (2001) argue that researchers should utilise different methods to validate the research findings. Moreover, Hsieh (2004) claims that the strength of qualitative case study research lies in the fact that, by studying human behaviour in detail, it allows researchers to generate rich information of the context in which the case study takes place.

Overall, then, qualitative and quantitative research methods generate different findings which reflect the different techniques followed by the researcher to collect and analyse data. Equally, a very different epistemology is associated with quantitative and qualitative research (Walliman, 2016). Table 5.4 above highlights in detail the distinctions between the two, thereby providing a fundamental review of the two different research methods (Walliman, 2016).

Within any research, then, including within the field of tourism, the selection of a suitable methodology and appropriate research tools is of fundamental importance. In addition, as Gratton and Jones (2010) observe when selecting an appropriate method, the researcher must keep in mind the nature and objectives of the research. Hence, in this study, the purpose of selecting a qualitative research method is to gain insights into the perceptions of different stakeholder groups with regards to the WoT memorial in New Delhi. That is, rather than identifying some cause and effect relationship between stakeholders and the WoT, the emphasis of the research is on capturing the deeper meanings of the site to stakeholders, revealing their opinions, feelings, experiences and views on the memorial and the manner in which it represents their history of the event it commemorates (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The stakeholder groups were divided into four groups. One group represented the viewpoints of the management committee whose perceptions revolved around the socio-political narrative conveyed by the WoT and control issues. In contrast, the expert brought with them an alternative insider's view of the development of the memorial. The eye-witness group reflected on their perceptions of the event and recognition issues, while the general community group (Sikhs and Hindus) were concerned with the broader implications positively and negatively to both communities of having a memorial which commemorates a dark event in contemporary

Indian history. Therefore, the data generated from qualitative methods were, as Gratton and Jones (2010) state, rich and subjective.

Moreover, the qualitative approach allows researchers to adopt a flexible research design (Marshall & Rossman, 2014), providing them with the opportunity to seek ‘understanding through...methods such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing and others that yield descriptive data’ (Taylor et al., 2015: 4). Thus, qualitative research is a powerful instrument of ‘data collection and analysis, an inductive analysis process, and a product that is a rich description of the phenomenon’ (Merriam & Grenier, 2019: 16). Additionally, the findings from qualitative research may be supported by quotations from participant interviews and from the researcher’s field notes, offering a source of ‘evidence’ for the reader for the findings of the study (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Again, therefore, in order to carry out this research, aligned with its ontological and epistemological positions, a qualitative research approach was deemed most appropriate. Specifically, the nature of this study suggests the need for intensive research to investigate stakeholders’ feelings and perspectives associated with WoT memorial, in order to critically review the dissonance (if any) among those groups.

### **5.7 Selection Strategy**

In qualitative research, effective and appropriate sampling is fundamental to the quality of the research (Coyne, 1997). There are two approaches to the selection of samples: probability and non-probability sampling (Denscombe, 2010). Based on statistical theory, probability sampling relies on the use of the random selection process of people, whereas non-probability sampling involves choice or discretion in the selection process (Denscombe, 2010). In non-probability sampling, the selection of people is based on their expertise on the particular event, their personal experiences associated with the event or the fact that they might be different from the norm (Denscombe, 2010). Nevertheless, the selection of respondents through non-probability sampling is not a subject of pure chance; that is, individuals are purposefully selected. Thus, for this research, both non probability and probability sampling was also employed.

Non-probability selection method was used for three out of four categories of informants in this research, namely, (i) Representatives of the management committee of Rakab Ganj Sahib Sikh Temple and (ii) the experts and (iii) eyewitness groups associated

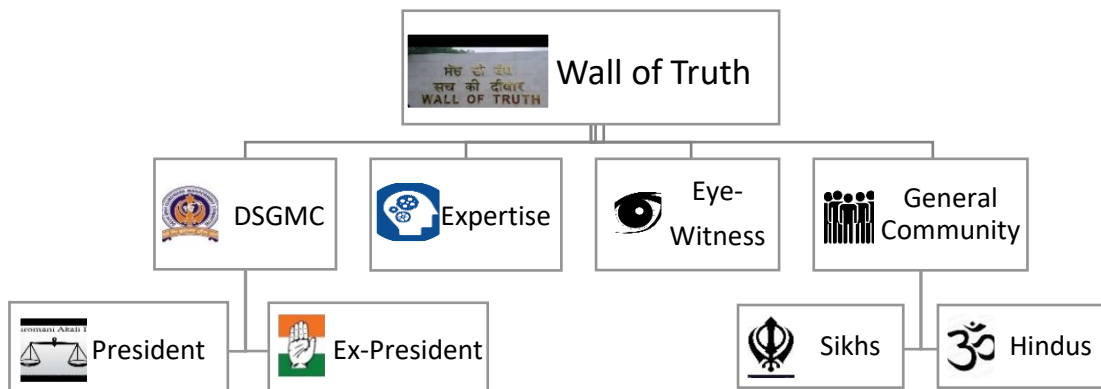
with the 1984 riots. In contrast, (iv) the fourth group of respondents, members of the general community (Sikhs and Hindus) were selected through probability sampling.

For this research, the first key informant identified was the President of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC). Similarly, the ex-President of DSGMC was also identified as a key informant given his significant role in the case study, specifically in the development of the WoT inasmuch as he filed a case in Delhi High Court of India challenging the siting of the proposed memorial in New Delhi. The researcher also then identified the second key candidate; a senior advocate of Supreme Court of India, who is also a Member of Punjab Legislative Assembly and prominent human rights activist, as a crucial and extremely important informant. Together, these three individuals were selected on the basis of their role, profession and expertise to provide useful information on issues related to the WoT. All three individuals agreed to participate in the study and therefore, in-depth interviews were conducted in their respective offices.

For the third group of respondents, eyewitnesses, the snowballing technique was employed as it was considered compatible with the selection strategy (Denscombe, 2010). Specifically, the second approach was to identify potential eyewitness participants recommended by the existing identified respondents in the first stage (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Stevenson et al., 2008; Walliman, 2016). This proved to be very beneficial as a number of potential eye witness informants were suggested during the first initial interview with the key candidate. The senior advocate of Supreme Court of India personally introduced the researcher to one of the three people who gave eye-witness testimonies in Delhi High Court against some of the direct key perpetrators of 1984 violence. Participants were able to suggest referrals and made personal contacts to targeted informants. One of the key informants recommended the researcher to visit the 1984 riots victim's colony where eyewitness informants accepted the interview request. The sampling process proceeded through several rounds as new respondents were approached following a recommendation by earlier respondents (Denscombe, 2010), in so doing, enlarging and improving the quality of data for this research. It was also useful as the researcher was able to generate greater trust with the subject due to 'being introduced by a known member of the population' (Gratton & Jones, 2010: 113). The key advantage of employing the snowballing method is that the gathering of contributors can be achieved using the multiplier effect in a process that can be repeated until the sample size is achieved (Denscombe, 2010). The limitation of this kind of sampling, however, is

that it can be time-consuming. In this study, the researcher had to travel extensively to conduct interviews. With the snowballing technique, it presented a selective and broad list of theoretical stakeholders for the research (Figure 5.5 below).

**Figure 5.5:** Stakeholders theoretical sampling



### 5.8 Semi-Structured Interviews

As discussed earlier, this research adopts a qualitative approach; attention now turns to identify and discuss the data collection instruments used for this study. In order to achieve rich and in-depth data, it is necessary to employ the methods most appropriate to the research questions. There are multiple practices and methods in qualitative research, such as narrative inquiry, observation, interviews, online ethnography and focus groups (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Broadly, a dialogic approach is necessary in order to generate rich and meaningful qualitative data. Such an approach is manifested in both interviews and focus groups, though there are implications associated with each method (Somekh & Lewin, 2007). Focus groups are regarded as a particularly attractive and easy option (Somekh & Lewin, 2007), as well offering the opportunity for new and unexpected themes to emerge from the group conversations (Carey & Asbury, 2016). However, group conversations might be influenced by dominant participants, whilst conflicts might also occur. It is for the latter reason in particular that the use of focus groups was not considered a feasible option for this research, specifically the potential for clashes between participants who hold

opposing opinions. Such conflicts could lead to ill-feeling amongst participants and disrupt the information gathering. Moreover, as noted by Somekh and Lewin (2007), establishing focus groups may, in certain circumstances, create many logistical problems.

Hence, the data collection tool selected for this study was individual face-to-face interviews. Somekh and Lewin (2007: 43) suggest that the interview is ‘much more than just a tool, like a drill to screw deeper into the discursive structure that frames the worlds of “subjects”’. Moreover, as Gratton and Jones (2010) note, interviews allow unexpected data and themes to emerge, which can be essential for the research.

There are three key common fundamental forms of research interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Bailey, 2007; Gill et al., 2008; Walliman, 2016). Structured interviews are the least flexible, the aim being to ask the same questions in the same order during each interview; conversely, unstructured interviews, though addressing topics relevant to the research, follow no predetermined structure and are, essentially, open-ended, free-flowing conversations. For this research, semi-structured interviews were considered to be the most appropriate method as, unlike structured interviews, they allow the flexibility for themes to emerge and to be followed up by the researcher (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Moreover, they enable participants to divulge insights into their feelings and behaviour, which may not be apparent to the interviewer (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Thus, semi-structured interviews ‘contain structured and unstructured sections with standardised and open format questions’ (Walliman, 2016: 127). The semi-structured interviews become a social and flexible process in which a key informant performs a pertinent role within the research (King et al., 2019).

In this research, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted in a flexible manner (Appendix three), guided by an interview schedule which provided the framework for the interviews. This framework listed the principal questions which were open and non-directive. In an open-ended interview, questions are shorter, and answers are longer, and often enable the interviewer to generate unanticipated issues and information (Somekh & Lewin, 2007). Hence, the open-ended questions stimulate the extensive sharing of information (Bailey, 2007). However, the disadvantage of open-ended questions is that they can take longer to complete, and this may itself result in questions remaining partially unanswered (Walliman, 2016). Though the researcher follows a semi-structured format, it must be noted that the interviewer may at times diverge from the guide to pursue an emerging question. The interviewer may also reword questions and drop / add questions and change the sequence as necessary. This can be

seen as an opportunity as it allows participants to express themselves freely and share their views / emotions for the first time. Thus, it is important to note that the structure of interviews varied from participant to participant.

The questions in the interview schedules below were used to guide the focus and direction of the interviews. Two sets of semi-structured questions were employed: interview question schedule 1 (Figure 5.6) for the DSGMC and interview question schedule 2 (Figure 5.7) for the expertise, eye-witness groups and the general community (Sikhs and Hindus).

**Figure 5.6:** Interview Question Schedule 1

<p>Interview Question Schedule 1: DSGMC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What do you consider the purpose of this memorial to be?</li><li>2. Why do you think it took so long to build this memorial?</li><li>3. Why was this memorial built within the confines of a Sikh Temple?</li><li>4. Was a more 'neutral' location considered?</li><li>5. Who are your intended visitors? Why will they want to come here?</li><li>6. Do you think the memorial will become a tourist attraction for visitors? Should it be promoted as such?</li><li>7. Will you encourage other temples to send visitors to this memorial?</li><li>8. As per the report, Punjab's Chief Minister Mr Parkesh Singh Badal and his son Mr Sukhbir Singh Badal was supposed to inaugurate the memorial, why there was a last-minute change?</li><li>9. Do you think the government should have played a role in the development of this memorial?</li></ol>
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**Figure 5.7:** Interview Question Schedule 2

<p>Interview Question Schedule 2: Expertise, Eyewitness and General community</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Do you think that it was a good idea to build a memorial to commemorate the 3000 Sikhs who got killed during the 1984 riots? If so, why (or why not?)</li><li>2. Do you think it was right/appropriate to build the memorial within the grounds of the Temple in Delhi?</li><li>3. Do you think it would have been more appropriate for the memorial to have been developed as a National Memorial built on state grounds?</li><li>4. DSGMC endorse that the Wall of Truth will not be used as a platform for any political benefits. Yet, the foundation stone was laid by Punjab's Chief Minister Mr Parkash Singh Badal back in November 2014. Can one ignore the political angle associated with this memorial?</li><li>5. Would you visit/have you visited the Wall of Truth memorial? If so, why (or why not?)</li><li>6. What role do you personally consider to be the purpose or role of the memorial? What does it mean to you?</li><li>7. Would visiting the Wall of Truth motivate you to visit any other commemorative attraction/site related to death and tragedy?</li><li>8. How would you describe people who visit sites like the Wall of Truth? For example, Tourists, Worshippers, Pilgrims, Mourners, Visitors, 'Commemorators' or just Curious?</li></ol>
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Interviews were conducted in three languages: English, Hindi and Punjabi according to the preference of participants although, out of a total of 26 interviews, only two were conducted in Punjabi / Hindi as the respondents were not comfortable with the English language. The remaining 24 were conducted in the English language. The duration of the interviews varied from 35 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes, except for one interview, which took half a day owing to the participant's level of hospitality. The interviews were audio recorded with the consent of the participants and all were subsequently transcribed. The two Punjabi / Hindi interviews were also translated into English by the researcher, as she is fluent in all three languages.

The participants, including both males and females, varied in age from 23 to 96 years old (Table 5.5 below). Their place of residence also varied, some living in New Delhi (the actual location of the memorial), others in other cities and towns such as Chandigarh, Mohali and Haryana. The reasoning for these location choices was that a balance needed to be achieved in relation to the religious backgrounds of the participants to include both Sikhs and Hindus.

**Table 5.5:** Participants sampling

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Place of Interview</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Stakeholder category</b>
1	New Delhi	Male	61	Sikh	Management committee (MC1)
2	New Delhi	Male	Unknown	Sikh	Management committee (MC2)
3	New Delhi	Male	63	Sikh	Expert (E3)
4	Mohali	Female	46	Sikh	Eyewitness (EW4)
5	Mohali	Female	42	Sikh	Eyewitness (EW5)
6	Mohali	Female	68	Sikh	Eyewitness (EW6)
7	Mohali	Male	62	Sikh	Eyewitness (EW7)
8	Mohali	Male	71	Sikh	Eyewitness (EW8)
9	Chandigarh	Male	65	Hindu	General community (GC9)
10	Chandigarh	Female	23	Hindu	General community (GC10)
11	Chandigarh	Male	56	Hindu	General community (GC11)
12	New Delhi	Male	24	Hindu	General community (GC12)
13	New Delhi	Male	28	Hindu	General community (GC13)
14	New Delhi	Female	59	Hindu	General community (GC14)
15	Haryana	Male	38	Hindu	General community (GC15)
16	Haryana	Male	69	Hindu	General community (GC16)
17	Haryana	Female	41	Hindu	General community (GC17)



18	Haryana	Female	55	Sikh	General community (GC18)
19	Mohali	Male	62	Sikh	General community (GC19)
20	Delhi	Male	24	Sikh	General community (GC20)
21	Haryana	Male	65	Sikh	General community (GC21)
22	New Delhi	Female	96	Sikh	General community (GC22)
23	Delhi	Female	61	Sikh	General community (GC23)
24	Haryana	Male	55	Sikh	General community (GC24)
25	New Delhi	Female	43	Sikh	General community (GC25)
26	New Delhi	Male	31	Sikh	General community (GC26)

Having gained ethical clearance from the University of Central Lancashire's Ethics Committee, the interviews were carried between April and November 2017. During this period, the researcher travelled twice to India to achieve the required data. All respondents were contacted prior to the interview process, and dates for interviews were finalised either by email or by phone. The researcher also obtained permission from each respondent to use an audio tape recorder during the interview process via the interview consent form. All the interviews were conducted either in the participant's home or offices.

Interview question schedule 1 was devised specifically for the representatives of the DSGMC stakeholder group, who administers the WoT memorial; as this group was the first to be interviewed. This was followed up by an interview with the ex-president of DSGMC, who were interviewed using both sets of interview questions.

The expert on the topic area, the senior advocate of Supreme Court of India, Member of Punjab Legislative Assembly and human rights activist, was interviewed

under interview question schedule 2. The other two stakeholder groups: eye-witness groups and the general community (including both Sikhs and Hindus) were also interviewed under interview question schedule 2. The eye-witness group included five Sikh participants who were direct victims of the 1984 riots, whilst the general community group comprised nine Sikh and nine Hindu participants. After conducting a total of 26 in-depth semi-structured interviews, the researcher concluded that no extra data was emerging from the investigation and that the saturation point had been reached.

## **5.9 Data Analysis Process**

The process of data analysis has been characterised by Thorne (2000) as one of the most complex stages of qualitative research. Specifically, it is essential for qualitative researchers to construct a rigorous and systematic method of analysis in order to yield meaningful and useful results (Attride-Stirling, 2001). For the purpose of this study, thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019) was deemed the most suitable.

The benefit of using the thematic analysis method is that it allows the researcher to apply a tried and tested systematic approach to data analysis which is widely used in qualitative research (Alhojailan, 2012; Attride-Stirling, 2001; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is an analytical tool ‘for systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meanings (themes) across a data set’, hence, allowing ‘the researcher to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences’ (Braun et al., 2019: 57). In other words, this method offers a means of coding and analysing data systematically, which then can be linked to broader theoretical or conceptual issues (Braun et al., 2019).

In order to undertake a thematic analysis, one must be familiar with the word ‘theme’. A theme ‘captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 82). Thus, a theme is an outcome of coding, as ‘code is the label referred to special parts of the data that contribute to a theme’ (Javadi & Zarea, 2016: 34). A theme may be evident a few times in the data and must be of significance in addressing the research question (Javadi & Zarea, 2016).

There are several advantages related to the use of thematic analysis. First, it is a highly flexible and accessible approach which can be modified according to the requirements of the study, and which provides a rich, detailed yet the complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2019; Nowell et al., 2017). Second, it is a useful

method to investigate and examine the perspectives of different stakeholder groups involved at a site by emphasising similarities and differences within stakeholders opinions, actions and experiences as well as producing unanticipated insights (Nowell et al., 2017). Here, it was used in order to detect and identify various factors of contention generated by the different stakeholder groups associated with WoT (the eye-witness group, the expertise, the general community and the management committee). Stakeholder interpretation is important in terms of providing the most appropriate analysis to identify any potential dissonance at the WoT site.

Third, a researcher using thematic analysis is required to adopt a well-structured approach towards handling data, resulting in the production of a clear and well-organised final report (Nowell et al., 2017). Alhojailan (2012) suggests that thematic analysis can be appropriate when the study aims to understand how the participant's viewpoints influence current situations. Within this research, some respondents may have had varying personal biases and therefore, information gained could be driven by a perspective, where a participant's views can have some influence on the level of understanding on either the WoT memorial or on the commemorative process in India in general. Therefore, it is essential to recognise this as a possibility when analysing their statements from interviews.

Although there are many advantages to using thematic analysis, it is also essential to acknowledge its disadvantages or limitations. While thematic analysis is flexible (which is an advantage), it can also be a disadvantage in itself, as this flexibility can lead to inconsistency when developing themes (Holloway & Todres, 2003). Holloway and Todres (2003) also argue that thematic analysis is a process, but not a separate method, that is employed within several qualitative methods. Hence, it used to assist researchers in their analysis. Conversely, some researchers such as; Braun and Clarke (2006), King (2004), Nowell et al. (2017) and Thorne (2000), claim that thematic analysis should be considered to be a foundational method for qualitative analysis of its right, as it delivers fundamental and essential skills for conducting various other forms of qualitative analysis. Despite such debates and criticism, however, thematic analysis enables the researcher to conduct qualitative research which aims to create rich, sensitive, insightful and trustworthy research findings (Nowell et al., 2017).

In order to conduct a thematic analysis, Braun et al. (2019) outline a six-phase approach:

### ***Phase 1: Familiarising Yourself with Data***

This phase involves the researcher immersing themselves in their data by reading and re-reading data, such as interviews transcripts, listening to the audio recordings or watching video recording (Braun et al., 2019). In this research, all the 26 interviews were audio recorded and also notes were taken during the interviews. Subsequently, the interviews were transcribed and the transcripts, along with the additional field notes, were read and re-read, thus facilitating a greater level of understanding of the information gathered and consolidated. As Braun et al. (2019: 61) observe, this first phase allows the opportunity to ‘become intimately familiar with your data set’s content and to begin to notice things that might be relevant to research question’. This process was subsequently repeated numerous times throughout the research.

### ***Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes***

Once the research was digested to a good level of understanding, phase two of the thematic analysis approach was undertaken, which involves the coding of the data gathered through the systematic analysis (Braun et al., 2019). Systematic analysis requires researchers to repeatedly re-examine and re-visit the data to enable them to develop codes that allow ‘the researcher to simplify and focus on specific characteristics of the data’ (Nowell et al., 2017: 6). Braun et al. (2019: 61) note that codes provide an acute ‘summary of a portion of data or describe the content of the data – such descriptive or semantic codes typically stay close to the content of the data and to the participant’s meanings’. Nonetheless, Braun et al. (2019) also suggest that codes can also go beyond the participant’s meanings and present an interpretation of the data content.

In this research, in order to manage the coding process, the researcher decided to code on ‘hard-copy data’, identify the code name and then to highlight the section of the text associated with it. The use of a computer software method, NVivo was considered but, after investing some considerable time in learning this process, the researcher felt more comfortable with the hard-copy approach than utilising the NVivo / file codes. Specifically, hard-copy coding process involved highlighting the sentences from each participant’s interview transcript and by taking excerpts that could be used to answer the study’s objectives. This process was repeated throughout each transcript comprising the

data set until all the data were fully coded. The process of searching for themes (Phase 3) then commenced.

### ***Phase 3: Searching for Themes***

In phase three, themes take shape from codes. The fundamental process of generating themes and subthemes, which are subcomponents of themes, comprises the clustering or dissolving together of codes that appear to share certain unifying feature. This is done in order to reflect and illustrate a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data set (Braun et al., 2019). Another important element of this stage is that it facilitates the identification of the relationship between the themes, in the case of this research themes emerging from stakeholders perspectives and how these themes function together in telling an overall story, which will culminate in answering the research aim.

Braun et al. (2019) note that whilst developing themes, some that emerge may be stand-alone and are distinctive; that is, there may be a central theme or concept that underpins or ties together most of the other themes in the data set. In addition, there can be miscellaneous themes which include all codes and which clearly do not fit anywhere. Hence, these may end up being discarded or may become part of new themes (Braun et al., 2019).

### ***Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes***

Once a set of themes has been formulated, the fourth phase commences by refining them. That is, the coded data extracted for each theme are reviewed in order to make sense of data and whether or not they form a coherent pattern and accurately reflect the meanings in the data set as a whole (Braun & Clarke, 2006). During the course of this phase, if the coded data extracted for each theme do not work in relation to the entire data, initial coding and themes might be relocated under other themes(s) or can alternatively be discarded, or a new code may be inserted. In this study, once a distinctive and a coherent set of themes had been gathered, these were then reviewed in relation to the entire set of data, as in where the data fit together and with regards to the overall story the data tells. Thus, reviewing themes became an ongoing process that reduced data into a more controllable set of important themes which was used to succinctly summarise the whole research (Nowell et al., 2017).

### ***Phase 5: Defining and naming themes***

In the fifth phase, thematic analysis involves the researcher taking a deep analytical approach to the work in order to critically shape the analysis into what Braun et al. (2019: 67) refer to as its, 'its fine-grained details'. Specifically, the researcher determines the aspects of data that each theme depicts and then conducts a detailed analysis by identifying the narrative / purpose that each theme reveals (Nowell et al., 2017). Braun et al. (2019) suggest that each theme must be unique and specific. A good thematic analysis should have themes that: (a) have singular focus; (b) do not overlap; (c) directly address the research aim / question; and (d), must be punchy and instantly give the reader a sense of what the theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, et al., 2019).

The main themes identified for this research were; 1) Perceptions of the WoT, 2) Politicisation of commemoration at the WoT followed by 3) WoT and its touristification. Each theme identified regarding the WoT has a clear focus and purpose, which together provides a coherent picture of the case study. The selected extracts from the data will provide a vivid and convincing argument in order to support the analytic points (objectives) made within this research. Selections of shorter quotes are also included to support the understanding of specific points of interpretation and demonstrate the prevalence of the themes.

### ***Phase 6: Producing the Report***

Once a set of themes has been established, the last phase of the thematic analysis process involves finalising the analysis and writing up the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) note that the write-up phase of a thematic analysis must deliver a concise, coherent, rational, nonrepetitive and fascinating account of the data within and across themes. In this study, the researcher was aware that by simply presenting the findings with codes and themes that emerged in the transcripts, the results would lack the richness and would offer a flat descriptive account of the data with very little depth (King, 2004). Hence, in order for the findings to be credible, the researcher examined and analysed all the relevant results that emerged from the data, in so doing, contributing new data to the literature of dark tourism. Thus, it meets Nowell et al.'s (2017) suggestion that literature can be used to strengthen the research findings as well as it can also be used as an opportunity to challenge or add new themes to the literature. Hence, the work conforms to Braun et al.'s (2019) conclusion that researchers must present and link themes logically and meaningfully which should create an overall story regarding what the various themes

reveal about their topic. In addition, King (2004) recommends that direct quotes from participants must be included as they are a vital component of the final report. Therefore, in this thesis, both short and extensive passage of quotations are included to not only facilitate deeper understanding of the topic but also to keep the voice of the interviewees alive within the research.

To summarise, then, having conducted the in-depth semi-structured interviews, the interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the interview data following the process outlined above.

### **5.10 Ethical sensitivity**

Ethical issues exist in all kinds of social research. Qualitative research, such as that undertaken in this thesis, requires the exploration, observation and examination of people and their natural settings (Orb et al., 2001). This often prolongs enquiries and personal interactions with people in the settings during field research, which can create the risk of various ethical concerns (Bailey, 2007). Therefore, research which involves sensitive stakeholder groups should seek ethical clearance prior to commencing any sampling and data collection (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Having met ethical clearance requirements from the relevant ethics committee of the University of Central Lancashire, the research for this thesis was then undertaken in situ within India. Each participant within the research was informed of the nature of the study and was provided with consent forms (Appendix one and two). The participants were fully informed about the use of their data verbally and in writing before data was collected from them (Gratton & Jones, 2010). The participants were also given the right to withdraw from the research at any time (Gratton & Jones, 2010). Data were audio recorded with each participant's consent and was stored in computer database systems, which were password protected (Walliman, 2016). Special precautions were taken into consideration while conducting interviews with vulnerable groups; in this case, the eye-witness groups (Yin, 2018). Participants anonymity and confidentiality were also strictly protected (King et al., 2019), whilst a copy of the findings will also be made available to those participants who request it.

### **5.11 Researcher's Role**

The relation between the researcher and the researched has been a persistent concern in the methodology literature (Manohar et al., 2017; Raheim et al., 2016). Factors such as personal values, beliefs and the social background of the researcher may determine to a

considerable extent the choice of the research topic and / or its methodological approach (Manohar et al., 2017). In addition, Watts (2006) argues that the researcher's background may facilitate the disclosure of more in-depth, detailed data if the researcher is being treated like a friend or counsellor by his / her participants. This is further emphasised by Hayfield and Huxley (2015), who suggest that researchers sharing the same value beliefs, culture, religion, ethnicity or profession as respondents are 'more aware of the lives of their participants' and, thus, have a 'stronger position to conduct ethical research' which represents participants voices in true sense (Hayfield & Huxley, 2015: 4). Nevertheless, different researchers inevitably approach a study from different perspectives, which, in turn, elicits different replies from various participants, which ultimately shape the research's results. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the researcher's background and perspectives, which may have some influence on the choice of the research topic and research methodology.

In this thesis, the researcher is an Indian national. However, her religious views gravitate towards secular rather than religious perspectives, and she is a non-practising Sikh. Religion for her is viewed as one of choice; therefore, her personal choice of religion is one that encompasses an eclectic mix of Sikhism, Hinduism and Christianity, having been educated in an Indian Public school. The researcher was brought up in a progressive and liberal home environment where an open attitude to religion was encouraged. Therefore, she views herself as being open-minded and respectful of the faiths of others but feels unconstrained by the ideas of one religion.

For the researcher, the case study is a historical event. However, as she is interested in Indian history, specifically contentious dark issues revolving around India's post-independence events, this case study provides a unique opportunity to explore India and Indian culture through the manner in which it manages its dark histories, in particular, the ways in which they are memorialised and presented to its public.

There was no bias selection in choosing participants from the chosen cities. Moreover, all eyewitness participants had no personal connection with the researcher. In addition, general communities, especially all Sikh respondents, were from New Delhi, Haryana or Mohali in order to minimise local personal connections. Overall, the researcher simply sought to identify and explore participants perspectives in order to meet the research objectives by establishing an effective relationship between herself and her respondents. As such, and given the sensitivity of the subject, her Indian background proved invaluable to this research.



## **5.12 Summary**

This chapter establishes that this research adopts a constructivism research paradigm by describing and justifying the methods employed to conduct the research. This chapter also provided a brief distinction between qualitative and quantitative research approach. It has been established that this research adopts a qualitative research approach. Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the interview data. The next chapter will now present the results and discussions.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Results and Discussion of Key Findings**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

As introduced in Chapter 1, the overall aim of this thesis is to explore critically the extent to which dissonance exists or may occur at the WoT memorial in New Delhi, India. In addition, it also considers the concepts of memorialisation and dark tourism within the context of India, specifically in contrast to typically Western conceptualisations. It should be noted that in order for a memorial to accomplish its purpose, it is important to recognise the elements that contribute to it doing so. Through an analysis of the literature, the researcher identified and constructed six factors that enable memorials to achieve their purpose including: its role in reconciliation; timing; ownership; design factor; location and, its accessibility and challenges: dissonance, all of which will be illustrated as fundamental themes within the findings.

Having detailed the methodology adopted in the research in the preceding chapter, this chapter now reveals and discusses the key interview themes and sub-themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. In order to facilitate a deeper understanding of the topic and to reflect the phenomenological approach adopted in this research, key quotes from participants are utilised within this chapter to both; illustrate and underpin the central themes extracted from the interviews. In doing so, the voices of the interviewees are kept alive throughout the chapter, while the research analyses individual participant's understanding of the topic and issues relating to WoT. Finally, the culminated evidence from the primary data is summarised, and the conclusion is drawn.

##### **6.1.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

As discussed in Chapter 5, for this research, twenty-six, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted guided by an interview schedule which provided the framework for the discussions. The principal questions were open-ended and non-directive. Intense, in-depth and comprehensive interview sessions were carried out to explore participant's perspectives on the WoT. Following the subsequent coding of the

transcribed interview data, the thematic components for this research were identified and critically analysed.

In the following sections, the discussion is structured around these themes to provide order and direction to the narrative and to facilitate the generation of answers to the research questions established at the outset. More specifically, the emergent data is deconstructed into subgroups in order to explore critically the extent to which dissonance exists or may occur at the WoT memorial in New Delhi, thereby addressing the aim of the research and exploring the following themes in particular:

- Perceptions of the WoT (Section 6.2)
- The politicisation of commemoration of the WoT (Section 6.2.7)
- WoT and Indian Dark Tourism (Section 6.3)

## **6.2 Perceptions of the WoT**

By way of introduction to a discussion of respondents' perceptions, particularly of those from the Sikh community, a common argument to emerge from the interviews was that the WoT did not adequately symbolise or commemorate the pain and suffering of their community, thus, immediately pointing to the existence of dissonance. For example, according to one respondent representing the eye-witness group:

*The community of Sikhs really needs to understand the notion behind this memorial. They need to see how it will depict the cause to our coming generations... a lifeless brick structure that has fallen short of depicting our horrifying memories and built by those who are out there for their own political gain. Can you call this memorial a symbol of our pain? I don't think so. Because these politicians don't know what pain is, because they never lost anything. We did. (EW8)*

Memorials commemorating events and those people affected can be seen as 'mundane elements of public space,' but 'neither memory nor commemoration is straightforward' (Eross, 2017: 20). Indeed, as Eross (2017: 20) explains, the 'proliferation of commemoration and politics of remembrance explains why memorials have a difficult task when tempting to address the multiplicity of memories'. This challenge can be seen as an influencing factor for the WoT insofar as the memorial appears to be constantly controlled by political elites. This, therefore, raises questions as to whether or not the WoT is capable of representing and commemorating the event appropriately and, in

particular, whether the needs of both the victims and other stakeholder groups are successfully addressed. In order to address these issues, a number of sub-themes related to the perceptions of the memorial which emerged from the research are now considered, broadly exploring the extent to which the WoT has the capacity to engage with its visitors?

### **6.2.1 What does WoT Means to Sikhs and Indians – to Remember or to Forget?**

*I was at that time 16 years when my father was killed in front of my eyes by the politicians and the people...Now, my younger son, his age is 17 years old, and sometimes he asks me the question: what happened in 1984? What have you seen? To me it seems a silly question. I know that he does not know anything. The question he asks, Mamma, why are you wasting your time and money to go in the courts and to fight with them for the justice because your father will not come back.... Everybody's father was killed at that time, so why are you going there. So, I have to explain what happened to us and why. I have to tell him to go on the Net and see what Sikhs are and what they did to us. How Sikhs got India's Independence and how we only got killed. That is why we need this memorial, to show my kids, our generation... that is the importance. (EW4)*

In the above quote, respondent EW4 illustrates that 'remembering and forgetting are inseparable' (Eross, 2017: 20). For this respondent, those who experienced or witnessed the event, the Sikh massacre, are the ones holding on to the memory of it. Moreover, they see it as their duty to transmit their memory of the event down to the next generation. However, the next generation, at least according to EW4, seems unable to relate to the incident and, thus, appears to be less interested in the narrative been handed down to them, pointing to a connection with Stone's (2006) notion of chronological distance, discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, as a factor in the relative 'darkness' of dark sites. Nevertheless, Eross (2017: 20) observes that in the 'constant dynamic flow of memory (re)making... [actual experience] ...can be perceived as a fixed, anchoring point', an argument that can be applied to respondent EW4 who, in effect, has become the narrator of direct memory to an indirect audience. And that memory is linked to a particular event which has been, in a sense, transferred to the WoT, a site that is not only associated with the 1984 Sikh massacre (Sharpley, 2009) but which also which attempts to be meaningful

inasmuch as memories of the event can be preserved. Hence, the WoT should, as implicit in EW4's response, serve as both a custodian of memory and a transmitter of narrative aimed at preserving not only a Sikh collective memory but also a nation's memory.

Memorials associated with tragic events such as the Sikh massacre can if done well, 'provide a strong, visible, legible representation of national identity and values' and help to create a stage for rituals that reinforce and extend meaning (Stevens, 2015: 39). Nevertheless, people's relationship with a particular memorial site can be complex and potentially a challenge to understand and respect, particularly when they are not directly connected to those being commemorated or when the trauma or loss being commemorated is not a one-off event but occurred over an extended period of time (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). In this context, so-called 'disenfranchised grief' (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018: 82) may provide legitimacy to those who feel the necessity to mourn such events. In addition, it is recognised that, more often than not, those in control of the interpretation deliver an 'authorised heritage discourse' to the visitor / tourist (Smith, 2006: 29), insofar as the narrative encompasses the message of those with the ability (or influence) to interpret the meaning of the message to their intended audience. Hence, the fate of memorials 'is very much dependent on how they are perceived, evaluated, accepted, neglected or even refused by the audience whom they intended to address (Eross, 2017: 21).

In the case of the WoT, then, its fate (or, more precisely, its success in reaching out to all stakeholder groups) is also very much dependent on the perceptions of its audience, as different people or stakeholder groups may hold different memories or interpretation of the event, it is seeking to commemorate. Subsequently, individuals may challenge the extent to which their perspectives are represented within the projected (authorised) narrative of the WoT memorial, thus creating a level of dissonance between some stakeholders, particularly 'subaltern' groups expressing a 'dissenting discourse' (Smith, 2006: 35) and the owners / controllers of the site.

In this research, when exploring stakeholder's understanding and perceptions of the WoT, it was deemed important to identify those participants who regarded the construction of the WoT as a positive contribution to commemorating the victims of the 1984 massacre. Interestingly, 17 respondents, or roughly 65 per cent of those participating in the interviews, expressed broadly positive perceptions with regards to the construction and role of the WoT; conversely, the remaining nine (35 per cent) participants viewed it with some foreboding. When analysing the data, the majority of those respondents who

viewed its construction in a positive light generally considered it to be an effective memorial landscape that commemorates those who died and maintains the memory of the event itself, reflecting the arguments of Svendsen and Campbell (2005) discussed in Chapter 3 (section 3.4). Not surprisingly, these respondents included the then-current president of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) which, as discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3.3.1), comprises the owners / controllers of the WoT who took full responsibility for the construction of the memorial including its financial affairs along with its administration. As such, the DSGMC conforms with Seaton's (2001) argument that those agents who have control and authority over heritage development are also those that are able to fulfil allocative and operational roles. This, in effect, gives the DSGMC a monopoly over all things related to the WoT, reflecting its position as the main stakeholder group associated with the memorial.

When interviewed, one of the representatives of the owners / controllers of the WoT stated that the memorial had not been constructed to '*increase hatred among communities;*' rather, in his view, it is '*a place for... those who lost*' (MC1). Through his use of the word 'loss,' the respondent is, in all likelihood, referring to not only the loss of life but also the loss of homes and businesses experiences during the riots as well, as, implicitly, the loss of dignity amongst the Sikh community. As such, the WoT, in the view of this respondent, matches Williams's (2007: 8) concept of a memorial, in so far as it has become a 'physical location that serves a commemorative function'. However, though providing a place of homage for the victims of 1984, the owners / controllers group has created a situation where the relationship between the memorial and visitor(s) can be rather complex, not least because of the potential for dissonance to occur between the various stakeholder groups who, while sharing a common interest in the heritage development of the WoT, have very little influence in having their own voices heard when it comes to the direction of the site's development. This practical challenge is highlighted in Seaton's (2001) heritage force field (HFF) model in which he acknowledges that, in any heritage site development, any one group may enjoy more power and influence than others. Similarly, Sharpley (2009) notes that the HFF model illustrates the potential for dissonance, which may occur amongst disparate groups who share an interest in heritage development.

Interestingly, three out of five of the eye-witness participants in the research directly rejected the WoT memorial. Specifically, they viewed the memorial as a hallmark for Sikh nationalism, endowing it with the potential not to encourage the healing process

but, rather, to stimulate further conflict and discord. In so doing, they support the point made by Idris (2016), discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5.1), that when a memorial is constructed, it can, on the one hand, encourage reconciliation but equally, on the other hand, lead to further conflict. In essence, this demonstrates that dissonance occurs when two or more communities or groups generate their own distinctive discourse around a shared cultural heritage landscape or site.

More specifically, this group of respondents also expressed the view that the intentions behind the creation of the WoT by the DSGMC were primarily politically motivated idea, seeking to gain Sikh support and votes by exhibiting their traumatic past but, in so doing, hindering the process of commemoration and generating further discord among stakeholder groups. For example, one respondent stated:

*Absolutely not...No, I don't think it was a good idea to construct the memorial... When there is no apology from the government, who has given them the right to build the memorial for us. We waited all these years, for what? To compromise? By building the memorial inside the gurdwara, they are creating more problems for generations to come. By isolating us and the massacre, they want to brainwash Sikh children by showcasing our torture memories. You said the Wall of Truth is there to commemorate the 3000 victims of 1984. I say it is there to make a political statement to Sikh; not to Indians, but to only Sikhs. That we are a minority in this country, look what happened to us and vote for us so that they are always there to protect their minority group. It is a sham. This is making the victim suffer all the more by raking up our troubled memories. The memorial has come to mean that it is a measure of how much suffering we can inflict upon you. This is what the memorial has become. (EW8)*

Another respondent raised the concern of identity as an encapsulating element of being victims of not riots but of a particular religion, thus suggesting that, as Aulakh (2015: 209) observes, 'the attacks quickly became very personal, so that, even though Sikhs are and have always been Indian, perpetrators systematically burned Gurdwara's, destroyed scriptural texts... religious artefacts. Sikh men wear long beards and turbans, as unshorn hair is a symbol of faith for Sikhs, and perpetrators would often pull on beards, knock off turbans, and even scalp Sikh men. Meanwhile, Sikh women faced humiliation, sexual harassment.' Reflecting Aulakh's statement, respondent EW7 stated:

*...not at all ... No, it's [the WoT] of no use. Our identity is our turban, our hair and our beard. They isolated us on this basis and killed us... we did not go and kill Indira Gandhi... It was her two own bodyguards; they were the ones who killed her. But we were implicated along with them because of our identity. On the basis of appearance only. And this memorial that they have built, the benefit had gone to those who built it. The common public did not get any benefit out of this memorial. It is wastage of money [emphatic]. (EW7)*

Hence, from the interviews, it emerged that although the WoT was ostensibly constructed to be of benefit to and to commemorate the victims and their families, a strong connection with memorial was absent amongst the majority of respondents representing eye-witness group. Nevertheless, others amongst the eye-witness stakeholders group viewed the WoT memorial in a more positive light, believing that it will act as a reminder for Indian society to ensure that both good and bad memories are passed down from one generation to another so that the present can learn from the past. As one respondent suggested:

*Yes, it was perfectly fine to build the memorial. At least the next generations will see .....they will at least know that something like this happened. How it is made and what changes are needed, we can always add on to it. We can make improvements. However, something like this should have come up much earlier.... They were the innocent people who were killed. They were, they cannot be named as martyrs. They did not lay their lives down for the country...They were literally killed, brutally murdered without their knowledge. They did not even know why they were being attacked. We did not come to know even days after why this thing happened to us. I mean, somebody kills the Prime Minister, and the killer happened to be a Sikh, and they try to kill all the Sikhs of the country? I mean you try to finish a community. (EW6)*

Here, it is evident that although the respondent expressed the need for the WoT, they were not entirely satisfied as the narrative did not fully represent the event and it was believed that there was room for improvement with regards to the manner in which the memorial commemorates the event.

In contrast to the predominantly negative views expressed by the eyewitness group, the responses from the general community representatives (including both Sikhs



and Hindus) participating in the interviews revealed an interesting perception of the WoT. Some, for example, considered the memorial to be a constructive idea; they believed it would act as a focal point for commemoration:

*The surviving family members badly needed a place where they could commemorate their dead... (GC26)*

*For people who were really affected by this violence or for a generation who have been scarred, at least this memorial is a step forward to commemorate those who lost their lives for no fault of their own... (GC12)*

Others believed that the WoT would act as a reminder. That is, inspired by the well-meaning intention that lessons can be learned from the presentation of previous events, it could potentially fulfil the need for the nation to address its difficult past to prevent the reoccurrence of similar atrocities. They expressed the view that the memorial will act as a place of education, showcasing the dangers of inter-community conflict:

*Yes, it was a good idea because it stands as a reminder of atrocities that happened in the past and should never be repeated in future. I think it is the most shameful and dirty history India has got. So, I guess it needs to be addressed... (GC14)*

*Such outrages against humanity must be a constant reminder to the coming generations...so yeah, overall, I do think it is good to have memorial which would represent Sikh genocide. (GC23)*

Again, however, yet others viewed the memorial as a political manifestation of the event, the WoT being held in disdain by some respondents who viewed it as a platform being mistreated by the political elites. They considered the memorial to be little more than an asset to be promoted for their own benefit by those who controlled it:

*It was a political idea...it is for collecting money ... this is wrong, and I do not appreciate...they have done it for their own political gain. They have encashed in the name of the memorial of stone....(GC13)*

In contrast, some participants believed that memorialisation and transitional justice go hand-in-hand (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007) but, significantly, that difficult pasts, as in the case of 1984 anti-Sikh riots, arguably demand transitional justice first and then subsequent memorialisation. For example:

*The families of thousands of Sikhs killed in riots are still waiting for justice from the past 33 years, but it has eluded them. The hurt, the anger and the sense of betrayal remain the same. ... Hardly any compensation has been given to the victims... So, I think it was not a good idea to build a memorial without providing them with justice first. (GC18)*

*It is all about justice first. Until justice is achieved, [there is] no point of having a memorial. So, no... I do not think it was a good idea to build this memorial' (GC10)*

This view in seeking justice before the creation of memorial was also raised by E3 (the 'expert' respondent), as well as other stakeholder groups whose responses will be expanded in section 6.2.5 later in this chapter.

From the evidence of the responses of the younger participants in the interviews, there appears to be a theme of dis-interest driven by the ideology that negative acts should be forgotten or if not forgotten, laid to rest. One participant was quite explicit, and expressing the view that the WoT has the potential to create problems for future generations:

*Making a memorial of negative things can be counterproductive for the youngsters who go there to see it. They will ask why it was made. Their parents will narrate history. There will be several negative thoughts entering their minds. They will become revengeful. These [memorials] should not be made anywhere. I do not think, so it is not a good idea. Because I already told you it develops negative thoughts in everyone. I did not come to know about all this, and when I did after getting to know the history, I became fierce, and I did not like it. If it already happened, it is done, it's gone. So why to bring that flame again inside everyone. (GC20)*

The 'expert' stakeholder, on the other hand, confirmed the need for the memorial, suggesting that the WoT memorial as a necessity not only in terms of demonstrating the violent history of the nation and its human loss and suffering but also to act as a reminder for societies:

*This demand has been there for a long time; there needs to be a memorial, and also that memorial is not only meant to commemorate history but also meant for the purpose of that history...that this kind of gory history is not repeated. So, this is the purpose and idea of these memorials. So, it was absolutely, in fact, necessary to have this memorial and have names of all those people who have been killed during the carnage. (E3)*

However, although this respondent highlighted the need to commemorate the victims, the actual location of the WoT was considered to be a hindrance:

*Though had it been outside, we would have shown to the whole nation we could have shown to the general masses... it's in Gurdwara then at least show to our own next generation... our own generation. Though the sphere is limited.... (E3)*

Generally, then, it became evident from the interviews that the majority of the participants were broadly supportive of the creation of a commemorative landscape, specifically, the WoT memorial, in order to keep the events of 1984 alive in the common memory through physical representation (Gurler & Ozer, 2013: 858). However, as discussed in Chapter 4, dissonance may occur when two or more communities or groups generate their own distinctive – and potentially subaltern or dissenting (Smith, 2006) – discourse around a shared cultural heritage landscape or site. In the case of this research, the potential for or existence of dissonance between all four stakeholder groups who are either directly or indirectly linked with the WoT is eminently clear. In addition, it also became evident from the interviews that there are complexities stemming from the construction of the WoT which may be manifested in higher levels of dissonance which may prove difficult to resolve (Laing & Frost, 2013). Therefore, it is important to recognise the varying perspectives of stakeholders as a basis for understanding the elements of dissonance at the WoT.

### 6.2.2 The WoT: An Unwanted Reminder and Catalyst for Unrest

*Mahatma Gandhi was shot by Nathu Ram Godse. He was a Maratha; why all Maratha's were not attacked? He was an upper caste Brahmin; why all Brahmins were not attacked? Because you killed Father of the Nation. But after Indira Gandhi's death, why Sikhs were targeted? Indira Gandhi was not a bigger leader than Mahatma Gandhi. So why at that time a community was stigmatised? Why were Sikhs attacked? We did not go and kill Indira Gandhi. And this memorial they built, is of no use. (EW7)*

The above quote from one respondent is evidence of both a difficult past and ongoing discord that is manifested in the dissonant heritage of the WoT. Yet, Hamber and Wilson (2002) observe that the process of uncovering and confronting (an implicitly difficult) past through memorialisation may allow a nation to develop a shared and common memory, in essence contributing to a sense of unity and reconciliation. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter 3, the key aim of a memorial is to enhance the process of reconciliation by 'acknowledging aspects of the past' (Batten, 2009: 88). In general, reconciliation is a means of erasing the divisions between rival groups and improving their relations, thus facilitating the post-conflict healing processes (Kriesberg, 2000; Lederach, 2000; Staub, 1998; Taylor et al., 2016; Wissing & Temane, 2014). More specifically, Bar-Tal and Bennink (2004) note that the reconciliation can take place in those societies that are dealing with conflicts, including communal riots or politically motivated violence such as 1984 anti-Sikh riots, that have resulted in hatred and animosity within societies. For both survivors and victims of political violence, coming to terms with the difficult past involves both social and psychological aspects (Hamber, 2004).

In the process of engagement in strategies aimed to address the past, memorialisation, in particular, can be used as a tool to encourage national efforts to 're-establish' society (Hamber, 2004). However, as noted in Chapter 4, (dissonant) heritage may often emerge as the outcome of heritage that is not only a product of contemporary interpretations which are shaped by the narratives of the history (Ashworth, 2017), but also that these contemporary interpretations of the past contribute to potential discord as they revive both memories and reactions. Thus, dissonant heritage can impact negatively on the process of reconciliation, a point which links to the statement made by EW7 above.

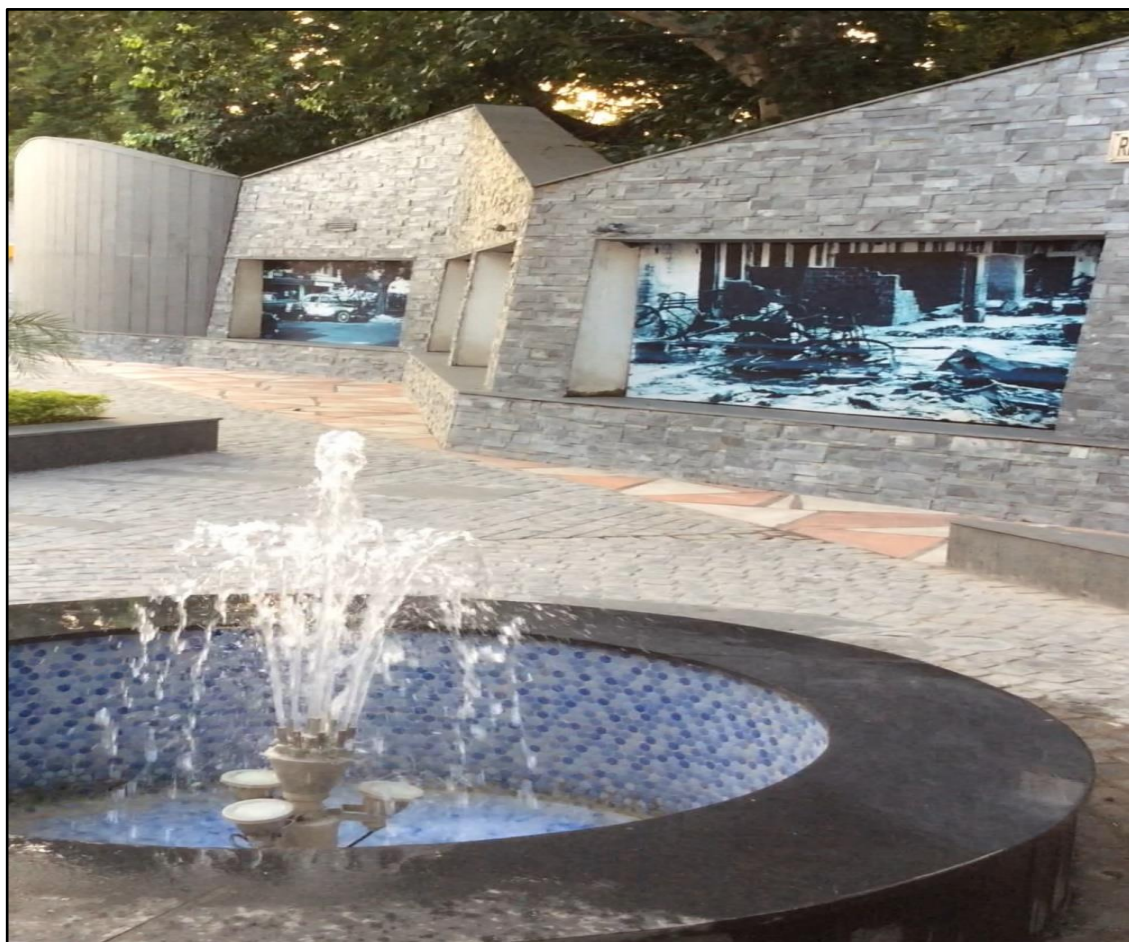
For the owners / controllers of the WoT participating in this research, their perceived purpose of the memorial, as identified in their initial statement, seemed to fulfil the broader concept of memorials. However, when the question of reconciliation was put forward, the response was more nuanced and challenging:

*Reconciliation in the community; why? Now the question is why? If you see, we have zigzag walls on which their names are written because people ran for their lives in those lanes and by-lanes where they were tortured by putting burning tyres around their necks. (MC1)*

Here, the question of ‘why’ reconciliation, was emphasised, immediately followed by a partial explanation of the purpose of the WoT design. In other words, this respondent abruptly redirected the discussion from reconciliation to a focus on the purpose of the memorial design, a theme that is an intrinsic element of dissonance implied in the responses of all the stakeholders and which will be discussed later in Section 6.2.4.

Here, it is important to note that the process involved in developing and shaping a memorial is significant as its design and appearance helps to connect its audience with the event. Memorials, as discussed in Chapter 3, are physical representations of dark or difficult events, and of the experiences of people involved in them or affected by them (Miles, 2002). They can be looked at or can be touched and, thus, it is the memorial design which allows visitors to share and experience the dark stories, it represents. They are, in essence, structures that demand answers to charged questions (Miles, 2002). Respondent MC1 highlighted the integral feature of the design by stressing the symbolic importance of the zigzagged walls, used to inscribe the names of the victims (see Figure 6.1 below). In doing so, it was explained that this design symbolised a symbolic representation of places / locations common to the victim’s experiences. This approach of interpretation adheres to the methods advocated by Smith (2016) in his ideas relating to the ‘registers of engagement’, which attempts to justify the full range of ideological and effective visitor’s responses to strengthen the visitor’s engagement within the WoT memorial.

**Figure 6.1:** WoT zigzagged construction symbolised the narrow, restrictive lanes and by-lanes



**Photo:** B. Singh

Although memorialisation provides a focal point for commemorative rituals or symbolic acts, it can also be a particularly effective path to reconciliation given its potential to reach out both at cultural and at a personal level (Idris, 2016). However, as Idris (2016) also observes, when a memorial is constructed, it can, in a variety of ways, either encourage reconciliation or stimulate further conflict. By emphasising a link between the memorial's design and its purpose, the owners / controllers of the WoT referred directly to the victims suffering, thereby suggesting that the purpose of the memorial appears to be re-enforcing perceptions of the victimisation of the community further, rather than providing a platform for reconciliation.

*Women were raped before their families...a lady's son and husband were killed before her eyes, and for three days, nothing could be done. The family could not*

*take them out for their funeral. They broke furniture and cots, and with that raw wood, they burnt their dead ones in their house only. (MC1)*

The emphasis here, on raw wood, has significance. As noted in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.3.1), cremation rituals are of extreme significance for Sikhs and Hindus as it is an essential requirement that the cremation should take place within 24 hours of death (Arnold, 2017). Traditionally, the cremation process requires dry wood, as this facilitates much faster burning of the body which, in turn, facilitates the faster transmigration of the soul. If the body is only partially cremated, the soul is denied from liberation and rebirth, contradicting the importance of ‘reincarnation’ and ‘moksha’ in Sikhism and Hinduism.

Consequently, for the woman referred to in the above quote, the attack on her husband and son was also an attack on their religion and their religious rituals associated with death and dying as she was denied the right to endow them with dignity in death. As discussed briefly in Chapter 2, the whole procedure of the cremation ritual not only provides the comfort of serving the death personally, but it is also considered fortunate for the deceased (Gupta, 2011: 256). Therefore, in this case, the inability to fulfilling the cremation rituals denied the woman her religious rights and her husband and son their liberation and rebirth.

In describing the victim’s distressing memories associated with the event, MC1 made it clear that, in his view, the memorial’s purpose is to help heal their troubled memories rather than to address any reconciliation:

*This was the condition of the people in 1984, and I think this memorial does very little to put a balm on their wounds. (MC1)*

This, in the view of those responsible for the WoT (the DSCMC), the memorial has become a symbolic landscape of commemoration by acknowledging the suffering of the victims of the 1984 massacre. Yet, it is evident from the above discussion that the WoT consequently, has neither become a symbolic landscape of reconciliation for the 1984 massacre, and nor was it created with the intention of restoring harmony between rival groups. Hence, when referring back to the notion of reconciliation, there seems to be a contradiction in the respondent’s earlier assertion that the memorial was...

*...not there to increase hatred among communities. It is a place of solace for those who lost. (MC1)*

In other words, when the conversation in the interview turned to the issue of reconciliation, it became clear that the memorial was designed to serve as a graphic reminder of the killings by placing the visitors alongside the destruction. Hence, the purpose of WoT, at least in the eyes of owners / controllers, is to take people back in time to an event and the people it commemorates, thus contributing through its 'authorised' (Smith, 2006) narrative to the Sikh collective memory. This perspective supports Naidu's (2004: 4) opinion that such memorials become a 'means of reclaiming an oppressed history... honouring those that have died or that have been victimised during the conflict, as well as reconstructing social identities in society.' Eross (2017) maintains a similar position, stating that the principal purpose of any commemoration site is to foster a connection between the past and the present although, logically, this then provides a platform which invites related groups to interact in commemoration and, thus, reconciliation. However, from the research, it is evident that the purpose of the WoT is to foster only commemoration, not reconciliation.

Further exploring the owners / controllers perspective on the purpose of WoT, it emerged from the interviews that the memorial was constructed not only 'to acknowledge the suffering of victims of the conflict but also 'act as a reminder to every one of the lessons of the past' (Idris, 2016: 11). As was suggested explicitly:

*The purpose of this memorial is that victims were butchered on the roads of the capital and the whole of India after the death of Indira Gandhi. (MC1)*

This respondent's comment leads on to the issue of the importance of justice, of the fact that the killing of Indira Gandhi was followed by justice for the Gandhi family. In so far as one of the perpetrators of her killing was shot at the site, while the other two (Satwant Singh and Kehar Singh) were executed by hanging in January 1989 (Crossette, 1989). In contrast, however, justice has been denied to the Sikh people so far:

*They [Indira Gandhi's killers] were hanged, they were booked by the law, and they faced the consequences. We are still waiting for justice. (MC1)*



To return to the question of the purpose of the memorial, analysis of the interview responses of representatives of the owners / controllers group reveals that the WoT has been constructed not for reconciliation but to serve as a ‘constant reminder’ (MC1) to keep alive the rawness of the Sikh massacre by re-constructing the sites of the killings through; its symbolised zigzagged lanes, the inscribed names of the victims and the visual scenes of violence. For the DSGMC, it is also constructed to serve as a symbol, or a landmark of the injustice done to Sikhs in 1984. As discussed in Chapter 4, heritage is broadly ‘a product of the present, purposefully developed in response to the current needs or demands for it and shaped by those requirements’ (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996: 6). Similarly, from the outcomes of the interviews, it can be concluded that the WoT has been purposefully constructed in order to seek justice and thereby to prevent future injustice to Sikhs. As respondent MC1 summarised:

*We do not want their apology; we want justice. The killers must be punished because if there is no recompense, there will be many 1984’s. Had the 1984 culprits been punished, the 2002 Gujrat riots would not have happened because people would have known that they cannot get away with riot violence. (MC1)*

In addition, the opinion was expressed that it was not the fault of the Sikh community that Indira Gandhi was killed, yet it was the Sikh community that bore the backlash through what has been called the 1984 riots:

*Riots are when two parties are fighting between themselves. This was a form of Genocide; it was a government-sponsored genocide, the way people were butchered. We do not have any answer to it, and even the government does not have an answer to it, we are still waiting for justice. (MC1)*

To summarise this section, then, from the interviews, it is evident that a significant degree of dissonance surrounds the perceived purpose of the WoT memorial. For some respondents, particularly those representing owners / controllers, its purpose is to keep the memory alive of the massacre as a basis for seeking justice; for others, it has an overtly political purpose reflecting the ambitions of the owners / controllers. Yet, others view it more positively as a place of commemoration and for promoting the ‘never again’ message. Collectively, these outcomes support, Ashton and Hamilton’s (2008)

description of the multi-functionality of memorials; they suggest that memorials are considerably diversified in purpose and that, typically, there can be several reasons for the erection of a memorial.

Nonetheless, it is evident that the creation of a purposeful WoT memorial broadly reflects the minds and the intentions of those responsible for its development and stewardship. Generally, official power-laden groups create ‘authorised’ narratives and knowledge of history, and the representation of such history can be highly selective (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018; Sather-Wagstaff, 2016; Smith, 2006). As a consequence, memorials may serve the interests of those powerful groups who created them (Sather-Wagstaff, 2016). In other words, if any particular stakeholder group becomes the sole proprietor of a memorial site, the interpretation of the event, it commemorates can be biased. Therefore, from the discussion of the research thus far, it is evident that differing perceptions of the very purpose of the WoT have emerged as a key source of dissonance.

However, it is important to note that, more recently, the original function of the WoT has become blurred. Specifically, in July 2018, the DSGMC announced they would ‘inscribe the names of Afghan Sikhs killed in a suicide attack in Kabul on the “Wall of Truth”’ (Tribune, 2018). In addition, it was further noted that the WoT, which was initially built to commemorate the victims of the 1984 riots, will now also serve to commemorate all the Sikh victims of hate crimes around the world through the inscription of their names within the memorial (Arora, 2018). This is an issue that falls out with the realms of this debate, but which has the potential to ignite further strands of dissonance.

### **6.2.3 WoT: Noble Idea but Wrong Location**

*By confining it within the four walls of the temple, it has restricted its international as well as its national approach. How can this memorial be an object which serves as a focus for memory? People of other faiths will hesitate to visit it. Memorials should serve as a historical touchstone. By building this memorial inside the temple, they have defeated its very own purpose. (GC18)*

The locations where public grieving takes place are significant for communities that have experienced collective grief. Acknowledgement of that memory via the mediation of memorial spaces is one way to demonstrate the importance memorials play in the grieving process (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). After all, memorials do become permanent places of

remembrance (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018) that address persuasive representational aspects of commemoration. Hence, the geographic setting of a memorial is fundamental in making the memory of the past visible to its public. Scholars such as Foote (2003), Forest et al. (2004), Johnson (2004) and Rose-Redwood (2008) emphasise that geographers and historians have always demonstrated the significance of the landscape of commemoration in reforming the geographies of oblivion and memory. The location of a memorial is generally ‘tied to where the event occurred, or the person was born (or died)’ (Benton-Short, 2006: 300). As memory begins to take on greater meaning, this results in an increased sense in value for stakeholder groups and also for the nation (Light, 2004). However, in the case of WoT, as discussed in Chapter 2, the memorial’s actual location is non-authentic owing to the fact that no actual killings took place in the grounds of the Sikh Temple.

The memorial can be seen from the owner / controller’s perspective as a memorial which recognises the pain of the victims while keeping that pain alive, thus serving ‘to make a political statement or to claim political ground’ (Batten, 2009: 88). When discussing the choice of location for the WoT, respondent MC1 claimed that:

*We have not shown any blood over there; we have not tried to do anything that way that we should disturb the peace of this country. This is my country, and this country belongs equally to the Sikhs as it belongs to the Hindus, Muslims, Jains and the Buddhists. Yes, this is a very big thing for my community to build a memorial bang opposite Parliament. (MC1)*

From the phrase: ‘bang opposite parliament,’ it is apparent that the decision on the location of the WoT was, from this respondent’s perspective, one born out of necessity but also one that was politically saturated.

Specifically, during the interviews, the story unfolded that the Gurdwara management committee approached the government requesting a memorial for 1984 massacre with the proposal of naming a park as the ‘1984 Memorial Park’. However:

*The government never gave us any place...they could not even give us a yard of land to build a memorial... (MC1)*

This resulted in the Gurdwara management committee seeking out other options, including approaching the affluent suburb in New Delhi which incorporates Punjabi Bagh (Punjabi Bagh is a locality in Delhi and is one of the three sub-zones of West Delhi). It was explained that Corporation of Punjabi Bagh has the rights of naming roads, crossings and naming parks. This took place in 1990 and, in 2012, formalities were completed with permission from the Mayor of the Corporation of Punjabi Bagh to dedicate an area of land as a commemorative park. However, at that time, the Corporations and the State were under the control of different political parties:

*The corporation was with the BJP, but the state government was controlled by a Congress Chief Minister. (MC1)*

On 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2013, the leader of the opposition in Rajya Sabha at the time, now India's current Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, was supposed to lay the foundation stone dedicating the chosen park as the new '1984 Memorial Park'. However, a day before the inauguration, as MC1 explained:

*A letter from the Chief Secretary of Delhi was received. A single line letter stating that this programme has been postponed, with no explanation as to what time, nothing, just postponed. From that day, I took a vow and discussed with Sikhs that whenever the elections of the DSGMC (Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee) happens because I was in opposition to the then DSGMC president, that if I were elected, I would build a 1984 memorial and it would be built bang opposite Parliament so that those politicians who never let us get justice for our victims will be constantly reminded... so the purpose was it should be opposite Parliament House. (MC1)*

Here, then, is clear evidence that the location of the WoT was selected in part to shame politicians, but also to serve as a tool in assisting this respondent in the elections to the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee. Thus, while, the WoT undoubtedly acts as a memorial for the 1984 Massacre, its location, design and management is very much politically motivated and influenced.

Interestingly, the ex-president of the DSGMC (MC2) revealed opposing views to those of MC1. From the start of the interview with this respondent, who had held the role

of president of the DSGMC for 17 years (1995-2013) prior to electoral defeat, significant antagonism was in evidence towards his successor. It is also worth mentioning here that MC2 and MC1 had differing political alliances. The interview commenced with the respondent being asked whether he thought it was a good idea to build the memorial. By way of response, an offensive stance was adopted with the claim that, before the development of the WoT had come to the forefront, MC2 had been negotiating with the central government to build a memorial to honour Guru Teg Bahadur, the ninth of the ten Gurus who founded Sikhism (BBC, 2009). He stated that:

*Now regarding this memorial [WoT], in the whole of India, none is placed in the historical Gurdwara... In the whole of India, there is no Gurdwara which honours any person in their grounds.... You see, we persuaded the central government at that time, when Dr Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister, to build a memorial in honour of Guru Teg Bahadur Saab. If you have not seen it, you must see before leaving this country. It's on the border of Delhi. They have built this memorial in about 12 acres. It is the most beautiful memorial... (MC2)*

He continued to explain that they were given a plot of 11.87 acres of land (DelhiPedia, 2017) by the government for the Sikhs to construct a memorial to honour Guru Teg Bahadur (see Figure 6.2). He continued:

*If the government gives you land, then it is ok. If the government is not giving you land, then we can purchase land ourselves, one million, two million even ten million dollars is nothing for us to build a memorial. But they [MC1] just wanted to keep the money intact because at the beginning of their tenure we left about 123 crores in the accounts of the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandhan (management) Committee. They are not short of funds. (MC2)*

From the analysis of this part of the interview, inference is made that the central government is a listening government and that, during his presidency, the respondent had involvement in overseeing the development of the memorial for Guru Teg Bahadur; a memorial not to commemorate men and women killed during the 1984 riots but to honour a Guru. However, whilst the memorial to Guru Teg Bahadur can be viewed as being non-political, the establishment of the WoT can be thought of as overtly political.

**Figure 6.2:** Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib Memorial in Delhi



**Source:** DelhiPedia (2017)

As explained by MC2, had his successor wished to have constructed a memorial during his tenure, this could have been easily achieved as the finances were readily available to purchase land and to construct a memorial for the victims of the 1984 massacre. Therefore, based on this and reflecting on the MC1 interview, it can be further construed that the decision to construct the WoT within the grounds of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib was more of a political decision than a practical necessity. Hence, together the two interviews with representatives of the owners / controllers group re-enforce the theme of politicisation of the commemoration of the 1984 Sikh massacre, not least as MC2 concludes that the memorial was built to conciliate the BJP (the Bharatiya Janata Party, one of the two major political parties in India) with which his successor has political affiliations. Hence, the WoT location can be construed as a thorn in the side of the Congress party and can be seen as a tool to discredit the party and possibly to generate anti-Congress sentiment among Sikhs in general.

*But they wanted to build the memorial in front of Parliament just to appease the BJP. (MC2)*

MC2 also questioned and challenged MC1's claims for seeking a '1984 Memorial park' from central government, stating that, from the outset, the latter had clear intentions to

construct the WoT memorial within the grounds of Sikh Temple to gain a political advantage:

*Can he show me any letter? He has written to the government of India that they want the land to build a '84s riots victims memorial park? Tell him to show me the letter... There is Right to Information. Write an email to Right of Information department and ask, had Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhan (management) Committee after 2013 asked for any piece of land to build this memorial? From the beginning, they want to build at Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Saab. (MC2)*

The disparity between the two presidents of the DSGMC emphasised by respondent MC2 in his final statement:

*I am against any memorial, not only to riot victims but any built in the historical Gurdwara. We are not against the memorial to the 1984 riot victims, but we are 100 per cent against that a memorial should not be built in the historical Gurdwara. That place is for the Guru that should be kept for them... I did put a case against this memorial construction in the High Court then... (MC2)*

To which, MC1 responded

*My Opposition, the Congress Party or the prior President who was supported by the Congress, they went to court, they lost it. They gave me notice through NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Cooperation) because this piece of land is under NDMC. They gave me notice. I told them that I am not constructing a building that I need to give a plan or maps for the approval. If I put a stone and say this is a memorial who can stop me? So, we did it, and I must tell you the way people come here and cry. (MC1)*

The previous discussion illustrates the scale of dissonance within the management committee itself, whilst it is also important to note that, from the analysis of the interview data, 22 out of the total of 26 respondents or roughly 85 per cent considered that the location of the memorial to be entirely incorrect. Members of all stakeholder groups perceived the memorial to be misplaced, with many suggesting that given its location

within the grounds of a religious place, visitors belonging to other faiths and beliefs will feel isolated or will be unwilling or feel unable to access the memorial. As one eyewitness respondent observed:

*It is not open to all the people at all the time... No, it is not open, I mean, people would hesitate to go to the Gurdwara. Not all people will like to visit them. The maximum people will be Sikhs only. Very less others. If they wanted to construct a memorial, it should be appealing to all the people. It should be open to people belonging to any religion within India, outside India can visit the memorial without any hesitation. (EW5)*

Another eyewitness respondent recognised that building the memorial within the temple grounds could be viewed as unholy, thus re-enforcing MC2's opinion:

*They should have never built the memorial within Gurdwara grounds. Not at all. That is a religious place. Absolutely religious place for the Guru's worship. Using that land. This is unholy... Totally the wrong location. They are defaming that place rather, I think. (EW8)*

This proliferation of dissonance regarding the location of the WoT was also in evidence amongst respondents from among the general community. Specifically, while one member of the owners / controllers group emphasised locating the memorial 'bang opposite parliament' as a key priority, not only did the general community see no value in this to themselves but also commented on its location as a negative point. However, this negativity in relation to its location was not directly linked to its proximity to parliament but, was, rather, related to the issue of accessibility. In particular, its location within the grounds of the temple was perceived as a hindrance to those wishing to engage in a meaningful dialogue aiming at reconciliation. For example:

*A place which is more accessible to the general public, say if a person belongs to another community, does not believe in Sikhism might hesitate or might not feel comfortable first visiting a temple and then the memorial. It should have been built in a more secular place so that it had nothing to do with the religion. Though it is true that all the victims were Sikhs, so it is hard to disassociate them from*



*religion, but then the purpose of the memorial is to commemorate the victims, and that has to be done by all the people. So, had it been outside the temple it would have been far easier for people to visit it. So, it should have been in a public place. As it was a national tragedy, so it should have been built on national grounds.*  
(GC12)

The hesitation element related to the accessibility of the memorial was considered by many respondents to be the main obstacle to the memorial's visitation, insofar as issues of location can limit the process of reconciliation between the two communities. In order for memorials to function appropriately, participants believed that the WoT should be in a public space and open to everyone (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018) in order to foster the reconciliation process:

*Now let us talk about memorial's accessibility... so having it within the temple, it defeats its very own purpose. Lots of visitors will not even come to know about this memorial, that it exists inside a Sikh temple. Moreover, a lot will hesitate to visit it. They wanted to construct it; they would have constructed it somewhere out, open space... had it been somewhere out, Hindus and Sikhs would have stood next to each other... moreover, a Hindu would not have felt an outsider there.*  
(GC26)

Surprisingly, perhaps, one participant viewed the location of the memorial as too controlling, to the extent that the interpretation and location were favouring the perspective of the stewardship and not necessarily one which represents the community involved. In addition, the location was viewed as another controlling factor, in that its location within Gurdwara grounds was not acceptable to someone who, while being a Sikh, no longer respected the authority of the religious leaders. This respondent also raised concerns that the location of the memorial, lacking in space, does not allow people to connect at various levels. As discussed in Chapter 3, sites such as WoT reflect atrocities of the past. Therefore, space within the memorial should not only be allocated to the narration of the event being commemorated but should also allow for reflection and open discussions amongst members of the public (Dutt, 2016). Specifically, the respondent considered the location as a hindrance to meaningful dialogue between the Sikh and the Hindu community.

*Simply because I was born in a Sikh family, but I am an atheist now, and I am uncomfortable of the fact that I have to go through a temple chamber taking my shoes off, covering my head with a scarf and then finally I can the visit the memorial. I refuse to take part in any so-called rules governed by a religious institute just to visit a memorial, sorry I cannot be bothered. If I am visiting a memorial, I want my private space where I can contemplate, analyse and mark my respect ... not that I should be conscious of my apparel and put in a situation where I am surrounded by only Sikhs who are already feeling sorry for themselves. Rather I would prefer to surround myself with people of all castes and religions and exchange viewpoints and witness myself what people really think about all this. Rather than one religious, political leader telling me what to think by putting me in a vulnerable environment where emotions are already running high. (GC25)*

As previously discussed, the geographical setting of the memorial provides a religious / religious-political backdrop for potential political influence. However, the location of the WoT has the potential to generate confrontation not only between individuals, such as the two interviewed members of the DSGMC but also among the wider Sikh community and between the Sikh and other communities. Indeed, by ‘acknowledging aspects of the past’ (Batten, 2009: 88) demonstrated by one particular community (the Sikh community) within their own religious grounds, the very purpose of the memorial can be (inadvertently or intentionally) impacted upon. In addition, it is important to note that those commemorative sites which are ‘planned with a strategic outcome, often provoke multiple, contested meanings’ (Laing & Frost, 2013: 11), resulting in sites not only being contested but also potentially becoming the focus for further conflicts. Reflecting this argument, reference was made by some respondents to the fact that the memorial’s location has the potential to generate further frictions within Indian society:

*It is not correct and that too, especially within the grounds of Gurdwara. They should have never made it in the first place and never at all inside the Gurdwara. It will create fights among Hindus and Sikhs. Now what they have created, it will create problems for generations to come. It is constructed now, nothing can be done, but I only wish this piece of wall does not become a piece of war again.*

*Keep it as a symbol and no one should take this symbol as against one community but as a commemoration point only for people who were martyred, just to remember them and nothing more than that. Isn't it! See, memorials always create friction. One will go there, remember the whole incident, at some point do get angry at what happened to their own people, and it creates a whole set of new conflicts and fights with other communities all over again. And see, people who died are gone, but with family members, the loss will always be there whether they will go and visit memorial or not. Though it was just a political influenced Hindu nationalist mob, but it grabs everyone associated with that religion. (GC22)*

Although the views on the location of memorial revealed in the interviews pointed to a number of factors as evidence of a higher level of dissonance between the management committee itself and amongst other stakeholder groups, there was, in particular, a stark contrast between the views of the 'expert' respondent and management committee.

Curiously, perhaps, the 'expert stakeholder' identified a 'thanatological' location, which could have been used as the site of the memorial rather than constructing it in a religious place. This location proposed by 'expert' respondent was the site of the ruins of a house whose occupant had burnt to death. This authentic site of a representative encounter with death (Seaton, 1996) would have linked directly with the victims. In addition, respondent E3 stated that if the actual site of event had been used, it would have acted as a place of unity, as the house belonged to Hindu who tried to save the life of a Sikh and would have been more fitting in order to achieve the purpose for which memorials are constructed in societies. Respondent E3 stated that:

*There was also a proposal of a house on the Rajindra Prasad Road, House no.12, a house of Ram Vilas Paswan, who is the Cabinet Minister now. At that time, he was an MP, and he saved a Sikh. He gave him protection in his house, and that house was also burnt down by the mob. Moreover, the Paswan had to run away to save his life, but they caught hold of that old man, the old Sikh and burnt him in the burning house itself. So that could have been a good memorial, so that is also a kind of a symbol of unit... an appropriate place. It was not that people of one religion were killing others. So, Ram Bilas Paswan, his house was burnt trying to protect a Sikh, so it is a symbol of unity and that we know that only a*

*handful of the people, people who were the followers of the Congress, they were the ones who were killing. It was not like in general; the Hindus were killing, or Hindus were against Sikhs. (E3)*

Interestingly, the 'expert' respondent also rejected respondent MC2's claim that no memorial should be built inside the Gurdwara land, stating that:

*I do not agree with it that in our religion, there is no place for memorials. Why not? We have memorials of the wars; we have memorials of the other Shaheed's (martyrs). The fact that this place is the Shaheedi (martyrs) place of Guru Teg Bahadur Singh. His last rites were done there. But, then again, that is somebody else's view, but I do not agree with them that this memorial should not be put over here. This is somebody else's view; certainly, it is not mine. (E3)*

Moreover, this respondent further revealed that he believed that, in its present location, the memorial is nothing more than a political construct. The reason for this is that, in order for victims to be commemorated, visitors have to pass through the Gurdwara and on commemoration days, they would be lectured by the Gurdwara management committee as to how the event unites the Sikhs, as opposed to being given the opportunity to commemorate the individual victims in their own way:

*It would have been much better if the prominence had been given to the victims. Now you make all of these, sit on the stage bring the victims to 'sit' and hear all their lectures 'Congress did this to us, Congress did that to us,' and then you do nothing. This would have been the other way around.*

*This is an occasion for the victims you are now creating, trying to create a memorial which is in the memories of those who have been killed and their own kith and kin are there and so it... I feel that it would have been much better if the importance had been given to them. Let these political people come. Let them witness it. But unfortunately, here everything is being made political. (E3)*

Overall, then, it emerged from the research that the location of the WoT was a major issue of disagreement amongst the stakeholder groups. In order for memorials to function appropriately for the victims and their families, it should be in a space which needs to be

both public and intimate, and in which the process of grieving can take place (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). It is evident that the WoT memorial portrays an event, but there is significant dissonance amongst stakeholder groups as a result of its construction in the wrong setting.

#### **6.2.4 WoT: An Ineffective and Ill-Conceived Memorial**

*You call this a memorial? You tell me what qualities of a memorial this Wall of Truth has? A biased location, isolating everybody, through design their agenda is to seek votes, and the platform is designed to stand there and give lectures to all their followers by telling them – Look how great we are. You call this a memorial? It's a 3-D movie, where first you should technically pay, means a donation to them, then you can go and see what they want you to see, not what you want see. And at the end, you are not even given the opportunity to feel the emotions what you want to feel, because the only emotion you should feel is; Why us? How could they? And you call this a memorial? (GC25)*

Owners / organisers who monopolise narratives in order to achieve their own objectives of the commemorative site may discover that their interpretation of history is contested by other stakeholders who hold a different view (Laing & Frost, 2013). This process, as discussed in Chapter 3, can result in subsequent debates and argument, leading to various levels of dissonance (Laing & Frost, 2013). Whilst memorials can be seen as physical representations of dark events, people and their experiences (Miles, 2002), it is the memorial design which allows visitors to share and experience the dark stories they represent by creating an opportunity for visitors to engage in discourse. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, when memorials commemorate difficult heritage or traumatic past, a degree of dispossession amongst specific groups may be in evidence owing to the complexities of representation (Friedrich et al., 2018). From the research considered thus far in this chapter, this is undoubtedly the case at the WoT, the design of which has been shown to be contentious between many of the respondents who, as will be discussed shortly, also found the memorial's visual representation of the 1984 Sikh massacre to be lifeless and meaningless.

The owners / controllers of the WoT went on to justify the design for the memorial, specifically, shaping the memorial in the forms of standing walls with names

to commemorate the numerous Sikhs who died during the massacre as well as people belonging to other faiths who lost their lives while protecting Sikhs:

*We have put up the name of a Muslim lady who died while saving the Sikhs. We have put up the name of a Hindu gentleman who died while saving the Sikhs because we salute those people who tried to protect us. We do not have all the names because family after family was butchered. There is nobody to tell us the name. Nobody is there. If my whole family is killed, who will notify? Who is coming here to give me the names? So, we have kept a wall with no names; this is for the people who died, and for whom there are no names...So, we have a wall with the names, a wall without the names and a wall for the people belonging to other religions who lost their lives saving our lives. So, it is a 'Sarv Dharam Sammelan' (Meeting of all faiths). (MC1)*

As noted, and debated earlier, this respondent was not only responsible for finalising the location for WoT but also for its design and its name. Originally, the name for 1984 memorial was proposed as 'Wall of Tears' but was finalised as 'Wall of Truth'. Explaining, the change in the name for the memorial, MC1 stated:

*I kept the name, earlier, as the 'Wall of Tears.' But a young boy in his twenties; he met me at a function and congratulated me. Sir, we are with you that you are building that memorial to pay respect to the 1984 victims. But he says, in Sikh religion, does 'Tears' have any value? Because our God has always told us you can never cry. If you have to give your life, you have to give smilingly. So, he said that you must think. When I listened to this small boy, I said yes, I am doing something wrong. It is against the principles of Sikhism. I sat in my car after the function, and I kept on thinking. I have 2-3 good advisers. I called a meeting the next day at my house, and I said I think this name is wrong. 'Wall of Truth,' it should be. Wall of Truth because we are waiting for justice. Waiting for the culprits to be punished. (MC1)*

Here, then, we can see that even in designating a name to a memorial can have underlying political significances. The original name, as pointed out by the youth, was seen as

detrimental to the Sikh character and hence was changed for one that reflects the need for a political reckoning.

However, one Sikh participant questioned the name of the memorial and disapproved the reasoning behind the given name of the 1984 memorial. Thus, illustrating discord within Sikh community itself.

*...Why are you calling it Wall of Truth ? ...They have named it wrong... Why do they say there is no place for tears?... I don't agree with this at all. It's wrong to say that in Sikh religion there is no place for tears. That's untrue. (GC20)*

Interestingly, the manner in which WoT is designed was referred to by all the respondents during the interviews, who also criticised it. None of them was able to fully understand the reasoning behind its design, or indeed the purpose of the design: to mourn, to console or propagandise? (Behuniak, 2012: 165). Some also questioned the effectiveness of the memorial design.

Certainly, the memorial does (a) signify one of the darkest episodes in modern Indian history and (b) to some degree formalises that history (Foote, 2003). Over recent decades, authenticity has become a topic of notable significance. MacCannell (1973; 1976) was among the first scholars to introduce and discuss the term authenticity within the context of tourism., whilst Handler and Saxton (1988: 243) defined 'an authentic experience [as] one in which individuals feel themselves to be in touch both with a 'real' world and with their 'real' selves'. Conversely, Baudrillard (1994: 50) writing on simulacra and simulation, states that 'history is a strong myth ... a myth that at once subtended the possibility of an "objective" enchainment of events and causes and the possibility of a narrative enchainment of discourse'. The study of authenticity within tourism has given rise to an array of concepts within the academic literature (Thyne & Hede, 2016), including staged authenticity (MacCannell, 1973); hot authenticity (Selwyn, 1996); indexical authenticity and iconic authenticity (Peirce, 1998) existential / constructive authenticity (Wang, 1999) and hot and cool authentication (Cohen & Cohen, 2012). Exploring the complexities of the authenticity of the WoT from the perspective of the varying concepts, it is beyond the scope and purpose of this thesis, yet it is important to note that one respondent from the eyewitness stakeholder group expressed doubts with regards to the authenticity of the pictorial representation of the event within the memorial. Specifically, it was suggested that the names of many of those listed as victims could not

be verified, whilst considerable disagreement was voiced with regards to the extent to which they are fairly represented.

*You can see in the poster they have shown the photo of a Sikh being burnt. Look closely; is that really the photo of a Sikh or is it some other photo they have created and shown. They have just made up a photo for gaining sympathy. They have taken many photos of houses that had been burnt down. Among those burnt down relics which had belonged to whom? Whose property was burnt? There are several names that even they don't know that have been burnt down.*

*One cannot come to know about anybody. They were running around trying to save their lives; where could they have got time to take photos? These photos were taken later by the media. They have created these photos. They are nothing. (EW7)*

However, with reference to concerns over the trustworthiness of the graphic representation expressed by this respondent, through a search of pictorial records from a wide range of media sources, the researcher found that many of the pictures incorporated within the WoT memorial can be authenticated as actual images (or perhaps dark representation of the event) taken during the 1984 Sikh Massacre (figure 6.3 below).



**Figure 6.3:** The researcher's authentication of pictures of Riots. The pictures are chosen randomly

**A) From Media**



**Source:** Singh (2017a)

**A1) At WoT**



**Photo:** B. Singh

**B) From Media**



**Source:** Menon (2018)

**B1) At WoT**



**Photo:** B. Singh

C) From Media



Source: BDC News (2016)

C1) At WoT



Photo: B. Singh

Remarkably, one of the eyewitness stakeholder respondents whose father's name is inscribed on memorial's wall revealed that the participant found the inscription a valueless notion, and that it was insignificant and meaningless. In other words, for this respondent at least, the nature of the memorial's design and appearance was unsuccessful in connecting with its audience: As the respondent explained:

*My father's name is on the wall.*

*See what they have done; they have written only the names. They did not even write the day on which it happened.*

*Where he died, at what address, on which date and time, and who were the killers? They should write the names of those people also — an example of my father. My father's name was P1 Singh; nobody knows which P1 Singh died, where he lived, who was he? That is what I am telling you that they put the name of P1 and there are a lot of P1 Singh's who have died and about which P1 Singh they are talking about. (EW4)*

Interestingly, this respondent also suggested the need for the authentic site so that visitors could have meaningful experiences or what Seaton (1996) refers to as representative encounters with the death which occurred during anti-Sikh riots. The respondent expressed the view that using an actual site from the 1984 event would not only create the opportunity to contemplate meaningfully the tragic events (Biran & Hyde, 2013: 192) but would also be fascinating for visitors of all age groups. In other words, the respondent felt that locating a memorial in a place where deaths actually occurred during the riots would have a greater impact on its audience as well as attracting wider range of visitors:

*I want such a memorial should be constructed that brings the very atmosphere and scenario alive. I do not consider making zigzag walls, lighting candles, planting trees, and so on as a memorial.*

*It should provide the actual depiction of the victim's situation. Instead of simply showing passive insipid pictures, actual atrocities should have been shown. For this memorial, they should show what actually happened. Tyres being put around necks. The reality should be shown; burning houses should be shown. These days there is great technological advancement in multimedia.*

*Only to write a name on a wall, it's wrong – you look at Jallianwala Bagh memorial. It shows something about the scene, the people, there are bullet marks. Ok, the people are not there, but their essence is there. (EW4)*

The Jallianwala Bagh memorial in Amritsar referred to by respondent EW4 in the above quote, is an interesting example when examining the effectiveness of a memorial's design and interpretation. The respondent expressed the need to recreate a tangible reality of the event for visitors in order to bring it to life, particularly to emphasise the trauma that the victims went through. In so doing, the respondent implied that the WoT offered a sanitised version of the event, comparing it with Jallianwala Bagh where bullet holes can be seen in the wall (Figure 6.4 below), relating to a tangible past and, in so doing, bringing history alive for its audience (Figure 6.5 below). However, this contrasts with the comments of one respondent representing the owners / controllers group, who stated: '*We have not shown any blood over there; we have not tried to do anything that will disturb the peace of this country*' (MC1).

Again, this contributes to the panorama of a conflict of opinions between the DSGMC and the eyewitness group. That is, it is clearly apparent that the victims feel alienated from the WoT, that they were unable to truly engage in any mourning process through the memorial.

**Figure 6.4:** Jallianwala Bagh memorial in Amritsar, the actual site of the massacre displays the bullet marks at the wall



**Source:** Shukla (2019)

**Figure 6.5:** Visitors including young and children observes the bullet marks on a preserved wall



**Source:** Asia Pacific (2019)

However, it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons between the Jallianwala Bagh memorial and the WoT; the former is a site of actual death, whereas the latter is a site associated with death. Therefore, it would be unrealistic to bring an authentic representation of the event with the Sikh temple. More specifically, the WoT attempts to recreate or, more precisely, interpret the events of 1984 through visual narratives of the riots and by inscribing the names of those who were massacred on the walls. In addition, and as already noted, the memorial's management committee considered its integral feature; the symbolic zigzagged walls replicating the streets of Delhi where Sikhs were killed during riots, as an effective and poignant interpretation. Conversely, both the ex-president and 'expert' respondent made it clear in their interviews that it was an ineffective attempt to recreate the visual dimension of the event. Rather, an actual location / landscape could have been used in order to emphasise the tangible reality of the event, thereby helping to foster reconciliation between two communities. Certainly, from the research, it became evident that the design of the WoT has failed to create an impact on its visitors, appearing lifeless and empty (Veil et al., 2011) to its audience:

*That is all.... just putting the names on the wall. That is not going to solve anything. It does not solve the purpose.... They want people to go there to read some names? They may read maybe 10, 15, 20 names then..... not all because there are plenty of names. Then they say ok.... fine they are all just names, who is going to see. Let us have a broader view of why go to each wall and read something because there is nothing to read apart from the name and a house number. Who were these people? Where were they living? How were they killed? Why were they killed? Why their names are there?*

*You know, they will walk a few steps ahead, and they will say why to go to the end there is nothing. No, nothing. Nothing exciting for us to see. It is all wall, wall, wall and names are there, nobody is interested, and nobody has time to read much. Had it been something different or maybe some history is written about someone, then the things would have been different, totally. O.K. fine. Just three-four pictures are not going to solve the purpose. That you can see on the net, what is the fun of going there and have a look...? I really do not think that's a really good idea... Absolutely not.*

*It would not impact, not at all. I have seen the pictures and got the idea it is just names nothing interesting there. Why should I go and waste my time?*  
(EW5)

During the interviews, it became apparent that within the eyewitness group, there were issues with the representation of the event, particularly because there is no indication or information provided as to the cause of the attacks. Furthermore, in creating a commemorative landscape in a capital city such as New Delhi, the process becomes more complex as it involves the engagement of various groups such as political elites, civil societies, stakeholders, experts in history and design experts. In such circumstances, seeking consensus on, for example, a memorial's layout, location and utilisation (Stevens, 2015) may result in conflict between different groups, such as the disenchantment voiced above by EW5. In particular, if a memorial is designed to appeal to a specific visitor group, dissonance may occur. In the case of WoT memorial, questions were raised as to whether the DSGMC, when developing the memorial, consulted the appropriate stakeholders with regards to its location in a Sikh temple. Or the decision was reached solely by the then president of the DSGMC, therefore isolating its associated stakeholder groups?

What did become apparent was the stakeholder groups, including both eyewitnesses and the general communities, were not involved or consulted in decisions regarding the memorial's location, design and nor utilisation. Indeed, these stakeholder groups felt that their views and needs were not fully or appropriately taken into account in the interpretation of the 1984 massacre at the memorial. This viewpoint was illustrated by one eye-witness respondent, who stated that:

*The victims were not consulted about the design, the concept and the meaning of the memorial... Who was consulted for the name? ...They have not taken any suggestions from us on this memorial. No one was consulted, no survey was done, nobody's opinion was taken about the memorial. (EW4)*

This has resulted in significant disagreement between eyewitnesses and the management committee with regards to the memorial's location (as discussed above) as well as its design. Indeed, it is interesting to note that this eyewitness respondent voiced the necessity for appropriate representation in decisions on the memorial's design, particularly to embrace opinions and perspectives of victims and their families, in order to have an effective commemoration, as memorials do become permanent places of remembrance (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). However, it is evident from the research that by not involving victim groups in the process, what has emerged is a catalyst of dissonance as expressed by all eyewitness participants.

Surprisingly, perhaps, issues with regards to the visual appearance of the memorial were also evident in the comments made by the general stakeholder groups during the interviews. Specifically, some respondents suggested that displaying large visual images of violence could create further conflict and could hinder the process of reconciliation as discussed above (Section 6.2.3).

*I think the style is incorrect. Yes, you have the names of the victims but to have large photographs displaying the violence against Sikhs and victims, I don't think it is a good idea. It just makes people angry. It should be something that promotes peace. The picture would be something you would see in a museum. Pictures do not let you forget. So, the memorial hangs on to the violence against Sikhs, and memorial does not, in my opinion, create a feeling for forgiveness and*



*reconciliation. It's just more of a monument of – look what they did to us and we won't forget.*

*The way in which memorial is designed, it seems that there is a reason behind the style which shows the Sikhs as victims within a Sikh temple. So, what is it saying? it is saying 'we will remember' not that the country will remember. So, it's political because the state has not done it and its political because the temple has done it. (GC24)*

In contrast, others criticised the visual images on the basis that they did not connect the visitor with the event being portrayed. That is, they believed that establishing a tangible link through the artefacts of the time would create a direct link with the event, thus, having a greater impact on visitors:

*I feel that this memorial should have been made more visually strong by recording the experience of the surviving family members or maybe some artefacts or something which has never been witnessed before. One can't just simply put pictures of riot scenes and say here you go – this is the Wall of Truth; this is the Sikh tragedy .... I mean, no imagination, there is no real deal about this memorial what-so-ever. It's like they just wanted to make one, for the sake of it. I don't think they had any clue what they were doing, and it is apparent that they were reluctant to show the full picture. (GC9)*

The call for showcasing 'artefacts' was a significant theme amongst respondents from both the general community and eyewitness groups. By displaying personal belongings, the memorial lens focuses on individual perspectives of the events; it 'serves as a unique testament, inviting the visitor to spend time there and engage with the items' (Eross, 2017). From the interviews, it is evident that this tangible character of a memorial is seen to be missing from the WoT.

Amongst the general community respondents, the issue of seeking consensus on the design was also voiced, once again:

*It's not being done right, and they should have gone and taken a little bit of consensus among Sikhs of India.... they could have decided on design after getting a majority vote from the people. (GC19)*

Certainly, the interviewees gave the impression that the design of WoT was unsuccessful as it proved to be incapable of connecting with its audience. As a consequence, higher levels of dissonance were in evidence reflecting disagreements with regards to its development.

As discussed in Chapter 3, timing is an issue of significant importance to the development and success of a memorial (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). More specifically, the timing of the construction of a memorial in relation to its proximity to the events, it commemorates is crucial. On the one hand, memorials, particularly those related to violent conflict, should be established only after sufficient time has elapsed, to allow for the transitional justice and truth-telling processes through which nations seek to reconcile their societies (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007; Naidu, 2004). On the other hand, however, the construction of the memorial should not be delayed for too long, to when memories of the event begin to fade. The WoT was constructed 33 years after the event, yet, neither transitional justice nor truth-telling processes have been accomplished so far.

In answer to the question why it took so long to plan and construct the WoT, the response on the part of MC1 instantly became political with aspersions being made against his predecessor, the former president of the DSGMC. Specifically, reference was made to a lack of will and, or more so, a willingness to allow the 1984 massacre go unatoned for. Stating that his predecessor was, in effect, aligned with the then ruling Congress party of which Indira Gandhi was a member, he claimed that....

*...because the people who were in power over here in this Gurdwara committee, they were aligned with Congress. They never had the guts to tell a spade is a spade because they were in alliance with the killers. When I took over in 2013, it was in my manifesto that this is one thing, I would do, build a memorial, and I did it God made me do it, and my community stood by me. (MC1)*

Expressing his view passionately, this respondent went on to give all credit to the Almighty and explained how he had put his life on the line to achieve his goal by emphasising that he had faced strong opposition from his direct opponent (the former president of the DSCMC) as well as from both the National Congress government and the state government which was also controlled by the Congress party.

*They tried everything through the court and through the people whom I defeated in elections that it should be stopped. But I did not stop, it is there now before you.*  
(MC1)

Clearly, then, the WoT memorial is highly politicised with respondent MC1 expressing his socio-religious political ideology and seeking gains in political self-fulfilment through honouring his manifesto and constructing a memorial for the historically disenfranchised Sikh community.

The time frame can be highly influential in the way in which a dark site, such as WoT memorial, is perceived and consumed. As Stone (2006) argues, that the shorter time scale after the event, the more intense the emotions; conversely, the longer the time scale, the lighter the emotions become. In addition, dark events commemorated within a shorter time frame may evoke a greater sense of empathy as they can be validated by the living (Stone, 2006). For the WoT, the chronological distance of 33 years had, for some interview respondents, dimmed the vividness of the memory. One respondent from the general community group, for example, suggested, that:

*...emotions relating to the whole episode of the 1984 event are not that high anymore in terms of anger. Rather, there is a feeling of disappointment towards the government of that time and at present and lack of trust in judiciary power.*  
(GC15)

Unremarkably, the 33 years of delay in the construction of the memorial appears to have induced a sense of indifference amongst the younger generation, the event seeming insignificant to them:

*To be honest, it does not mean much to me, since the issue has become insignificant. To me justice is more important.* (GC12)

Nevertheless, the interview responses revealed an element of curiosity in visiting sites associated with death, and the Sikh massacre in particular, although this was tempered, by attitudes towards the memorial's design and its association with the ownership of the memorial:

*The younger generation is curious and wants to know about the past happenings, so it has to be presented with facts and a bit of imagination in terms of construction. And has to be interesting at the same time. Otherwise they will not bother to visit a place which does not catch their attention and especially if its built by the victim community. See, you need a government-sponsored memorial, not some Sikh political leader proprietorship on 1984. (GC10)*

### **6.2.5 The WoT as a Symbol of Injustice**

*How do you expect us to move on? The perpetrators are still not punished. We just can't forget what we have suffered, nor we can forgive. 33 years of silence. Waiting every day, for justice. Is that not long enough? (EW6)*

The foundation for any effective civilian memorial depends on the fulfilment of a number of initial stages, which should incorporate factors such as justice, national recognition of the event and, if appropriate, personal compensation by the government for the victim's losses (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). As previously observed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.8.4) of this thesis, national memorial projects in India commemorating either mass killings, civil unrest or ethnic conflict are notably absent, the principal reasons being, first, that memorialisation is a highly politicised process in India and second, that transitional justice processes are rarely implemented. Specifically, it was highlighted in Chapter 3 that internal disputes and violence between civilians in India, such as the Nellie Massacre (1983), the anti-Sikh riots (1984) and even the Gujarat riots (2002), were allegedly either government-fuelled events or the result of failures at official level to stop the uprisings, are neither commemorated and nor has the government undertaken its role in truth-telling and seeking legal accountability.

However, as also pointed out in Chapter 3, it is widely recognised that the achievement of justice is essential to heal traumas and old wounds and thus, fundamental to attaining reconciliation and peace (Long & Brecke, 2003; Mani 2002). In particular, justice processes may hold perpetrators accountable for their actions and, subsequently, punished for their crime (Gloppen, 2005). Conversely, political failure to achieve justice may undermine the legitimacy of the post-conflict government and, potentially, lead to future violence (Elster, 2004; Gloppen, 2005; Mani 2002). In case of the 1984 riots, several eyewitness testimonies and victim statements supported the claim that National

Congress leaders, both deceased and living, were accountable for the ‘criminal’ activities which took place in 1984, specifically ‘Members of Parliament Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler, labour union leader and Members of Parliament Lalit Maken, and Minister of Information and Broadcasting H K L Bhagat’ (Aulakh, 2015: 218). These politicians were accused of gathering and motivating mobs by disturbing ‘voting lists, and even paid perpetrators for their crimes’ (Aulakh, 2015: 218). Hence, as respondent MC1 suggested in an interview and observed by Sonali (2017), ‘Congress leaders who were involved in the violence were never convicted, and now they are either dead or acquitted’.

By taking ‘ownership’ of the commemoration of the 1984 massacre and constructing the memorial within the grounds of the Rakab Ganj Sahib, the temple has in effect imposed a monopoly over Sikh commemoration within the Sikh community. In addition, references made during the interviews not only to external but also internal politics cannot be ignored. Throughout the interviews with both the presidents of DSGMC, when questioned whether they thought the government should have played a role in the development of this memorial, the answers immediately focused on the issue of justice. For example:

*Before building the memorial, I think it was the duty of the government to punish the culprits.... We could not even think of it that they will build the memorial.*  
(MC1)

*...the perpetrators, the people who were responsible for the killings, they were not booked. They were given Z-plus securities. They were given bulletproof cars. They were made Ministers and MPs. They were made Chairman of big organizations, government-owned PSU's [Public sector Undertakings]. And today, right now when you are taking my interview it is 2017. It is almost 33 years. We are still waiting for justice.* (MC1)

Thus, respondent went further, expressing his animosity against the Congress party chiefs and claiming that true commemoration will only be accomplished once the perpetrators of the massacre are held accountable and punished by the law:

*It was Rajiv Gandhi, it was Sonia Gandhi, and I can say now, Rahul Gandhi ...never apologized till date. They, in fact, tried to give a political ticket to Sajjan*

*Kumar, and Tytler...we don't want their apology, we want justice, the killers must be punished...this country is as much as my country as it belongs to anybody else...so as Indians, we are fighting with the government on the issue of 1984, and we will keep on fighting till the way government should respond. (MC1)*

However, with the passing of time and Sikh victims calls for justice are going unanswered, the development of the WoT can thus be seen as a physical reminder for the need for justice, thus highlighting the lack of recognition from the government. In other words, in the absence of national recognition, the WoT can be seen as having evolved from an idea to a physical memorial partly, if not wholly, to shame the then Congress government and subsequent successive governments. Thus, the point is considered in more detail below (Section 6.2.7 and 6.2.8) but, to return to the issue of justice, it was (perhaps unsurprisingly) a theme raised continually by respondents from the eyewitness group:

*Till the culprits like Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler are booked by the law for their crimes, we will not be at rest. We will keep on fighting for justice. They should be punished for their heinous role in 1984. (EW5)*

Another eyewitness also expressed the need for justice:

*Justice still has not come. Even until now, we have not received justice. So, this memorial solves nothing until and unless some good is done for those who need it. The real benefit of the memorial would have been if you had satisfied everybody. Thus, the memorial would have been appreciated. The sentiments should have been to settle the people first and then make the memorial for the dead to keep the memories alive.*

*You have seen what a joke they have played on us. There is no food in the house, and they expect people to be satisfied with pictures. Can you see the pictures and fill your stomach? Be satisfied with just the pictures? (EW7)*

Thus, although for respondent MC1, representing the owners / controllers group, the WoT is a platform to seek justice, for members of the eyewitness group, it appears from the

interviews to be a bitter place which jogs their memory of a dark past and which deprives them of justice:

*We have lost everything... We had seen people being killed and many families were affected. One of our very close family, Mr P2's daughter, was killed in public; she was raped. These things you can't just forget. .... Government should have taken some initiative by now, but since we have been watching that no justice has come in, I mean people are suffering... the political parties were only involved. And politicians are still not punished. I mean, the names are well known by everyone. Jagdish Tyler and all are still alive. There were so many people ...in thousands and lakhs...so again the figure is also wrong. ...in the area where we stayed the people were put in blast furnaces and the bodies went into ashes, and there was no proof left to count the number of people thrown into that furnace. I am talking about the Bokaro Steel Plant. And the many members of Dashmesh colony were thrown into that place. Where is the justice? (EW6)*

*The point of having a memorial would have been if the people who commit this crime would have been punished. They should have been punished. It has been 33 years. (EW8)*

In comparison, the general community felt the opposite; the majority of these participants viewed justice as not being a dominant matter. This viewpoint, however, may well be driven by the fact that unlike the eyewitness group who may well see justice being administered via financial compensation, the general community would have no personal benefit. Thus, this could account for only a few participants from this regarding the WoT memorial as insignificant, owing to the lack of justice. For example:

*It is all about justice first. Till justice is achieved, no point of having a memorial.'*  
(GC23)

And for another:

*The Wall of Truth will be and is at present, a constant reminder that the perpetrators of '84 are still roaming free and justice has not been met. No justice has been delivered so far. (GC18)*

Interestingly, the 'expert' respondent considered the memorial's prime purpose to be not only to secure justice for the victims but also, owing to the involvement of political leaders, to fulfil many other purposes:

*This memorial is only a means. Its ultimate aim is not only to achieve that object. That object is to highlight to get those guilty of perpetuating the genocide to get them punished and to ensure that it does not happen in future. But this memorial, as I mentioned earlier, is not contributing to the extent it was expected to do, because of the very same reason. It was much overpowered by politicians, and the main purpose stands frustrated. (E3)*

Broadly, then, the research revealed that for many respondents, not only does the WoT symbolise continuing injustice, but will not be able to facilitate a true sense of commemoration within the Sikh and wider community until such justice is achieved.

#### **6.2.6 Recompense for the 1984 Event**

*Yes, you have built a memorial, but what have you done for us? Was there any rehabilitation measure considered for the victims by the Gurdwara? Those who are dead, are gone, you did something for them, and we, who, the living, who lost everything, members of family, house and businesses, we are struggling every day, every hour – what have you done for us? (EW5)*

Surprisingly, the desire for compensation emerged from the interviews as an element of dissonance that seemed to overshadow the reason for which the memorial was constructed. From the analysis of the data, it became evident that not all stakeholder groups raised the issue of compensation; however, for those affected by the atrocity, compensation emerged as a powerful theme.

Gates et al. (2007: 4) note that 'an additional strategy of post-conflict reconciliation is to offer some reparation or compensation to victims and help them to



recover from past brutality'. These reparations take the form of economic compensation or are in kind, such as through the provision of living accommodation or health care services. The eyewitness group respondents affected by 1984 atrocity expressed a wide range of emotions and perception towards the development of the WoT, in particular emphasising the view that in order to progress the commemoration process, priority should have been given to settling with the victims first. As one eyewitness stated:

*I feel that rather than making a memorial, it would have been much better to give some adequate compensation and improve the financial status of these victims. It would have been much more appreciated.....rather than spending lakhs [thousands of pounds] wastefully on making such a memorial. This would have been a creditable memorial if they had done something for the people. If it had directly impacted upon the victims and brought relief to them immediately, then it would have been a proper memorial. People would remember as a memorable memorial.... go ahead and make memorials as per your wish but first see to the needs of the needy. Look after the victims first. Those who have been uprooted, who have lost everything. It has been so many years they have not been able to settle down at all. Do something for them at least. The expenditure you have slated for the memorial - distribute it among those who need it the most. (EW7)*

When the victims of events await transitional justice and still struggle to survive, and if revenue is generated from (dark) tourism that does not help the victims, then resentment may be in evidence (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007). This was certainly evident amongst eyewitness groups, with respondents remarking on the failure of the DSGMC to support the victims economically. As such, thus highlights another major element of dissonance that has hindered the Sikh massacre victims from recovering from past brutality. The respondent stated:

*Making memorials of stone and those who are living breathing souls who do not have one time or two-time meal, what purpose does that memorial solve? There are blind schools. Do something for them. There are those orphaned children whose parents have been snatched from them by death in '84 riots..... Give them some employment. Do something for them. 3 crores or 4 crores (£300,000 or £400,000 approximately) you have spent on the memorial; you could have*

*supported 300-400 families. Today they would have been enabled to stand on their own feet. They say the memorial is very beautiful .....What beauty will do if people are still dying with hunger? No employment? They do not have clothes even. What is the use of that stone? What I will gain from that name. When families and remaining people are still facing hunger. What have you done for us? (EW8)*

*It has been 33 years; compensation should have been given to the people, those who have suffered so much and ... would have done something practical for the people. Maybe monetary help or something for the people. Not just putting the names on the wall. That is not going to solve anything. It does not solve the purpose. We have not got any house; we are just a red card holder. (EW5)*

Red card holders are those victims who were promised resettlement in the Punjab by the government (Figure 6.6) (Arora, 2008). Despite holding the red card, respondent EW5 stated that 33 years after the event, they are still waiting for resettlement, a point which serves to highlight both the continued agony for the victim who is unable to add closure to the event and the continued incompetence of the government in failing to fulfil its promise.

**Figure 6.6:** 1984 Riot victims, red cards holders



**Source:** Sharma (2006)

When respondent MC2 (the former president of the DSGMC) was asked what he thought about the argument that the money that should have been given to the victims instead of being spent on the memorial, he suggested that, in his view, both are equally important:

*The memorial should be built, but also money should be given to the 1984 widows or their children... riot victims... The memorial will show us in the future that if anything happens to Sikhs, it will not be forgotten. (MC2)*

Interestingly, among the general community respondents, there were some who openly voiced their strong opinion in relation to the compensation element.

*It [the memorial] is just wastage of time, manpower energy, resources, bricks and everything. I think a hospital should have been made there. A school should have been made there. These bloody people should have spent this money on schools, on hospitals, on some shelters, homes or something like that. That would have benefited the victims. They have made a place that does not even have a roof. I do not understand; what purpose does it serve? (GC20)*

*We just cannot ignore that political angle; that is why I am not interested in this memorial. Had they been given justice and compensation that would have made me happy because I believe in this – ‘do good and feel good.’ (GC21)*

The opinions raised regarding compensation for the victims first before constructing a memorial appear, then to be part of a complex equation for achieving true commemoration. It is, perhaps, another reason why victims felt disassociated with the WoT.

### **6.2.7 Politicisation of Commemoration at the WoT**

*Firstly, the Management Committee of the memorial is not doing any favours to the Sikh community; rather, they are doing a favour for themselves, to gain political votes. The memorial WoT they constructed is a sheer vote gaining strategy which is been played very cleverly by them. They are not remembering*

*the dead; they are playing politics over the dead. So how can one ignore the political aspect to it? It is propaganda...and it disgusts me. (GC17)*

As discussed in Chapter 2, many dark tourism sites have a political element. Indeed, within the literature, political power is widely recognised as one of the main causes of dissonance among stakeholder groups. Sharpley (2009: 47) observes that ‘tragedies, atrocities and disasters have the potential, through their representation and commemoration, to be exploited not only for commercial gain through tourism but also to convey political messages’. The WoT’s purpose, through its representation and its location, can be seen with as providing a provocative visitor experience rather than acting as a source of solace to visitors. As discussed above, the design of the memorial serves to re-ignite memories in a graphic sense by stirring negative memories rather than promoting commemoration, while its location is used to remind the government of its failure for not delivering justice to the victims. Generally, however, the construction of memorials tends to reflect ‘the people who built them’ (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007: 8) and this is certainly the case with the WoT, with the management committee governing all the important decisions relating to the purpose and functionality of the memorial.

Throughout the interviews, it was evident that the WoT is hinged on the politicisation the 1984 massacre. Berkhout & Van der Brug (2013: 5) note that ‘when a potential issue exists in public opinion but is ignored by mainstream parties, new parties may arise which explicitly emphasise this topic’. In the case of the Sikh massacre, as noted by the ‘expert’ stakeholder, the demand to commemorate the riots on a national platform has been ignored by the mainstream governments of India since 1984. However, the DSGMC, a political and religious organisation, came into existence in 1974 (DSGMC, 2017), ten years before the 1984 massacre, though the topic of the 1984 memorial only started being discussed in a public forum when the then president started campaigning for his manifesto in 2013/14. As stated by MC1 himself:

*When I won in 2013, it was in my manifesto. Before elections, I said if I come to power, this is one of the things I am going to do, and I did it. It is not I did; it is God made me do it. My community stood by me.*

*So, I took a vow, and I discussed with Sikhs that whenever the elections of DSGMC happens, and when we will come to power, we will build a 1984*

*memorial and we could not find a better place than bang opposite Parliament.*  
(MC1)

This last point re-enforces the extent to which the WoT's location, purpose and narrative have been politicised by MC1, who emphasised the link with his political manifesto in the 2013 elections; on being elected, MC1 already had the mandate to construct the WoT within the grounds of the Sikh Temple. As such, this process supports Berkhout & Van der Brug's (2013: 16) argument that 'focusing events are not the real cause of politicisation. Rather, these events function as an opportunity or breeding ground for an issue to become politicised.'

More generally, Light (2017: 284) observes that many studies highlight the relationship that exists between heritage and its politicisation and, consequently, issues of dissonance. From the evidence of this research, the WoT is no exception. As Hite and Collins (2009) claim, in a post-conflict society, memorials are all about the process, a process which includes, for instance, decisions regarding which groups and stakeholders are involved in the memorial's design and development, who builds and controls it, and who funds it. Moreover, to some extent, this process inevitably involves both anticipated as well as unanticipated political involvement or intervention (Hite & Collins, 2009).

Significantly, almost all participants in the interviews considered the WoT to be a highly political tool designed by DSGMC for its own political advantage. In terms of the numbers of respondents, 25 out of the 26 interviewed or roughly 96 percent expressed this opinion whilst, amongst the eyewitness group and general category, in particular, sentiments relating to the politicisation of the event through the memorial were high. They, in effect, viewed the memorial construction as a self-ingratiating instrument; as one eyewitness expressed:

*It is for their own name and fame; it is for their political gain. Otherwise, this memorial holds no sentiments for them. They wanted to be in the limelight. Those who are managing this memorial are doing it for their own ground. For their own existence. Their own earning. For their own bread and butter.* (EW8)

Another believed that by inviting political leaders belonging to the BJP to the WoT's inauguration, the DSGMC had set the stage for the political framing of the memorial. More specifically, this move was seen as evidence of the DSCMC president's political

intentions; by offering such a dominant position to BJP politicians, he was considered to have positioned himself to foster political patronage.

*From the beginning, they have been saying that he [MC2] was visibly Congress but kept saying we will not make this a political stage. It was a spiritual piece of work pertaining to Sikhism then what were Sushma Swaraj and Rajnath [political elites belonging to BJP] doing there. They had called them. They are just fooling people... Without them, they [MC1] are useless. They cannot function without political backing. (EW4)*

The general community respondents also unanimously voiced their concern that politics had overshadowed the true sense of the memorial.

*I can assure you the Gurdwara committee has got all its claws in it. They will always play a victim card through this memorial. Like that saying, politics over dead bodies, this memorial is a classic example of that. (GC16)*

*The memorial Wall of Truth cannot be devoid of political connections. From the day the brutal anti-Sikh riots took place by well-organised plan marked by important men belonging to Congress ruling party at the top, when Sikhs were being killed, and police remained a mute spectator, no curfew was imposed, no protection was given, no justice has been delivered so far, so all these things point towards the politics. I think every memorial makes a political statement having to do with the politics of the time, funding, vote politics and this memorial is no exception. This platform will definitely be used for political gains, when the election comes, in order to seek Sikh votes, the tragedy becomes alive. (GC18)*

*Well, the whole event is a political event. Bhinderwale was killed for wanting an independent state, Indira Gandhi was killed for attacking a holy shrine and the way in which memorial is designed, it looks to be that there is a reason behind the style which shows the Sikhs as victims within a Sikh temple...So, it is political because the state has not done it and its political because the temple has done it. (GC24)*

However, interestingly, one Hindu respondent presented a very different perspective to this debate, stating:

*Because I'll give the benefit of doubt to him ...to say straight-away, it was political or is political; I do not think it is right. Because he is into that profession...could be he is sensitive towards this issue, as head of the Sikhs, being in government...he could be from that angle...could be... At least possibility is there of being sensitiveness to the religion or to their own people. So that could be another way to look at it. Because I mean, it depends on how you see it. (GC11)*

This contrasting view can be seen as arising a challenging point, as one Sikh respondent commented:

*When you involve religion with politics, one must be very careful; unconsciously it will always bring and raise this point that 'they' killed us and naturally one spark can always start a big fire all over again. And this is exactly these people are trying to do. (GC22)*

The point raised above relates to Tunbridge and Ashworth's (1996) argument that history may be subject to a selective approach in the way it is expressed, and that a contemporary product which is shaped from a described history may become dissonant when it offers a selective interpretation of that history.

The 'expert' stakeholder respondent also expressed concerns with regards to how the memorial is being employed by politicians to further their own standing within the local and wider Sikh community:

*Unfortunately, here everything is being made political. And what is more unfortunate ... that among the Sikhs, I mean the religion has been so politicised... glorifying everything by the politicians and they are in the front and the people who are actually true social workers and the people who have performed and worked so hard, even they are brought just to be shown to gain sympathy. The programme of commemoration lasted two hours; they (victims and social workers) were not even given two minutes, and the rest was being taken over by the politicians.*

*The politicians are trying to protect themselves by using the memorial... This memorial is an occasion in itself. Where the politicians are coming to gain importance from. (E3)*

Interestingly, an alternative perspective which certainly contrasted with more general opinions was offered by a relatively younger respondent, aged 23, who expressed a mature argument emphasising how resources are all too readily wasted on the dead whilst, in contemporary India, there is a greater need to invest in the living:

*I do not know if you have visited PGI [Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, a government hospital] or not. So many patients are lying outside the PGI. The relatives of patients are just lying there, regardless of the weather and everything. And there is no shelter for them. They are just shivering in the cold. Their dear ones are inside getting operated on; they are just waiting outside. This, in this poor country, we strongly need more places like PGI. In this poor country we need, we need at least 100 more PGI's. Hospitals like these which are providing free medical treatment to the poor patients. So, I think because top leaders are spending money on these irrelevant things like memorials, that is why we are not progressing. This is the only reason I feel. Once you are a developed country, you have a lot of resources, you have a lot of money. You can do anything. It is all right, then it is fine. But why to spend so much money on things in such a poor country where people are dying of hunger, they do not have jobs or a roof above their heads. (GC20)*

In summary, the key issues that have emerged throughout this section support the argument that not only the commemoration of the 1984 Sikh massacre but also the construction of the WoT has been highly politicised. Specifically, from the interviews, it is evident that the issue of the present ownership of the WoT memorial is an essential concern amongst the great majority of participants in the research. This, in turn, lends credence to Williams (2007) observation that the ownership of a memorial can generate a whole set of new conflicts leading to questions about who should have the responsibility for interpreting memory.



### 6.2.8 The Desire for the National Memorial for 1984 Massacre

*I strongly agree that it would have been better to build a National Memorial on State grounds. The 1984 massacre of innocent Sikhs was a matter of national shame and outrage against the country's innocent citizens. The nation needs to atone for this genocide. (GC23)*

Regardless of what type of conflict a society experiences – a civil war, a war between states, genocide or other conflicts – the urge to publicly document who died, by what means and why appears to be nearly universal. Societies appear to need to record accurately how many died and under what circumstances (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007: 8). Memorials at a national level may contribute to social reconstruction by allowing victims and community members to engage in truth-telling and to examine the past as a basis for reconciliation. Thus, a state or nationally sponsored memorial may be respected by victims as a way of acknowledging their difficult past and their experiences (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). However, as noted in Chapter 3 (Section 3.8.4 and 3.8.5), successive Indian governments have proved reluctant to make decisions about what should or should not be depicted publicly. Indeed, since independence, India has been hesitant to publicise cases of conflict and violence on a national platform. Moreover, by consistently depriving its public of memorialising events of political upheaval, terrorist atrocities and even natural disasters more generally, criticism was evident among stakeholder groups with regards to the failure to recognise nationally the Sikh massacre. All respondents belonging to the eyewitness, general community and ‘expert’ stakeholder groups firmly voiced the opinion that the events of 1984 affected the whole nation demanded a memorial sponsored by the state in order to endow the massacre and its victims with national recognition and legitimacy. Moreover, it was suggested, as others have more generally (Buckley-Zistel & Schaefer, 2014), that a state / nation-sanctioned memorial would unite its citizens under a symbolic national identity.

For the eyewitness respondents, the significance of a government-sponsored memorial was clearly evident.

*It was a national tragedy and not giving any recognition to it, is not right. The government should have taken the initiative by now (EW6)*

Interestingly, and as considered in Chapter 3, some participants also suggested that by not building the memorial, the nation is demonstrating its hesitance to showcase its difficult history to its public. As such, the government might be considered to be promoting a ‘collective amnesia’ as opposed to a collective memory of the massacre (Ashworth, 2008; Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005; Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996).

*It should have been a national memorial ... Why hide it from the people? Because till now they have not built the memorial, they are hiding from the truth, aren't they...? Because it is not that in 1984, a number of people were killed. It is not that a number of selected people, Sikhs only were killed because non-Sikhs also were killed. Because those people were like cruel people at that time. They selected the Sikhs, but the mob was in such a bad shape that whosoever was in the way, someone was protecting the other Sikhs, they killed that non-Sikh too. I was in Kanpur. And I have seen with my own eyes not killing but burning of the fridge, scooter, wood, furniture, here and there etc. of everyone, caught up in riots. The mob was going everywhere. They threw stones also at our homes. It was my luck because of our landlord that we were saved. Me and my grandparents. I have experienced the curfew. (EW5)*

Significantly, there was also a prevailing attitude amongst the general community that the government should construct a national memorial to the victim of the 1984 riots. Specifically, in order to help repair a society that suffered from violent conflict, it was deemed essential that the country should address such conflicts at a national level and provide a platform for public mourning.

*I am Hindu and, believe me; I visit Gurdwara (Sikh Temple) more than a Mandir (Hindu Temple). However, atrocity as big as this deserves a national, government-sponsored memorial, in which true narratives and representation are there. It truly deserves national recognition by the centre. Certainly. Built on a state ground, sanctioned by the government and their representation of the 1984 massacre. Their version. After all, they were responsible, so they should pay the price. (GC9)*

It is interesting to note that the respondent quoted above while being a Hindu, appears not to equate the riots as a Sikh versus Hindu event. Rather, in their eyes, more emphasis is placed on it as a form of political reprisal and, thus, the call for a national memorial is more poignant. Many other participants in the interviews also argued that a national tragedy deserves a national memorial:

*If it is on state ground, more people would see it. Therefore, more people will remember that it was a bad thing that happened, and it would be a type of acknowledgement, a state acknowledgement of the political part of the events. But then, I suppose it would also serve as a reminder that a Sikh guy assassinated the prime minister. So, it is not an easy thing to construct, but it should be something that faces the challenge for both sides – victims and attackers. It would have been better if this had been built as a national memorial. Because it was a national tragedy. (GC24)*

*It was a national tragedy... should have been made under the central government. Then this would have been a direct acknowledgement of the fact that the killing of innocent Sikhs for no fault of their own was a grave mistake. (GC11)*

*See, it was a national tragedy; it should have built on a national ground so everyone could have visited. (GC22)*

*National tragedy deserves and demands a national memorial. Politics has eclipsed its purpose, had this memorial be built on a national level, then more and more people would be able to learn some lesson. (GC18)*

*Yes, it would have been more appropriate had it been a national memorial funded by state because it would serve as an admission of the State's complicity and a promise that it will not be repeated. (GC14)*

Whilst respondents were seemingly adamant that there should be a national memorial during the interviews, many revealed that they believed that successive governments had been, and continue to be, reluctant to publicise the 1984 violence against Sikhs. Moreover,

it was suggested by some that by recognising it publicly, the government face calls for legal accountability for the 1984 riots.

*A memorial should be built on state ground but, you see, the chances for that are very remote because then the government will have to own up to the fact that, yes, these people were victims of large-scale violence organised by the Congress government in power at that time.*

*I also believe the government should have taken the responsibility of building the memorial and own up to the fact that violence did take place and people of a particular community were literally butchered in the capital of one of the world's largest democracies, and none of its agencies controlled the violence. The entire nation was against this tragedy, and the government did not do anything to stop the violence. And till today the government has not acknowledged the fact or is still hesitant to admit the failure of the government to protect its people against the violence. Therefore, the government should own up and take responsibility. (GC12)*

This also confirms that, as discussed in Chapter 3, when it comes to commemorating a specific type of violence and honouring those killed in the conflict, a significant lack of engagement on the part of central government participation is typically evident in India. Overall, therefore, a strong voice for a national memorial for 1984 anti-Sikh riot victims was clearly heard throughout the interviews. Curiously, however, when this issue was discussed with the ex-president of the management committee – that is, who should have taken responsibility for interpreting memory of the 1984 event – his response was surprising. On the one hand, he disagreed with the construction of the existing (privately developed) memorial yet, on the other hand, saw no purpose or value in the government taking control for the construction of the memorial either.

*I do not want the government to build it. Have we constructed Gurdwaras with the aid of the government?... in our religion, in our thought, we will not accept any government money to build anything. And that too from that government that was responsible for the killings. Why? No, no, my personal views are that we should not take any money from the government. Neither from the BJP or any other government. (MC2)*

From the outset of this research, it became clear that significant differences of opinion with regards to the WoT existed between the two presidents (MC1 and MC2) of the committee. However, their views relating to the demand and need for a national, government-sponsored memorial were one and the same, albeit for different reasons. While MC1 wanted to keep the WoT in his own hands for personal political gain, MC2 demonstrated a lack of desire to provide any physical space to commemorate the 1984 victims. This analysis was also mirrored by one eye-witness respondent, who stated that:

*One president does not want to make the memorial, and even he does not want to fight the case of '84. He says forget about '84!... while another who has constructed the memorial does not leave one occasion for his self-publicity.*  
(EW8)

Hence, the WoT reflects the dissonance surrounding the politicised nature of memorials in India more generally, although the demand from the respondents for a national memorial cannot be overlooked. This, in turn, is evidence of the perceived lack of memorials in contemporary India to commemorate its ordinary citizens who have died or suffered in violence or conflict.

### **6.2.9 Significant in their Absence: Memorials for Ordinary Sikhs and Indians**

*Sadly, we do not have such kind of memorials. Government is more focused on memorialising themselves. They have the best prime land for themselves and cost wise; they have broken all the records. It makes you wonder that we are still a developing country and yet we can afford 3 crores, 10 crores, 50 crores (£300,000, £10,00,000, £50,00,000 approximately) worth of memorials. And yet for the public, they have no interest. Then they run out of public funds.* (GC17)

The comment above highlights the trend within the process of memorialisation in contemporary India, whereby memorials are typically created to remember and commemorate the political elite. Indeed, as highlighted in Chapter 3 (Section 3.8.2), one type of memorial, that is, memorials to political figures, has dominated the Indian memorial landscape. Instead of presenting the nation's collective memories of past sufferings or commemorating a specific type of violence and honouring those killed in

the conflict, the Indian people are confronted primarily with memorials to political leaders, a fact recognised by all stakeholder groups participating in the research. More specifically, as suggested in Chapter 3, Indians have struggled for centuries to have mass atrocities formally memorialised (Muthe, 2016), yet the Government's perspective on memorialisation focuses on either politicians who they believe should be remembered or as a potential platform for political gain.

Not surprisingly, this disenchantment was raised not only by the management committee's president but also appeared to evoke an intense feeling of frustration among other stakeholder groups. The president of the DSGMC, for example, argued that although there are three memorials for Indira Gandhi in Delhi, yet, when it comes to commemorating nation's citizens, in this case, the Sikhs, no memorial has been constructed to date.

*Now three memorials of Indira Gandhi are in town. Aren't these Sikhs not citizens of this country? They were killed through no fault of their own. (MC1)*

MC1 further claimed that after more than 70 years, still no memorial had been established for those who died during Indian partition. This, adding further weight to the argument and legitimising that remembrance and honour of the nation's ordinary citizens who have died in tragic circumstance have not been a priority for the Indian government.

*Now I will tell you one thing in 1947, Lakhs (thousands) of people died in Hindustan – Pakistan Partition. There is still no memorial to that. But we made the 1984 memorial. (MC1)*

Respondents belonging to general stakeholder group also pointed out how the successive governments have been prejudiced towards the type of memorials being constructed in contemporary India:

*33 years down the line and we are still debating whether there should there be a memorial or not. I mean, shouldn't the country be ashamed? What kind of government we had or have, whose top priority lies in building memorials for their own party leaders but not for a common man in India? It shows the level of value of the life of a common man here. Dirt cheap. (GC9)*

Once again, this highlights the fact that Indian governments have failed to recognise and commemorate atrocities and conflicts of the past at the national level, pointing to the fractured structure of the concept of memorialisation within India.

*But at the same time, these figure memorials, oh God, what a waste of money. I mean, oh come on, those statues of Shivaji and God knows whose so ever, they are a complete waste of time. Pathetic... makes you wonder, are there still people around who actually want to visit such pointless and irrelevant memorials which are so insignificant in a nation where human life is worth nothing, but a mythical fantasy religious figure is made the tallest or whatever statue in the country. After all, if they will not make such rubbish memorials, how on earth, they will get poor and uneducated votes. (GC16)*

It was particularly striking that this respondent claimed that memorials to political figures and religious figures are being used as a political stunt. This heavily politicised nature of (many) memorials in India not only challenges public memory but also provides a backdrop of the politicisation of the country's history. As already suggested, it was clear from the interviews that the absence of a memorial to the tragic events of 1984 in India was considered by many respondents to reflect the government's lack of will or desire to honour its Sikh victims. However, as GC17 suggested (at the beginning of this section), it is not just the victims of 1984 anti-Sikh riots who are not commemorated, but also Indian citizens more generally. Hence, it can be interpreted that there is no religious prejudice underlying the government's unwillingness to commemorate the victims of the riots; rather, it is politically motivated. Interestingly, the 'expert' stakeholder also noted that:

*Whenever the genocide has happened, the government has tried to reward those people who committed the genocide. The government totally tried to shield them. They tried to wrap it under the carpet. (E3)*

This highlights the heavily politicised nature of many memorials in India that challenge Indian public memory. Respondent E3 also stated that because there was no land allotted by the government, there was no choice but to build the WoT inside the Sikh temple,

hence, once again, demonstrating the hesitation and lack of will on the part of the government to commemorate the victims of atrocities at a national level.

*The government should have. They were Sikhs, and they were Indian citizens. The citizens of this country had died openly on the roads of the capital. The government should have done something. But the government failed; that is why the proposal came for the memorial to be built in the Gurdwara by the Gurdwara Committee. Though that tragedy happened during Congress rule, when BJP came into power, don't you think they should have pursued a little bit more to get land for the national memorial.....they should have, when the BJP was in opposition they were so much keen and curious to highlight 84 and even to talk about, 84's Congress leaders have not been punished. They only talk when they are in power this is their time to do it. They need to do it now. When they are in power, it is their time to do it. It has to be more effective. (E3)*

In this sense, credit should be given to MC1, who has been able to provide a memorial to those who were killed in the 1984 massacre. However, at the same time, the dominance of politics in the development and management of the WoT memorial by its current owner cannot be ignored, reflecting a common theme of dissonance identified amongst all the stakeholder groups.

### **6.3 WoT and Indian Dark Tourism**

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, sites such as the WoT that represent the commemoration of suffering and death fall under the umbrella of dark tourism. However, as a site imbued with political significance and, as revealed in the preceding sections, the existence of significant dissonance, the question to be asked: does the WoT, as a dark tourism destination, have the potential to become a site for visitation and to challenge both visitors experience and its role as a memorial in the context of dark tourism in contemporary India?

#### **6.3.1 WoT and its Touristification**

Within the broader themes of memorialisation and dark tourism, the interviews moved on to explore respondents opinions with regards to the touristification of the WoT. Sharpley (2009) states that memorials have the potential to become a revenue stream either through



pilgrimage or from general visitation by victims groups, locals and other domestic and international tourists. When MC1 was asked who might be attracted to the WoT as visitors, he identified three target groups, the first of which included expatriates or so-called as Non-Residential Indians (NRI). NRIs are Indian citizens who hold an Indian passport but who live abroad indefinitely. The second group comprises Person of Indian Origin (PIO), formally defined as a person who has in the past held an Indian passport or a descendant; that is, one whose parents or grandparents held an Indian passport (Hannam, 2004). MC1 stated that

*NRI's, the people living abroad, the Punjabis living abroad! Whenever they come here, they visit and also the citizens of Delhi, they also come and visit. (MC1)*

Interestingly, priority is clearly given to the NRI's before the local community. Being classified as an NRI brings with it many special economic and bureaucratic incentives and privileges in India (Hannam, 2004). More importantly, such diaspora tourism offers latent power in a political-cultural context insofar as the Indian diaspora could make a significant contribution to publicising the 1984 massacre to a wider audience and potentially, generating income through place promotion (Hannam, 2004). Aside from this argument, however, when considering potential visitation to the WoT, it is conceivable that NRIs and PIOs may view the WoT as a dark tourist site as a basis for re-engaging with their Indian culture, as illustrated by Hannam's (2004) discussion on Indian diaspora tourism.

In addition, MC1 identified what can be perceived as a captive audience, or a visitor group controlled by the Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee, namely, 40,000 children from Sikh schools (see Figure 6.7 (a) and (b) and Figure 6.8):

*Almost 40,000 children are studying in my institutions, so I am making it compulsory a child should at least visit the WoT memorial once; they should come to know about the history of 1984 from eyewitnesses in their lifetime. If something of this magnitude happened, they should know where things went wrong and what should be the right way to come out of it' and remember I am targeting up to 40,000 children! (MC1)*

As mentioned above, DSGMC operates and manages many schools, colleges, institutes and Polytechnic ITI within Delhi (DSGMC, 2017).

**Figure 6.7 (A):** School students of Guru Harkrishan Public School, New Delhi visiting WoT



**Source:** Guru Harkrishan Public School (2019)

**Figure 6.7 (B):** School students of Guru Harkrishan Public School, New Delhi visiting WoT



**Source:** Guru Harkrishan Public School (2019)

**Figure 6.8:** In addition, the school website highlights their students trip to the WoT memorial



**Source:** Guru Harkrishan Public School (2019)

Here, it is possible to an extent to draw some parallels with the Shoah, Jewish-Israeli identity and Israeli school visitations to Holocaust sites. Of course, no comparison can be made with the scale of tragedy inflicted on the Jewish community during World War II, yet parallels can be seen through Feldman's (2008) book, *Above the Death Pits, Beneath the Flag: Youth Voyages to Poland and the Performance of Israeli National Identity*. Feldman (2008) illustrates that by 'engaging with youth, that acts of testimony transforms the survivors from victims into empowered public witnesses, and the youth into the spiritual progeny, 'witnesses of the witness'' (Feldman, 2008: xiv). Feldman (2008) concludes that identification with the Shoah has become the strongest force uniting Israeli youth, even for those who have no family connection with the Shoah. In addition, it was observed that on their return from their visits to the Holocaust sites in Poland, Israeli youth became propagators of Shoah memory. However, Feldman (2008) also notes that critical analysts view the trips as a form of 'governmental manipulation and hegemonic indoctrination (Feldman, 2008: 3). This can be related to MC1's previous statement that it would be compulsory for school children from the Gurdwara run schools to visit the WoT; parallels can indeed be drawn insofar as the decision to engage in this obligated visitation can be seen as another extension of the socio-political value the WoT has for the Sikhs who own and control it and the politicising of the event.

However, the ex-president views the WoT as a failure. In the interview, he stated that the location of the memorial is off-putting and does not fulfil its potential for visitor numbers:

*People are not going. People go to Rakab Ganj Sahib to worship, not to see memorials. The conclusion is now they have built it, and they have built it in the wrong place, this is not the place, and in future, Sikhs will take decision when the time will come. (MC2)*

Besides members of the committee, the expert and two respondents belonging to the eyewitness and general community had so far visited the WoT. Where memorials may offer memorable tourist experiences (Dunkley, 2015), a participant expressed a high degree of disappointment as a tourist experience. As a member of the general stakeholder group category with no direct links to the massacre apart from belonging to the Sikh faith, the respondent felt that the WoT design fell short of living up to their own expectations of what a memorial should convey when commemorating such an event. The respondent

commented that the visit to WoT for them evoked no emotions, stating that primarily the memorial's design was inadequate, failing to stimulate any sense of reconciliation. However, for them, blame for this shortfall fell on successive Indian governments who have failed to act as a pivotal mediator to deliver justice for the victims and reconciliation for communities. But they also pointed out the management committee whom, the participant stated, could also have helped to address justice for the victims through, for example, providing compensation and also in having a more fitting design for the memorial to include actual artefacts to help make the experience more authentic and legitimate:

*Yes, I have actually. I have visited this memorial. But I will be very honest with you. It did not invoke any such feeling. Bare walls with simply the names of the victims, no details, nothing. There is no imagination in terms of construction and design of the memorial... More should have been done. Artefacts or any other documentation should have been displayed. This memorial cannot act as a balm on the wounds of those families who lost their kin. Like I said before, bare walls – are good for nothing and also families are still awaiting justice as none of the perpetrators of riots have been punished despite incremental evidence.*

*...memorials foster reconciliation, but how can the Wall of Truth offer that because a prolonged battle with the court is still going on for justice and hence resentment among the victims. Even the apology from Dr Manmohan Singh (Ex-Prime Minister of India) came too late and is not enough. And what has Wall of Truth and their creators have done for reconciliation? What have they done? Nothing, absolutely nothing. In the present scenario, Wall of Truth is just a concrete structure, and it means nothing to me. The victims are still going through a lot of agonies, so until and unless they are at peace, this memorial is not worth visiting. (GC18)*

Nevertheless, few participants expressed an interest in visiting the WoT site. As one respondent stated that:

*I would like to visit and see what all has been done for the people..... because I was affected by this incident, it does mean many things to me. I would spend a*

*little time there in silence memorising all that has happened in those years which are passed. But for a common layman, it might not mean anything more than a wall or a decorated park kind of a thing. It is just that just their names on it with no pieces of evidence I mean they should have kept some article there to let our coming generations know that what it was all about. Why did, why did all this happen. As a human, it does hold a strong place for me. The significant thing for me. (EW6)*

*I will surely visit this memorial...Yes, it is a part of history basically. It has gone down like that. And whether somebody likes it or not, whether they accept it or not, it is going to stay that way. (GC19)*

Conversely, majority of other participants refused to visit. Some owing to their long-held feelings of a lack of justice and the need for compensation:

*First of all, I will not be going to visit this memorial. Why should we go? What is the benefit of going there? Why should I spend my money? And to visit what? ....No, I will not. (EW7)*

Another respondent expressed the view that despite what the WoT represented to them, they would never consider visiting such a site. It was evident through their answer that they were in fact disenchanted with the concept of religion, politics and, seemingly, even more so when the two were mixed, such as can be seen in the context of the WoT memorial:

*Even though I am a born Sikh, still, I am not attached to my religion. I feel sorry for those people who lost their life. But no, I do not think I will visit Wall of Truth. Religion should not be the motivating factor to visit Wall of Truth. Religion is something which is forced on us as we are born in that family. We are Sikhs because we were born in a Sikh family. Otherwise, I would not have been Sikh. Also, this whole political link to the memorial is distasteful, so no, I will not visit. (GC10)*

Others, also expressed their reluctance, owing to dissatisfaction related to memorial's design :

*No, it's not from the heart. There should be streets left in ruins as a monument to this event. I don't think it reflects any of the tragedy. So why should I go and see something that wasn't constructed without any thoughts to the reality of the destruction. (GC24)*

*What's there to see? Tell me, what's there to see? I don't like the way it is done. I am not impressed by how they have constructed this memorial. I am really surprised at our leaders who could allow such shabby work. Moreover, I don't think it's got anything to offer. I personally think it's boring, dull and lack solemnity. So, no, I am not interested, and I will not be visiting this memorial. (GC17)*

While some expressed that they were ignorant of the existence of the WoT and blamed, in general the lack of publicity relating to the memorial for their lack of knowledge of the memorial, questioning why the WoT was not advertised or promoted by the media. However, 18 out of 26 which is roughly 69 percent of participants were, in fact, aware of the memorial's existence. The remaining 31 percent blamed media for the lack of awareness of the existence of the WoT.

*An event of such national importance should have been covered in a national newspaper – I did not see that happening. The media did not cover it, though they should have done it as it is a very sensitive issue. I was not aware of it. (GC12)*

*No, at all, never heard of it, neither on the news or any newspaper. (GC14)*

However, when analysing the participants responses, those who expressed a lack of media coverage around the WoT. It can be said that this lack of knowledge may be due to their own lack of engagement with the media rather than the lack of information informing the populous of the existence of the WoT. On analysing the Times of India (National Newspaper) archives, it was found that there have been four articles published since its inauguration in 2017 (The Times of India, 2019). While, in The Tribune, another of

India's National Newspaper, there have been nine articles published since 2017 (The Tribune, 2019).

Even though the research showed that there was an awareness of the WoT, the 'expert' stakeholder commented on the lack of engagement by DSGMC with its potential audience.

*... You go and stand on the gate of the Gurdwara Rakab Ganj. You ask them where is the memorial? Many of them will not know it. So, the efforts have to be made.....it has to be made more effective. People need to be more aware of it. .... Until and unless we give it media attention and international attention, this just will keep on going down under the carpet. (E3)*

In addition, E3 stated that:

*I mentioned earlier that this memorial is not contributing to the extent it was expected to do it because of the very same reason. It was much overpowered by politicians, and the main purpose stands frustrated. You can make it popular among the British, but you will not be able to make it popular among the Sikhs because it is inaugurated by Badal (Badal is Punjab's ex-chief Minister). (E3)*

The response above by respondent E3 highlights, yet again, the politicisation of the WoT which has impacted on its visitation.

### **6.3.2 Indian Dark Tourism**

To an extent, owing to the complexities of the dissonance surrounding the WoT, it can be concluded that the site is unlikely to become a focus of dark tourism visitation within India, at least amongst the domestic audience. Yet, it has been shown that the WoT does indeed have potential as a focal point for diaspora tourism, as identified earlier in this chapter, perhaps encouraging visits to other dark sites in India by NRI and PIO tourists. Yet, taking into account the WoT's other potential visitors group and through the outcomes of the interviews, it was found that, in order for respondents to engage in visiting the WoT, they would first have to be confident to believe that the memorial represents and commemorates the victims of the 1984 Sikh massacre in a more appropriate, sincere, authentic and captivating manner. In particular, they would need to



perceive that the victims are justly commemorated rather than exploited by the memorial as a political tool.

However, as noted in Chapter 2, dark tourism may be conceptualised differently in India compared with the West; that is, for Indians, visiting dark places does not hold the same experiential significance as for Western tourists. As explored in the literature, in the West, visiting places of death and suffering offers people an opportunity to confront and absorb the idea of death (their own and of others) and to satisfy their curiosity (and perhaps fears) about the reality of death (Walter, 2009). In contrast, in Indian culture where death is ever present, where it is part of the cycle of life, death and rebirth, Indians arguably do not feel the need to visit a dark site as a mediator of life and death. Nevertheless, implicit in the interview outcomes was evidence that Indians do seem to have a degree of morbid curiosity which can be seen as a motive or stimulus for Indians to visit actual sites of death or sites associated with death and suffering. This then serves to illustrate a key finding in the research highlighting a significant difference in the perceptions of various dark tourism typologies which exist between India and the West.

More specifically, and as discussed previously in Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.2), the proposed Indian thanatological model that represents the cultural context of death and dying in Indian conditions in India suggests that the interconnecting elements of religious beliefs and religious practices in India together facilitate the social acceptance of death, thereby reinforcing ontological securities. Thus, such beliefs and practices create the opportunities for death to be, in a sense, consumed, that Indian visitors might engage with a dark tourism spectacle through curiosity or education, and indeed (in the case of sites such as the WoT) for collective mourning, but not to address any ontological insecurities that Westerners may experience with regards to death and dying. Such a conclusion is justified in the responses of participants when asked how they would describe people who visit sites associated with death and suffering, such as WoT. The findings revealed that respondents identified curiosity as the dominant reason for travelling to the dark sites, followed by the more functional purpose of commemoration; tourists, visitors and mourners. Specifically, participants stated that visitors to such sites might be:

*Voyeurs, spectators, vested interests.* (EW7)

*Curious, some might just want to see places they have heard stories in previous days.* (EW6)

*I would say curiosity because to know what happened, how it happened and to actually see that place where that event occurred, its curiosity for sure, and then it would be mourners, commemorators and defiantly tourists. (GC25)*

*Curious to know things. (EW5)*

*They are tourists. Then there are people coming from abroad. They want to show their generation. (EW8)*

*People like me – curious. (GC10)*

*Many people are curious they visit. There are also tourists. I think it's a mix (GC20)*

*I would say curious. (GC9)*

*I would say definitely curious, also visitors from other parts of the country. (GC18)*

*Curiosity, because they want to know what happened, how it happened, and mourners, like family members and friends and visitors from abroad. (GC14)*

*People who visit memorial cannot be labelled under a single category. So those who visit such a place can be mixture of tourists, mourners, and many would come out of curiosity to know more about an event which has become history. (GC16)*

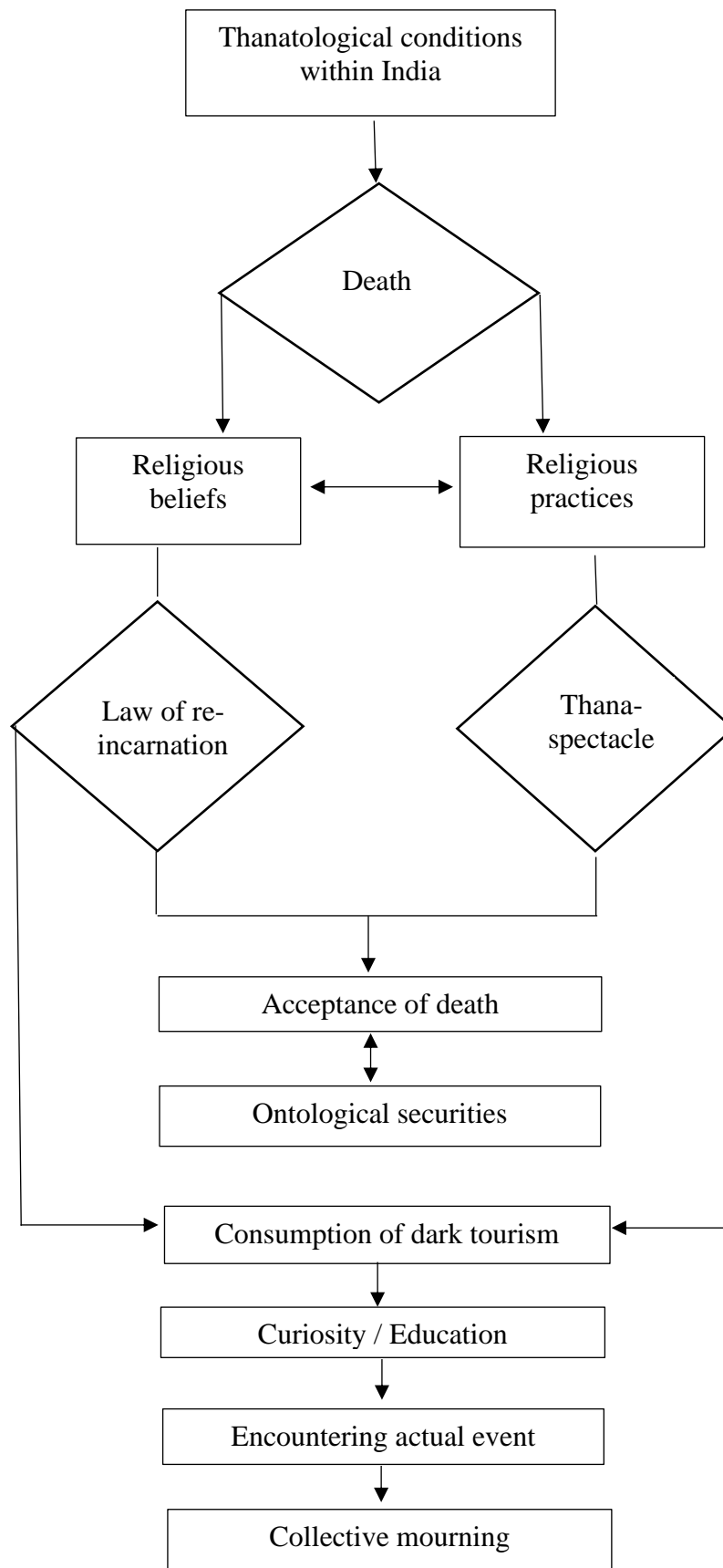
Thus, with regards to the Indian thanatological model (figure 2.17) proposed in Chapter 2, Figure 6.9 (reproduced below), confirms that Indian dark sites provide a platform for the consumption of dark events based upon:

- curiosity and education
- encountering actual events
- engaging in collective mourning

This is in contrast with Stone and Sharpley's (2008) view of the consumption of the dark tourism experiences, summarised in their model of 'Dark tourism consumption within a thanatological framework', which suggests that (Western) tourists visit dark sites for the purposes of:

- the social neutralisation of death
- the de-sequestration of death
- maintaining / achieving ontological security

**Figure: 6.9:** Figure 2.17 (from Chapter 2): Indian Thanatological Model



In short, whereas dark tourist sites may, in Western contexts, be considered culturally and analytically different from other heritage tourist sites, specifically through confronting death, in India no such distinction exists. That is, in India, dark tourism sites are simply tourist sites.

### **6.3.3 Future Demand for Dark Tourism in India**

When the interview participants were asked whether or not they would themselves visit sites of death or sites associated with death / tragedies (other than the WoT), the findings revealed that around two-thirds of the respondents suggested they would be interested in visiting dark tourism sites.

This perhaps supports Sharpley (2009: 4) contention that, ‘for as long as people have been able to travel, they have been drawn – purposefully or otherwise – towards sites, attractions or events that are linked in one way or another with death, suffering, violence, or disaster’. Nevertheless, as noted above and in Chapter 2, Indian tourist and a Western tourist viewing the same site, would in all likelihood experience it differently. Yet, the demand to create an effective platform for Indians to consume death for either curiosity or education, to encounter the actual event or to witness / engage in collective mourning was clearly visible throughout the findings. As such, it can be seen that there is an opportunity for growth within the dark tourism market in India for visiting sites that commemorate tragedies.

However, for a number of reasons, the assimilation of the term dark tourism in Indian (tourism) culture is currently in its embryonic phase, particularly in comparison to the understanding and consumption of dark tourism in the West. Two key factors support this argument. First, from the research in this thesis, there appears to be a lack of will on the part of the Indian government to invest in such sites in order to appeal to its domestic audience. Second, there is a significant issue of authenticity in relation to the interpretation of dark sites; that is, there must be what is perceived to be a ‘true’ representation of the event and equally fascinating in order to motivate visitation, as the following responses reveal:

*Yes, if the correct information is there and if it is really attractive, I would like to visit it. If it is only walls with names written on it, absolutely not. (EW5)*

*Provided something constructive thing is there. Some truth is behind that. Some history is there, as in real history is there and that memorial serves the purpose of community, humanity. The extempore reaction must be there. That is the kind of memorial I want to visit. I will pay my respect to those who have sacrificed their lives for the national cause or died for no fault for their own. I must pay my respects. (EW8)*

*So, unless they are associated with some real tragedies, a common man's tragedy, then only I will make an effort and visit... As I said, if intentions are right behind the formation, I will, and I have visited several memorials associated with the massacre, but it should be fascinating in terms of the event it's depicting and what message it is trying to convey. (GC17)*

*Oh yes, I would like to visit others too, as well. As time passes and people who lived through a tragedy are not around to remind viewers of their losses, so memorials bear testimony to that place and time. I find it rather interesting. (GC16)*

*I do visit memorials. I have been to Drass war memorial, it is absolutely amazing. It is the actual site, and you get the real feeling of the war zone there. (GC9)*

Based on the above comments, it is apparent that the respondents have a degree of interest in visiting sites associated with death and suffering. However, it is also evident while; contemporary Indian memorials favour elite-dominated / commemoration of political figures past and present, the commemoration for ordinary citizens remains rare. Nevertheless, where such memorials exist, they are politically and / or commercially motivated and typically are designed and located in such a manner that the broader social objectives of memorialisation cannot be achieved. However, the demand for such dark sites, such as, for example, Bhopal Gas Tragedy Memorial, 2001 Parliament attack memorial outside the Parliament, and for an Indian partition memorial (as discussed in Chapter 3) is apparent in contemporary India.

## 6.4 Summary

Overall, the purpose of this chapter was to present and consider the factors which have resulted in dissonance at the WoT memorial. It has revealed a number of themes that point to the existence and potential causes of such dissonance:

- *WoT memorial:* The memorial itself was viewed as a factor of dissonance, as some stakeholder groups viewed it as commemorative site and believed it would act as a reminder for generations to come, whilst others rejected the memorial as they considered it might generate further conflicts within communities. The latter believed the events of 1984 are better forgotten.
- *Location:* The location of the memorial potentially limits the progress in the process of reconciliation, thus causing dissonance between the Sikh community and government. At the same time, the location of the WoT was also considered to be meeting the objectives of the Sikh political elite who, for self-political gain, use the memorial as a platform for their own benefit. This is resulting in dissonance among the Sikh community itself.
- *Design:* The design and construction of the memorial led by the Sikh management committee, were viewed as ineffective. Therefore, as a memorial to those affected by riots, dissonance has arisen as a result of the lack of real representation of victims' voices.
- *Justice and recompense:* The denial of justice and compensation to the victim community was seen as a strong catalyst of dissonance between the owners / controllers and eyewitness / the general community.
- *Ownership:* The owners / controllers group of WoT, by emphasising and presenting their own interpretation of the past (Laing & Frost, 2013) has led to dissonance, especially amongst those with personal connections with the event who feel that their side of the 'story' is not represented through the interpretation at the site.

- *Political dimension:* Overall, all stakeholder groups considered the WoT to be a strategically planned memorial developed to achieve political gain. This represents a fundamental source of dissonance amongst relevant stakeholders.

The final concluding chapter that follows will summarise these findings and, within the context of the overall aim and objectives of the thesis, draw conclusions from the research.



# Chapter 7

## Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

The overall purpose of this thesis has been to explore critically the extent to which there is evidence of dissonance at the WoT memorial in New Delhi, India. More specifically, by applying the concept of dissonance to a ‘dark’ site in India, the thesis has explored both dissonance and the wider concept of dark tourism within that context. In doing so, the research has provided a detailed analysis of different levels and types of dissonance found within WoT (dark) site in relation to its political and cultural significance to its Indian stakeholder groups. Therefore, the purpose of this final, concluding chapter is to consider the extent to which the aim and objectives of this thesis have been met, to draw conclusions from the research and to demonstrate the contribution of the thesis to knowledge, specifically how it contributes to the dark tourism literature through exploring the concept of ‘dissonant heritage’ from an Indian perspective. In addition, the chapter also identifies opportunities for future research before drawing the thesis to a close with a personal reflection on the researcher’s PhD ‘journey’.

It was established in Chapter 1 that, overall, the aim of this thesis is:

to apply the concept of dissonance to a ‘dark’ site in India, thereby exploring both dissonance and the wider concept of dark tourism within that context.

More specifically, and as introduced in Chapter 1 and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, the phenomenon of dark tourism is a concept that, in the specific context of India, has been largely neglected by academia. That is, the majority of the research into dark tourism has been undertaken through a predominantly Western-centric analytical lens; the phenomenon is typically explored within a Western conceptual framework, particularly with regards to culturally defined perspectives on death and dying. As a consequence, there remains limited knowledge and understanding with regards to the issues surrounding the establishment, management and interpretation of dark sites and, in

particular, the concept of dissonance or dissonant heritage within India. In examining these issues, this thesis has sought to make an original contribution to knowledge by addressing four underlying research objectives, as also established in Chapter 1:

- i. To explore critically, the concept of dark tourism from a non-Western perspective, specifically within the context of socio-cultural perspectives on death and dying in India, as a framework for the analysis of the development of and potential for dissonance at the WoT.
- ii. To consider and critically compare the concepts of memorials and memorialisation from both a Western and Indian perspective, thereby establishing a foundation for appraising the development of the WoT memorial.
- iii. To identify and critically review the stakeholder groups relevant to the 1984 Sikh massacre and the WoT memorial.
- iv. To apply and critically analyse the concept of dissonance within the context of the WoT and, in particular, from the perspective of different Sikh and Hindu stakeholder groups.

Before considering the extent to which these objectives have been achieved, the following section briefly summarises the thesis.

## **7.2 A Summary of the Thesis**

The aim and objectives of this research were set out in Chapter 1. Following this, Chapter 2 provided the foundation for this thesis by reviewing extant knowledge and understanding of the concept of dark tourism, both generally and in the specific context of India. This chapter then went on to suggest that the WoT, as a dark site in India, cannot be categorised as a specific type according to Stone's (2006) 'dark tourism spectrum' but, rather, can be linked to three different typologies, thus identifying the limitations within Stone's model when used as a tool to categorise dark tourism sites. In addition, Chapter 2 reviewed dark tourism within the cultural context of contemporary society, specifically emphasising the distinction between Western and Indian perspectives on the concept which, in turn, reflects differences between Hindu and Sikh perspectives on death and

death rituals compared with those in Western Christian cultures. The analysis of these distinctions was then conceptualised in an 'Indian Thanatological' model of dark tourism presented within Chapter 2 (Section 2.4.2), which is further discussed below (Section 7.3, Objective 1).

Having identified the WoT as a memorial associated with death and dying and as an appropriate case study for this thesis, it was considered necessary to explore the meaning and significance of memorials and memorialisation in India. Therefore, Chapter 3 critically reviewed the roles of memorials in post-1947 independence India as a framework for the specific focus on the WoT memorial. This was achieved by reviewing the literature on memorials in general, their significant roles in society and how a memorial might best achieve its purpose. The chapter went on to discuss and distinguish the role of memorials in India from those in Western culture, in particular within the context of dark tourism. In so doing, it revealed that, in India, the commemoration of victims of political upheaval or community violence not only remains rare but also, when it occurs, is heavily politicised. Therefore, memorials in India are often designed and located in such a manner that limits the achievement of the broader objective of memorialisation. Consequently, there may exist higher levels of dissonance at sites associated with violence and atrocity in India than in other countries and cultures.

Continuing on to focus specifically on the issue of dissonance, Chapter 4 then considered and examined the concept of dissonance both in general and with reference to the case of the WoT in particular. In so doing, Chapter 4 also introduced and discussed stakeholders, both conceptually and specifically identifying groups relevant to the WoT who might potentially be affected by dissonance at the site.

Having established the conceptual underpinnings of the research in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, Chapter 5 then set out and explained the philosophical approach adopted towards the research in this thesis. It also explained and justified the research methods employed to meet the aim and objectives of the research. Chapter 6 then presented and analysed the outcomes of the research based on in-depth interviews with the specifically identified stakeholders associated with the WoT. The findings, drawn from the interviews with respondents representing four distinctive stakeholder groups, revealed that the WoT does not adequately symbolise or commemorate the suffering and pain of the Sikh community. This has resulted in significant levels of perceived dissonance amongst stakeholder groups, but particularly within the broader Sikh community. The research revealed that the commemoration of the 1984 Sikh riots through the development of the WoT has

largely benefited the owners / controllers of the memorial while, for others stakeholder groups, it had become in a sense an open wound, resulting in a high level of dissonance.

Specifically, the WoT was considered to be more of an asset of benefit to those who controlled it rather than a fitting memorial to the victims of the events of 1984. Hence, the research established that a significant degree of dissonance surrounds the perceived purpose of the WoT memorial, and these differing perceptions of it were a key source of discord. In particular, the research revealed that its location was viewed negatively, with the issue of accessibility being perceived as a main obstacle to visiting the memorial, particularly for non-Sikhs, thus limiting the potential for reconciliation between two communities of Sikhs and Hindus. Moreover, the physical representation of the event was deeply criticised; it was considered that the WoT was incapable of connecting successfully with its intended audience, thus reflecting disagreement with regards to the memorial's development and interpretation.

Furthermore, it was established that for those directly affected by the violence, still-pending justice and a lack of compensation emerged as powerful catalysts of dissonance. In other words, it was revealed that the achievement of both justice (that is, bringing to trial of those responsible) and appropriate compensation were prerequisites to future meaningful commemoration, hence illustrating another significant issue of discord between owners / controllers and eye-witness groups. Fundamentally, as discussed in Chapter 6, it became apparent that the commemoration of the 1984 events through the development of the WoT had been highly politicised which, in conclusion, can be seen as the main driver for the dissonance that surrounds the memorial.

In sum, the case of the WoT highlights the broader picture of memorialisation within India, in particular demonstrating the heavily politicised nature of memorials in the country. At the same time, the research also established that dark tourism sites in India are simply tourism sites; the cultural distinctions that exist between India and the West and the related analytical lens suggest that not only is it inappropriate to attach the term 'dark' to such sites in India but also that caution must be taken in applying the term to the Indian context more generally, at least beyond its use as a means of simply describing a site of or associated with death.

Overall, then, the case study of the WoT offered an opportunity to consider a number of key questions through empirical research. Hence, attention now turns to the extent to which the objectives of this thesis have been achieved.

### 7.3 Objective 1

*To explore critically the concept of dark tourism from a non-Western perspective, specifically within the context of socio-cultural perspectives on death and dying in India, as a framework for the analysis of the development of and potential for dissonance at the WoT.*

As discussed above, the aim of the literature review was to apply the concept of dissonance to a 'dark' site in India and, in doing so, to explore both dissonance and the wider concept of dark tourism within that context. In other words, and as previously mentioned, in order to explore empirically the extent to which dissonance exists at the WoT (Objective 4), it was first deemed necessary to consider the concept of dark tourism, both generally and in the specific context of India, from a theoretical perspective. This, in effect, helped to shape the foundation of the thesis by introducing the literature on dark tourism both in general and within the context of India (section 2.2) and reflects Objective 1.

As discussed in this thesis, at a basic level, the WoT is not a site *of* death but, rather, a site *associated with* death; it is a memorial to commemorate the multiple victims of a dark event, the Sikh massacre of 1984. However, when applying Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum, which proposes categories that allow for the measurement and positioning of sites within an organised framework in which varying dark tourism attractions can be compared and contrasted (from lightest to darkest), it was revealed that the WoT could not be located within one typology of the dark spectrum when viewed through a South Asian / Indian cultural lens. That is, it was evident that there are complexities involved in categorising the WoT within Stone's (2006) spectrum, not least because of identified limitations within the published literature. Specifically, the majority of the extant dark tourism literature has been generated by Western scholars and thus, formulated from a Western perspective. Hence, Stone's (2006) dark tourism spectrum, when applied to the WoT, does not allow for the consideration or categorisation of dark tourism sites in an Asian context. In other words, from the discussion in Chapter 2, responding to Objective 1, it was evident that Western convention underpinning much of the dark tourism literature do not apply to the dark sites in India and, hence, an Indian cultural perspective on dark tourism within India is required.

Subsequently, the review of the dark tourism literature revealed that many dark tourism sites are subject to political influence which may, in turn, give rise to a significant

degree of tension and dissonance amongst stakeholders (Light, 2017). During the empirical phase of the research, issues relating to the 'Politicisation of commemoration of the WoT' then emerged as one of the main themes. That is, throughout the interviews, all participants considered the WoT to be a highly political tool developed by the owners / controllers for their own political advantage. The research revealed that, for participants, the memorial had one clear function: not to commemorate deaths but, rather, to politicise the 1984 event and to shame the opposition parties in order to enhance the political careers of the owners / controllers.

In short, as identified in the literature review, many studies highlight the relationship that exists between heritage and its politicisation (Light, 2017: 284). This research revealed that the WoT was no exception; not only has the commemoration of the 1984 Sikh massacre been highly politicised but also the design and location of the WoT has resulted in significant dissonance amongst its identified stakeholder groups.

More broadly, in order to fully comprehend the phenomenon of dark tourism within the Indian context and, specifically, the mediating role of dark tourism attractions in that country, the cultural context of death and dying in India was explored. It was found that there are significant cultural differences in the way in which death is understood and socially mediated in India in comparison to those in the West. Consequently, as a result, it was also found that the meaning or the significance of dark tourism attractions, particularly to Indian visitors, also differs (Sections 2.3 and 2.4).

In more detail, from a Western point of view, the concept of death has become ever absent owing to its privatisation and medicalisation and is consequently hidden away from the public realm (Stone, 2009a). Thus, Stone and Sharpley (2008) highlight the sequestration of death and absent death in their model *Dark tourism consumption within a thanatological framework* (Figure 2.8). Their study identifies the paradoxical context of absent-present death, suggesting that there is an innate need (implicitly, in Western societies) to confront death and mortality, a need which can be satisfied through dark tourism which allows visitors to confront death at sites of or associated with death and dying. However, this raises the question as to what extent can Stone and Sharpley's (2008) model of the consumption of dark tourism within a thanatological framework, as well as its fundamental assumptions relating to the concepts of the sequestration of death, absent death, ontological insecurity and bracketing, represents a universal model that can be applied to all cultures, including India in particular.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, death is very much present within Indian culture. More generally, this thesis has shown that the manner of the contemplation and confrontation of death and dying in other cultures, specifically, in India varies significantly. Moreover, the notions of sequestration, ontological insecurity and bracketing of death may not necessarily apply within Indian culture, with death being considered an ever-present part of the life-death circle. Thus, what emerged from the research was that for Indians, unlike in the West, engaging in dark tourism does not have the same significance, or necessarily the same experience, as for Western tourists (Section 6.3.2 and 6.3.3).

More specifically, in the West, visiting places of death and suffering offers people an opportunity to confront and absorb the idea of death (their own and of others) and quench their own curiosity about the reality of death (Walter, 2009). However, within Indian culture in which death is ever present, many Indians do not feel the need for a site to act as a mediator of death, as it does in West. Thus, this then serves to illustrate a key finding from the research, namely, the significant difference in the conceptual underpinning of dark tourism in India and the West.

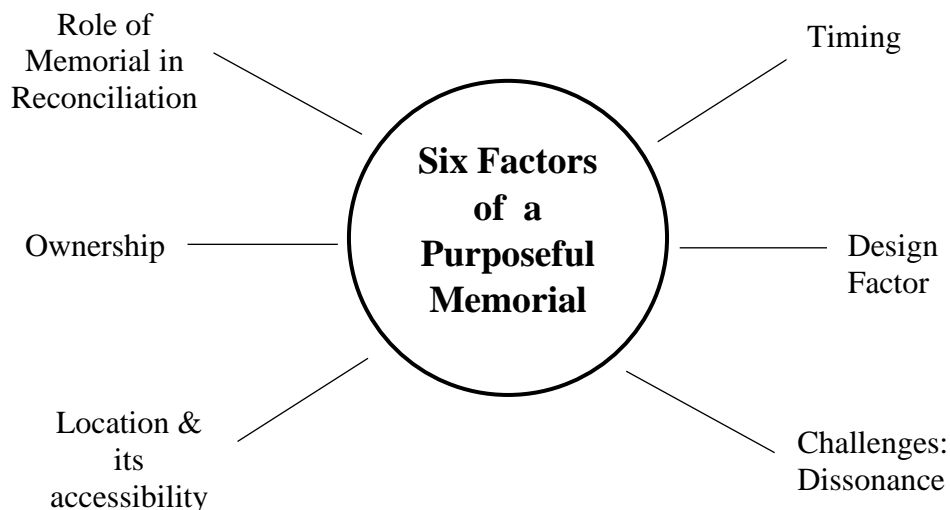
To conceptualise this difference, the thesis proposes an ‘Indian Thanatological’ model (Figure 2.17) to illustrate death and the consumption of dark tourism in India. Based on an understanding of religious traditions and practices in India, the model demonstrates that death in India is ‘ever present.’ Hence, dark tourism offers a platform for Indians to consume death for either curiosity / education, to encounter the actual event, or to witness or engage in collective mourning. Certainly, the empirical research revealed that the participants identified themselves as curious to visit places of death and suffering, but not to contemplate death through such sites. Consequently, it was evident that Indians do have a degree of morbid curiosity, which was seen as a motivational factor for Indians to visit actual sites of death or sites associated with death and suffering. Thus, dark tourism sites in India for Indians are simply tourist sites; therefore, this point, as argued, becomes a significant finding.

#### **7.4 Objective 2**

*To consider and critically compare the concepts of memorials and memorialisation from both a Western and Indian perspective, thereby establishing a foundation for appraising the development of the WoT memorial.*

Within the literature review and for the purposes of the research, it was considered important to review the significance and role of memorials in India as a framework for analysing the WoT memorial in particular. To facilitate this, the literature on memorials was explored in Chapter 3 in order to identify and discuss the definitions and roles of memorials in society and how memorials might best achieve their purposes. Furthermore, the chapter illustrated and distinguished the role of memorials in India from that in Western culture within the context of dark tourism. Six factors that enable memorials to achieve their purpose, to be ‘purposeful’ were addressed (section 3.5). The model 7.1 below depicts those six factors.

**Figure 7.1:** Six Factors of a Purposeful Memorial



- i. Role of memorials in reconciliation
- ii. Timing
- iii. Ownership
- iv. The design factors
- v. Location and its accessibility
- vi. Challenges: Dissonance

The research subsequently explored the extent to which the WoT has met those factors in order to be a purposeful memorial. During the empirical phase of the research,



'Perceptions of the WoT' was identified as one of the key themes (Section 6.2) comprising the sub-themes of: (i) WoT: As an unwanted reminder; (ii) noble idea but wrong location; (iii) ineffective and ill-conceived; and (iv) the desire for national ownership, all of which revealed that the WoT was unsuccessful in becoming a purposeful memorial.

With regards to the *Role of memorials in reconciliation*, the principal purpose of any commemoration site 'is to foster a connection between the past and the present', thereby providing a platform which invites related groups to interact in commemoration and, thus, reconciliation (Eross, 2017). Hence, this research investigated the potential role of the WoT in reconciliation. It was revealed that the key stakeholder group, the owners / controllers of the WoT, did not construct the memorial with the intention of restoring harmony between the rival sides; rather, it became evident through the research that the (official) purpose of the memorial is to foster commemoration and not reconciliation.

Nonetheless, several other approaches to achieve reconciliation were considered in the literature, such as socioeconomic support, retributive justice mechanisms or truth commissions (Idris, 2016). These factors are central for reconciliation in so far as they help support national initiatives that acknowledge past grief and suffering and function as strategies to help change negative attitudes amongst former adversaries (Brouneus, 2008). However, in the case of this research, reconciliation emerged as difficult, if not impossible, to achieve as the demands for justice and compensation from eye-witness group for their loss and suffering, which was firmly voiced, had gone unheard. Hence, for those directly impacted by the atrocity, the memorial symbolised continuing injustice and, hence, was deemed an ineffective means of achieving reconciliation as it was unable to reach out on both at either a cultural or a personal level. Moreover, any true sense of commemoration was deemed non-existent.

*Timing:* The timing of the creation of a memorial, specifically its proximity to the events it commemorates, is a key factor in its success. Stone (2006) suggests that the shorter time scale after the event, the heavier the emotions it conveys and elicits amongst visitors; conversely, the longer the time scale, the lighter the emotions. Hence, the timeframe can be highly influential in the way in which a dark site, such as the WoT memorial, is perceived and consumed. The research suggests that owing to the time lapse of 35 years, the vividness of the memory has dimmed amongst the general stakeholder groups whereas, amongst the younger generation, the event seemed rather insignificant.

*Ownership:* As discussed in the literature review, where official power-laden groups create narratives and the knowledge of history, the representation of such history can be highly selective (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018; Sather-Wagstaff, 2016; Smith, 2006), thus resulting in dissonance. The research found that the development and management of the WoT were used as a political backdrop by its current ownership. Specifically, the interview respondents collectively expressed that political motivations on the part of the memorial's owners / controllers had overshadowed any commemorative sense of the memorial.

*The design factor:* Memorials are physical representations of dark events, people and their experiences (Miles, 2002). It is the memorial design which allows visitors to experience the dark histories it represents and allows them to connect with the event. In the case of WoT, the research identified that the memorial was unable to connect with its audience owing to its weak representation of the event. Many respondents were disillusioned with regards to its physical design. Particularly, the research established that WoT's simplistic design presented a façade of 1984 event as it was unable to convey the actual narratives of the victims, thus failing to create a connection between the past and the present.

*Location and its accessibility:* Importantly, memorial spaces are one way to demonstrate the importance that memorials play in the grieving process (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). For a memorial to function appropriately, it should be located in a space which needs to be both public and intimate (Atkinson-Phillips, 2018). What emerged from the research was that the location of the WoT was ill-conceived, for two main reasons. First, throughout the interviews, many participants were firm in their opinion that the memorial had been constructed in a strategic location as an election strategy to assist the then current president of DSGMC. Secondly, the research also revealed that the respondents felt the WoT had been located in a Sikh temple in order for it to be as a hallmark for Sikh nationalism, thus further creating conflict within society. In addition, it was found that the memorial's current location (within the grounds of Sikh temple) was perceived as restrictive to those belonging to other religions, thus limiting the process of reconciliation between the two communities (Section 6.2.3).

*Challenges: dissonance:* In seeking to understand the challenges involved in a (dark) site, often places commemorating a dark event will involve various stakeholder groups

(Sharpley, 2009). Consequently, these stakeholder groups associated with sites / events may feel that their argument is not entirely or appropriately represented within the interpretation presented to the visitor. Simultaneously, not all stakeholder groups will agree on what message is important or appropriate with regards to the heritage being commemorated (Laing & Frost, 2013), thus, resulting in dissonance. In the case of WoT, undoubtedly, many elements surrounding the memorial were catalysts for dissonance amongst stakeholder groups.

When focusing on the concepts and role of memorials within India in the literature review in Chapter 3, it was argued that memorialisation in contemporary, post-1947 independence India favours the elite-dominated commemoration of political figures past and present. Whilst the commemoration of victims of political violence, communal conflict, terrorist atrocities and even natural disasters remains rare. This was confirmed by the findings of the empirical research which revealed that the absence of a (national) memorial for the tragic events of 1984 in India reflected the government's lack of will or desire, to honour its Sikh victims. This, in turn, supports the notion that remembrance and honouring the nation's ordinary citizens who have died in tragic circumstance has not been a priority for the government.

Furthermore, the literature review identified that those memorials which do exist in post-1947 independence India are politically and / or commercially motivated and typically planned and located in such a manner that the broader social objectives of memorialisation cannot be achieved. Hence, the highly politicised nature of many memorials in India challenges Indian public memory. Again, the research revealed that the construction of the WoT was a political manifestation of the Sikh massacre and a platform being dominated by religious-political elites rather than offering closure or solace to the victims. In addition, it was established that the WoT was unable to serve as a meaningful commemorative site as it was viewed to be rooted in its dominant political narrative which was visually and materially apparent. This supports the notion of the politicisation of commemoration within contemporary, post-1947 independence India that prevents memorials from achieving their broader objectives.

### **7.5 Objective 3**

*To identify and critically review the stakeholder groups relevant to the 1984 Sikh massacre and the WoT memorial.*

Sharpley (2009) notes that at any heritage site, including those of atrocities, tragedies and disasters, there are multiple stakeholders involved. Moreover, each of these stakeholders may view the interpretation of the event through a different lens and, consequently, challenge the extent to which they and other stakeholder groups perspectives are represented within the projected narrative of the memorial. Therefore, the research investigated relevant stakeholder groups associated with the WoT, in particular, exploring the extent to which their relationship with the memorial was defined by dissonance. In order to achieve a correct identification of a range of potential stakeholders involved at the WoT, Seaton's (2001) heritage force field model was utilised to facilitate the identification of stakeholder groups who either have power or interest in the memorial site's development and its touristification.

The literature identified four distinctive groups in Seaton's (2001) model, namely: owners / controllers of the development; the subject groups (the focus or subject of the heritage narrative); the host community (the residents located within the proximity of heritage site) and the visitor groups (Sharpley, 2009: 162). In addition, Seaton (2001: 123) acknowledges that, within his model, any one group may have more power and interest than others. The model also illustrates the potential for dissonance, which may occur among the four groups who share an interest in heritage development (Sharpley, 2009). In Chapter 4 of this thesis, it was illustrated that key stakeholder groups associated with the WoT were the owners / controllers of the site, the eye-witness groups, the expert group and general community, including both Sikhs and Hindus. The research also discussed the roles and the impact of identified stakeholder groups, and in doing so, it supports the notion that one group above all others possess more power and interest than other stakeholder groups. In the case of WoT, overwhelmingly the DSGMC has full control and authority over the memorial. However, it was also found that the power relations within the DSGMC are by no means established and continual, primarily because the role of president is determined by elections, that results in any control being limited to a four / five year period. Therefore, the direction in which the memorial is driven is by no means fixed and may be subject to change. This in itself, might mitigate old dissonance or ignite new dissonance.

## **7.6 Objective 4**

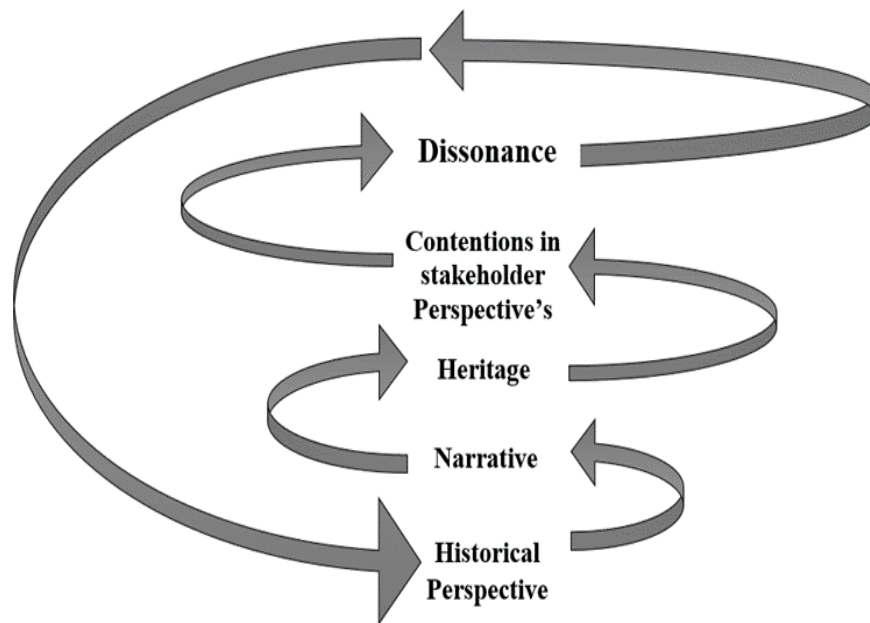
*To apply and critically analyse the concept of dissonance within the context of the WoT and, in particular, from the perspective of different Sikh and Hindu stakeholder groups.*

Dissonance occurs when two or more communities or groups generate their own distinctive discourse around a shared cultural heritage landscape or site (Smith, 2006). That is, dissonant heritage is ‘concerned with the way in which the past, when interpreted or represented as a tourist attraction, may, for particular groups or stakeholders, be distorted, displaced or disinherited’ (Sharpley, 2009: 13). Dissonant heritage, in general, is established on the assertion that not only is heritage a product of contemporary interpretations which are shaped by the narratives of the history (Ashworth, 2017), but also that these contemporary interpretations of the past can cause further discordance as they revive both memories and reactions.

This study reflects the common academic belief that while heritage is a product of history, it has the potential to stimulate dissonance through its contemporary interpretation, which may impact negatively on the process of reconciliation. It has revealed that the WoT is indeed a product of India’s dark history, commemorating the 1984 massacre victims. However, its contemporary interpretation of that history produced by DSGMC has resulted in a high level of dissonance amongst its stakeholder groups, resulting in limiting the process of reconciliation.

When unravelling the prevailing conundrum of dissonance at the WoT, the heritage force field (HFF) model (Seaton, 2001) identified potential stakeholder groups associated with the WoT where dissonance is likely to occur. In illustrating the process of dissonance, the dissonant heritage cycle (DHC) model (devised by Clinton and Singh-Mokha, 2019) (Figure 7.2) as discussed in Chapter 4 helps to illustrate the process by which dissonance in interpretation can occur.

**Figure 7.2:** Figure 4.5 (from Chapter 4): Dissonant Heritage Cycle

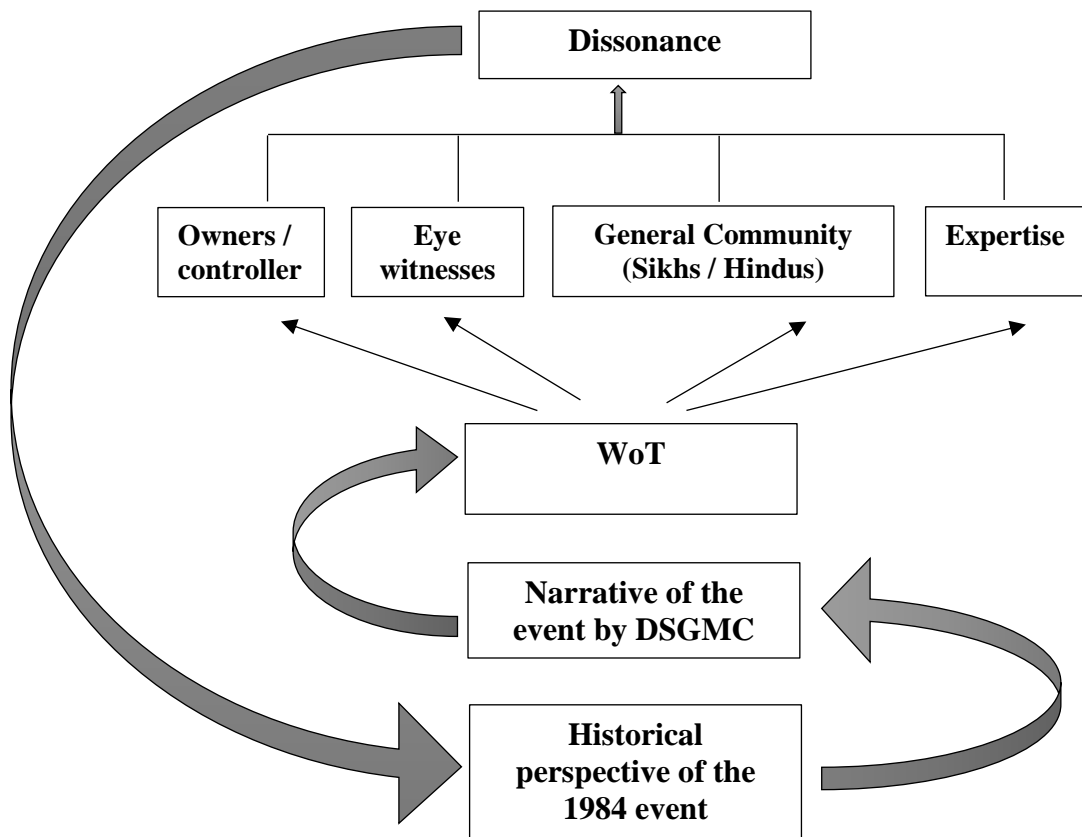


**Source:** Clinton and Singh-Mokha (2019)

The DHC model, when applied to the WoT (see Figure 7.3 below), commenced with the historical perspective of the 1984 event, which then led to a narrative formulated by the DSGMC. This narrative then materialised as a heritage / heritage product which, in this case, is known as the 'WoT.' This, in turn, has led to contentions amongst stakeholder perspectives (including those of the eyewitness group, members of the general Sikh-Hindu community, an 'expert' and the ex-president of the management committee), resulting in dissonance. This dissonance then leads to a review of a historical perspective. However, with multiple stakeholders, this dissonance can get caught up in a repeated cycle until an agreement is achieved. However, this in itself may well result in either a compromise in representation or a representation forged by a dominant group, thus perpetuating the dissonance cycle.

The model depicted in Figure 7.3 embraces the dissonance in interpretation that stakeholders may have towards the heritage / heritage product. The dissonance cycle at the WoT illustrates how dissonance occurs within that particular heritage but is equally applicable to any contested heritage setting. Moving forward, the following section will summarise the factors that led to the dissonance at the WoT.

**Figure 7.3:** The Dissonance Cycle at the WoT



Ever since its construction, the WoT memorial has been viewed as a vessel of dissonance. As examined in Chapter 6, the memorial was viewed, on the one hand, by some as a commemorative site; they believed that it would act as a reminder for Indian society to ensure that both good and bad memories are passed down from one generation to another. On the other hand, others directly rejected the memorial as they believed it has the potential to stimulate further conflict and discord within society. More specifically, they also questioned the intentions behind the creation of the WoT by the DSGMC. They expressed the view that the WoT is primarily a politically motivated idea, seeking to gain Sikh support and votes by exhibiting their traumatic past. Moreover, in so doing, it hinders the process of commemoration, thus generating further discord amongst stakeholder groups. Hence, for this group, the conclusion was that the events of 1984 were best forgotten.

In addition, it emerged from the research that the location of the WoT was a major issue of disagreement amongst the stakeholder groups. Its location can be described as

inauthentic because no actual killings took place in the grounds of the Sikh Temple. Moreover, while the owners located the WoT opposite the Indian parliament as a means of imparting shame on politicians, it also became apparent from the research that the memorial also served as a tool in assisting in the elections of the then current president of DSGMC. Additionally, and as previously noted, the research also revealed that the memorial's location was considered by most interview respondents to be entirely incorrect; it was believed that the location would discourage those visitors who belonged to other faiths and beliefs, thus, limiting the process of reconciliation. At the same time, the location of the WoT was also considered tactless, owing to the fact that Sikh political elites who, for self-political gain, use the memorial as a platform for their own benefit, thus causing dissonance between the management committee and other stakeholder groups. Furthermore, the scale of dissonance goes further and deeper, as the location of Sikh grounds used for memorialisation process was viewed as unholy by the ex-president of the committee, which has also resulted in discord within the management committee itself.

Another driving force of the dissonance at the WoT is its physical representation of the event. The design and construction of the memorial, led by the management committee, was considered by many respondents to be ineffective. For those affected directly by the riots, dissonance has arisen as a result of the lack of real representation of victims voices whilst the abstract tangled character of a memorial, such as showcasing 'artefacts,' has resulted in disconnection with its eyewitness groups. The WoT was considered unsuccessful as it proved to be incapable of connecting with its audience. As a consequence, higher levels of dissonance were in evidence reflecting disagreements with regards to its development.

Furthermore, the owners of the WoT have, by representing their own interpretation of the past, contributed to dissonance, specifically amongst those with direct personal connections with the event who felt that their side of the 'story' is not represented through the interpretation at the site. In addition, the research highlighted that the issue of the present ownership of the WoT memorial was an essential concern amongst the participants. Specifically, the significant political influence in the development and management of the WoT, reflecting its current ownership / control, has further contributed to a higher level of dissonance. Thus, during the interviews, it was suggested by some that the present ownership should be rejected and that there should be national recognition and representation of the events of 1984.



Notably, the denial of justice and compensation for the victim community was seen as a strong catalyst of dissonance amongst the owners / controllers, eyewitness and other stakeholder groups. The research revealed that, for many respondents, the WoT had become the symbol of injustice, reminding them of denial of justice for the past 35 years. In addition, it was also highlighted that resentment and anger were evident among eyewitness groups with regards to the failure of the DSGMC to support the victims economically. Thus, this point alone resulted in major element of dissonance that has hindered the Sikh massacre victims from recovering from the trauma and the financial struggle of having to restart their lives after having lost all that they owned. To this end, the memorial has failed to facilitate a true sense of commemoration within the Sikh and wider community, thereby further perpetuating the cycle of dissonance.

Finally, as illustrated throughout, the politicisation of the commemoration of the WoT was a fundamental source of dissonance amongst relevant stakeholders. As illustrated above and within the literature, the research revealed that the construction of the WoT was perceived by many respondents as a self-ingratiating instrument on the part of the DSGMC. Throughout the interviews, many considered the WoT to be a highly political tool designed by the owners / controllers for their own political advantage. By politicising it, the memorial continues to reignite memories of the 1984 massacre. Moreover, it can be seen that the WoT has an uncertain future, dependent as it is on the volatile and dynamic political fortunes of the elite members of the DSGMC. Hence, for the WoT, the cycle of dissonance is set to continue.

Overall, then, the future of WoT could be multi-dimensional depending upon the controlling management philosophy. Its purpose can either remain the same or with a change of governance, the memorial could indeed act as a mediator for reconciliation and a promotor of peace between the faiths of India. However, to achieve this, there will need to be a liberalising of attitudes amongst both the owners / controllers and other identified stakeholder groups to acknowledge the humanity behind the concept of reconciliation rather than maintaining the rift between faiths at a politicised level. Yet, the original function of the WoT has already become blurred owing to the DSGMC broadening of the memorial's purpose to include recognition of the death of other non-related Sikhs, such as Afghan Sikhs killed in a suicide attack in Kabul. Thus, unless careful management is implemented, it is highly likely that the memorial's initial purpose is unfortunately set to become diluted.

## **7.7 Contribution to the Literature and Future Research Directions**

Given the acknowledged lack of research on dark tourism within the Indian context, the research in this thesis is instrumental in advancing the breadth of knowledge and understanding within the academic field of dark tourism. Not only is the proposed thanatological model of dark tourism in India, an original contribution to the literature but also the case study of the WoT has offered the opportunity to consider the significance of the concept of dark tourism from a South Asian / Indian perspective. In so doing, the thesis makes a further original contribution to the literature by extending, through empirical research, understanding of dark tourism beyond the typical Western cultural framework, whilst responding to Light's (2017), Stone's (2013) and Yoshida et al.'s. (2016) call for additional research.

The findings suggest that for memorials or site of commemoration to be effective, to generate understanding and to act as a catalyst of reconciliation, it is important that dissonance is minimised. This, in turn, suggests that it is important to understand the role of stakeholders within the development and interpretation of any site. In other words, the understanding of dissonance and means of addressing it is of vital importance to the legitimacy of a memorial site, thus contributing to the validity of any memorial used as a place of reconciliation. This research has explored critically the stakeholder groups associated with the WoT memorial, in particular, examining the concept of dissonance from the perspective of those groups identified. In doing so, it has contributed to knowledge and understanding of dissonant heritage both generally and within the context of India, whilst also offering an additional and original perspective on dark tourism and memorialisation. Specifically, it has developed the dissonant heritage cycle model (Figure 7.2 above). Reflecting Seaton's (2001) heritage force field model and Sharpley's (2009) model of dark heritage governance, this can be utilised to demonstrate the cycle of dissonance not only of the WoT but any other heritage site that commemorates a contested heritage. Thus, the work has added an empirical dimension to the discussion surrounding the understanding of the cycle of dissonance at sites of contested heritage / dark tourism. Nevertheless, further research should be undertaken to test and verify the adaptability of the DHC. Research should be applied to new and emerging sites of contention in order to better understand the evolutionary phases of dissonance and thus, test the DHC findings that dissonance can indeed be a continual cycle when a site has multiple stakeholders.

In addition, having critically explored the extent to which dissonance exists at a contentious dark tourism site, the research has also confirmed that the study of dark

tourism and the concept of dissonance examined within non-Western contexts, and specifically within an Indian context, is a relatively new area in the academic studies. In recognition to this, the research sought to add an original contribution to the growing body of dark tourism literature and the concept of dissonant heritage by analysing it from an Indian perspective but also to stimulate possible future ideas for research areas, particularly within the Indian context. Yet, the need exists for a broader level of understanding (beyond a Western-centric gaze) of cultural and subcultural distinctions when considering the meaning and confrontation of death and dying in different societies. This would then provide a basis for exploring whether or not dark tourism can act as a tool for the mediation of death within distinctive ontological settings.

A number of more personal (to the researcher) directions for future research present themselves:

#### **7.7.1. Dark Tourism in India**

There exists the opportunity for further research in the specific context of dark tourism in India for Indians. India as a country has a mixed array of distinctive cultural practices related not only to death and dying but also to its rich historical past, from the Mughal era to the colonial era and post-independence. Thus, the opportunity exists to explore how people's understanding and contemplation of death in India is both culturally and historically determined and, consequently, how this influences their engagement in visiting dark tourism destinations.

#### **7.7.2 Diaspora Tourism as Potential Dark Tourism Market**

It was identified in the literature that 'diaspora tourism' might be targeted as a potential market for visitors to the WoT. This market has clear potential for the development of dark tourism in India as there already exists a link between the visitor and the country. In addition, while indigenous Indians may not view sites of death as a dark tourism spectacle, the opposite might be the case amongst Indian expatriates, specifically those who themselves reside in the West. Perhaps for them, death too has become sequestered into a privatised / medicalised experience and, therefore, it would be interesting to compare the diaspora tourist with the indigenous tourist to dark sites to investigate if the diaspora tourist conforms to the Indian or the Western model of dark tourism consumption within a thanatological framework.

## **7.8 A Reflection on the PhD Journey**

On beginning my venture into what would become the world of a PhD candidate, I was somewhat unsuspecting of the challenges that loomed before me. This is not to say I was totally ignorant of the process of the PhD journey, but I lacked in preparation for the degree to which the journey would consume the existence of the person I was, to the one I would become. The obstacles I encountered provoked varying degrees of emotional and mental responses; some were uplifting as I achieved various aims, I had set myself, while others resulted in self-disbelief, the feeling that I could never achieve completion. As time progressed, however, these feelings of disbelief began to wane, and I eventually found myself caught up in the 24/7 cycle of the PhD where the complexity of my work seemed a little less daunting.

My world had gone from a comfortable, somewhat laissez-faire existence to one focused on preparation and planning. At this stage, I realised that my journey had begun to change me. As I withdrew more and more from my normal life, I found myself as an international student increasingly removed from family and friends who, for the majority, were on another continent. As my journey moved ever forward, I totally became absorbed in my work. My PhD had become who I was and while I was learning from the research about the research, I was also learning about myself; my ability to apply myself and to question myself, my ability to listen to criticism but most of all, my ability to overcome my fear of failure and to overcome obstacles. In addition, having spent the first twenty-four years of my life living in India, culturally, my outlook became broader. On, the one hand, my Indian perspective enabled me as a researcher to apply a greater depth of cultural understanding to the issues that I was unfolding in my research, in so far as interpreting the mannerism and perspectives of those I interviewed. Yet, on the other hand, my acquired skills as a researcher equipped me with an ability to apply a Western analysis to the issues the research highlighted.

I cannot, of course, claim the credit for achieving all this myself; through my journey, there have been individuals who have given me the encouragement, motivation and support necessary to enable me to develop and to reach the end of my PhD journey. To them, I offer my full thanks and appreciation, and I give credit to them in my acknowledgements.

As my journey entered its final phase, old apprehensions began to reappear as the pending deadline, which once had remained in the far distance, suddenly appeared overhead. Even though I felt panicked, I also had a pending sense of transformation as I

realised that it was not the end of the PhD, which was making me apprehensive but the fact, I was about to let that journey go and step forth into the unknown. Nevertheless, although if I were to face myself in the mirror and without doubt, see a very changed person, I will not forget who I was.

My journey has equipped me with a high sense of achievement and furnished me with confidence and ability. As I move forward with my life, the PhD will assist me in opening doors to new ventures but also in creating my own opportunities in the countries I love, both India and the UK. Those first steps have begun, so I would like to end this by saying look out, for here I come.

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## Appendix One



### INFORMATION SHEET

The Wall of Truth, Delhi: A critical analysis of dissonance at an Indian dark tourism site.

Researcher contact information:

Bhavna Singh

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What is the study about?

The purpose of the research is to explore the extent of any sense of inclusion or exclusion amongst visitors which might emerge with respect to manner in which the massacre is commemorated at the memorial.

What will you need to do?

I will be asking you to take part in the research by allowing me to take undertake an interview with you.

How will the information be used?

The recording will be transcribed (written down) by the researcher and will not be played to anyone else. Your name will be removed from all the materials though we will keep information about your age, nationality, and gender but this will remain confidential.

Any information collected during the interview will only be used for research, including research articles and conference presentations but your name will not be used, and no one will be able to identify you from the information.

What if you agree to the research but then change your mind?

That's okay. You can change your mind at any point, before, during or up to three months after the interview and the researcher will delete and destroy your transcript/recording along with any other information you have provided.

What if you wish to withdraw from the study?

During the interview, if you wish to no longer to be interviewed, the interview will be terminated immediately and data which is already recorded will be immediately deleted. If you do not wish to inform the research verbally / directly about your withdrawal you can send her an email.

What will you get from this?

This is an opportunity for you to be involved and contribute towards an academic piece of research. I will also be happy to pass on the completed research article once it has been produced.

You will need to be aged over 20 and sign the consent form in order to be able to take part in the study.

## Appendix Two



### CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: The Wall of Truth, Delhi: A critical analysis of dissonance at an Indian dark tourism site.

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Bhavna Singh

Candidate PhD via MPhil, The Institute for Dark Tourism Research (iDTR)

University of Central Lancashire

bhavna147@gmail.com

Tel: 07505037768

NB Participants can ask for their data removal any time prior within 3 months of the interview.

**Please initial box**

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet, dated ..... for the above study and have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

I agree to take part in the above study.

I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) in a specialist data centre and may be used for future research.

**Please tick box**

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

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Name of Participant	Date	Signature
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Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
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## Appendix Three

### Participant GC20 Interview Transcription

Interviewer

Do you think that it was a good idea to build a memorial to commemorate the 3000 Sikhs who got killed in 1984 riots?

Participant

No, not at all

Interviewer

Why?

Participant

No, I don't. See it's like this. Making a memorial of negative things can be counterproductive for the youngsters who go there to see it. They will ask why it was made. Their parents will narrate history. There will be several negative thoughts entering their minds. They will become revengeful. These should not be made anywhere. I do not think, so it is not a good idea. Because I already told you it develops negative thoughts in everyone. I did not come to know about all this, and when I did after getting to know the history, I became fierce, and I did not like it. If it already happened, it is done, it's gone. So why to bring that flame again inside everyone.

Interviewer

Do you think it was right or appropriate to build the memorial within the grounds of the Sikh temple? Now, it's already there but what do you think of its location?

Participant

See madam, when its already been made then this question is not valid. It's not a valid question.

Interviewer

No, but you can give your views. Do you agree with the location?

Participant

If I say I don't, will you demolish it?

Interviewer

No, we can't demolish it. I am just interested to know what you think about the location.

Participant

Alright.

I've already told you that I don't agree with this point that the memorial should be made. So within or outside doesn't make any difference. These should not be made anywhere. I don't think so it's a good idea. Because I already told you it develops negative thoughts in everyone. I didn't come to know about all this and when I came to know about this negative thing after getting to know the history, I became violent and I didn't like it. If it already happened, it's done, it's gone. So why to bring that flame again inside everyone.

Interviewer

ok

Participant

But I also think at the same time that inside the temple is totally wrong. What are they trying to show to Sikh community? People already know what has happened. And people who don't, they are trying to provoke them.

Interviewer

Right. Interesting. My next question to you is that do you think it would have been more appropriate for the memorial to have been developed as a National Memorial built on state grounds?

Participant

Can you please elaborate on it?

Interviewer

O.K. Do you think it would have been more appropriate if the memorial have been built on state grounds by the government of India?

Participant

Yes, that would have been much more appreciated. That's the way to build a memorial to this kind of tragedy. By the government- I think that is more appropriate.

Interviewer

Ok. Have you visited the Wall of Truth memorial?

Participant

Ma'am I don't have the time to eat two meals a day. Do you think I will have the time for these things?

Interviewer

Ok, I gather you haven't visited. Would you visit?

Participant

No.

Interviewer

No, Why?

Participant

I simply don't have time for all this. Yes, I would love to visit places that give me positive vibes. Some positive message but I don't want to visit a place with negative vibes.

Interviewer

O.K. What role do you personally consider to be the purpose or role of the memorial? What does it mean to you?

Participant

It is just wastage of time, manpower energy, resources, bricks and everything. I think a hospital should have been made there. A school should have been made there. These bloody people should have spent this money on schools, on hospitals, on some shelters, homes or something like that. That would have benefited the victims. They have made a place that does not even have a roof. I do not understand; what purpose does it serve?



Interviewer

Ok. You have told me you have not visited the Wall of Truth, but you know sometimes...

Participant

I would like to interrupt. Why are you calling it a Wall of Truth?

Interviewer

Because that's what they have named the memorial - Wall of Truth.

Participant

They have named it wrong.

Interviewer

O.K. why?

Participant

What's the reason behind choosing this name? Do you know?

Interviewer

Yes. Because earlier they had named it Wall of Tears. And according to the management committee, in Sikh religion there is no place for tears. So, they changed wall of tears to the Wall of Truth.

Participant

Why do they say there is no place for tears?

Interviewer

Because again according to them a young Sikh boy had made a suggestion to rethink about the name as that there is no place for tears in Sikh religion.

Participant

This is all bull shit

Interviewer

You don't agree with that?

Participant

Not at all... I don't agree with this at all. It's wrong to say that in Sikh religion there is no place for tears. That's untrue.

Interviewer

Ok. What would you recommend?

Participant

I don't want to recommend anything. It's not my problem. But if this is the reason behind this memorial's name, then they are misleading people.

Interviewer

ok, but what...

Participant

I am surprised that they don't have any brains of their own that they need a young boy to tell them what name they should have. Anyways it's not my problem. They can keep whatever they want. I have no interest in this memorial.

Interviewer

Ok, moving on. My next question is would you visit any other commemorative attraction / site related to death and tragedy? I know you have already told me that you won't be visiting Wall of Truth. But would you visit any other sites related to death and tragedy?

Participant

Provided it's a good positive site. Now I know, one can say how sites like depicting death can be a positive site. I say if it is done right, in a way it sending a positive message to everyone, it's not one sided story and the way its depicting that story is done in a very sensible and in a sensitive way, it can be very much a positive site. Then, I would definitely go for it. Some good museum I would think once but not for this negative place, Ok.

This memorial is a place of negativity. It doesn't solve any purpose.

Interviewer

Right.

Participant

I want to ask you something. How much money have they spent to make this memorial?

Interviewer

Well round about less than 3 crores. So...

Participant

What if they had made a hospital or a

Interviewer

ok.

Participant

Or a school worth three crores would have solved so much purpose, right?

Interviewer

Yeah.

Participant

I do not know if you have visited PGI or not. So many patients are lying outside the PGI. The relatives of patients are just lying there, regardless of the weather and everything. And there is no shelter for them. They are just shivering in the cold. Their dear ones are inside getting operated on; they are just waiting outside. This, in this poor country, we strongly need more places like PGI. In this poor country we need, we need at least 100 more PGI's. Hospitals like these which are providing free medical treatment to the poor patients. So, I think because top leaders are spending money on these irrelevant things like memorials, that is why we are not progressing. This is the only reason I feel. Once you are a developed country, you have a lot of resources, you have a lot of money. You can do anything. It is all right, then it is fine. But why to spend so much money on things

in such a poor country where people are dying of hunger, they do not have jobs or a roof above their heads.

Interviewer

Yeah.

Participant

These people are very proud that they are providing langar's to everyone. They are providing free food. That's alright but why don't you teach people to earn a living. Giving free food is just like someone is begging and you are giving free food. You can fill their stomach just one time a day right. Why don't you teach them how to earn a living?

Interviewer

So, you are saying...

Participant

This memorial has done nothing. At least if you provide people with jobs or medical treatment, they can actually remember that they had some benefit from it.

Interviewer

ok. Coming back to my pervious question, that is visiting any commemorative site, like a war memorial, would you visit that?

Participant

Yes.

Interviewer

Because ...

Participant

Yes, because that's a different concept.

Interviewer

So, you will visit a memorial but...

Participant

but not a religious memorial built by prejudice people like this one. No, I won't.

Interviewer

Ok, Second last question is how would you describe people who visit sites like the Wall of Truth? For example, Tourists, Worshippers, Pilgrims, Mourners, Visitors, 'Commemorators' or just Curious?

Participant

I think it's a mix of...

Interviewer

Ok.

Participant

Many people are curious they will visit. There are also tourists. I think it's a mix.

Interviewer

Ok. Now my last question is...

Participant

Go on.

Interviewer

DSGMC endorse that the Wall of Truth will not be used as a platform for any political benefits. Yet, the foundation stone was laid by Punjab's Chief Minister Mr Parkash Singh Badal back in November 2014. Can one ignore the political angle associated with this memorial?

Participant

See, when we are talking about Badal then we are totally speechless. There all political parties. It is already inaugurated by a political party leader. I think they were ruling at that time?

Interviewer

well...

Participant

That's very obvious that it is but natural we cannot ignore this fact that the political angle is not there because obviously if Mr. Badal has inaugurated this so I don't think. I also think his presence was not required to inaugurate this place I think all the widows or children of the victims should have been called. Maybe that would have been a better idea. They should have been given the priority. But then again this is India, everything here is political. These people can't function without these political leaders. that's why I am not interested in this memorial at all.

Interviewer

Ok. So, on the whole how would you conclude this memorial. If you were to sum up. How would you sum up this memorial?

Participant

It's all bullshit.

Interviewer

Ok.

Participant

Wastage of, I'm repeating this for the third time. Wastage of money, manpower, resources, time, most important and that's it. The only positive thing that I find about this memorial is that while the construction was ongoing people might have got jobs. Many people may have got regular wages or you never know these people might have gotten done this free. You never know. But yes, if jobs were provided then this is the only positive point. Is the only positive point I feel.

Interviewer

Thank you very much for your time.

Participant

Most welcome.