

Report on the Field Visit to Chor Minar

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CHOR MINAR (Credit: Author)

On 13 February 2026, the students from the Programmes M.A. Archaeology and Heritage Management, & Conservation, Museology and Heritage Management, from the School of Heritage Research and Management, Dr B R Ambedkar University Delhi, visited Chor Minar in the Hauz Khas area of South Delhi under the supervision of Dr. Shalini Awasthi and Dr. Sailendra Kumar Swain, for the Courses Heritage Site Management and Heritage Laws in India & International Conventions. The purpose of the visit was to develop a practical understanding of heritage laws and to examine their application in real-life situation for heritage site management.

The monument, Chor Minar is located within the residential neighbourhood of Hauz Khaz and is presently enclosed within a circular green lawn protected by an iron fence, clearly demarcating its safeguarded limits.

Chor Minar, meaning the “Tower of Thieves,” dates to the period of the Delhi Sultanate and is generally attributed to the reign of Alauddin Khalji of the Khalji dynasty. According to popular accounts, the tower was constructed as a symbol of authority and deterrence. It is widely believed that the 225 holes visible on its upper storey were used to display the severed heads of Mongol invaders or criminals as a warning to others. Although definitive historical documentation confirming this practice remains limited, the monument continues to hold strong associations with these narratives and reflects the political climate of the Sultanate period. Over time, Chor Minar has witnessed shifts in power and urban

transformation, surviving as an important yet lesser-known remnant of Delhi's medieval past.

Architecturally, the Minar is constructed using random rubble masonry with locally available Delhi quartzite stone, a common material in Sultanate architecture. The first storey is square in plan, measuring approximately eight meters on each side, and features three arched openings on every side. Above this square base, the structure transitions into a circular form in the upper levels. The third storey contains around 225 small square holes, each side approximately 20 centimetres, arranged systematically across its surface. The structure is simple yet imposing, reflecting functional design and robust construction techniques characteristic of the period.



Chor Minar: Random Rubble masonry and arches (Credit: Ravina)

Learning Outcome of the Field Visit

This field visit helped students develop a deeper understanding of heritage laws and their practical application in the real world. Students gained knowledge about the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 (AMASR Act)** and "*Prohibited Area*", where construction and other activities are strictly regulated, under the subsequent amendments in 2010. They understood how this law is implemented at the site visited and how it contributes to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

Furthermore, the visit encouraged critical thinking about whether monuments with unknown or unclear historical backgrounds are still worth protecting. Students reflected on the cultural, architectural, and social value of such monuments and recognized the importance of preserving heritage for future generations.

The field visit provided valuable insights into, heritage legislation, Conservation practices and ethical questions surrounding monument preservation. Students discussed the role of government and non-government bodies in safeguarding heritage and reflected on whether monuments with partially legendary or uncertain histories deserve protection. It was concluded that heritage value extends beyond documented historical facts and includes architectural, cultural, and associative significance. Overall, the visit to Chor Minar strengthened the students' understanding of the practical application of heritage laws and reinforced the importance of preserving India's cultural legacy for future generations.



Students and Faculty of SHRM at Chor Minar (Credit: Bhavik)