



Jallianwala Bagh Massacre Memorial

REPORT

Disha, Krisha & Manya | History | 28th April 2018

INTRODUCTION

On 17th April, we visited the Jallianwala Bagh Centenary Commemoration Exhibition at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.

The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place on 13th April 1919, in Amritsar, Punjab, when General Dyer entered the area with British troops and fired mercilessly upon the people, killing hundreds of innocents, including children.

The exhibition has been organised to commemorate the tragic incident on its 100-year anniversary. It is being held in the remembrance of the people who died and it throws light on the events that took place and the oppression faced by the people in Punjab, before the incident and after the incident.

MANYA'S EXPERIENCE

My visit to the exhibition about the jallianwala massacre was very informative. There i learnt how brave our people were in fighting against the british colonisers, but they always did it with a spirit of non violence.

They were unbreakable, even when they got jailed, their leaders were taken away, or they were suppressed by the british. The jallianwalah bagh incident was a culmination of a variety of events, such as the spanish plague, capturing of popular freedom fighters like gandhi ji, etc. The incident itself however, completely shocked and horrified people then and continues to do so today.

It was an example of ruthless and heedless killing by firing on a peaceful gathering protesting against an unjust rowlatt act, where not only adults but children also died, and the man behind this, general dyer, showed no remorse at all. It was thought by the british that this act would stop people from rebelling but it only led to the flame of nationalism to burn brighter in our hearts. People still remember and pay respect to the common people who died there.



DISHA'S EXPERIENCE

The visit to the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre Memorial was a revealing, yet heart breaking one. The various aspects and events that culminated in this tragic event were explored in an extensive and captivating manner i.e. - The Rowlatt Act, Spanish Influenza, Arrest of local Leaders like Dr.Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, Ramnavami Etc.

A wide array sources - newspaper reports, eye witness accounts, survivor accounts, excerpts from books, poems, speeches etc. - were displayed in various forms – audio, video, art-installations, music and cut-outs. This was an excellent idea because it was more than just an exhibition, it was an experience.

It highlighted many incidences that demonstrated the despotic rule of the Britishers. For example we saw reports of the martial law that was imposed on the people after the incident, which included banning cycles, ordering people to drop everything and salute British officers whenever encountered, public humiliation, flogging, crawling on all fours on the streets etc. The Jallianwala Bagh incident further showed us most cruel and merciless face of their rule.

It also helps us connect with modern problems like communal hate, separatism and violence by focusing on Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity and peaceful protest, which was an integral part of the incident.

The Jallianwala Bagh Incident was thoroughly inspected from various points of view. It also mentioned that it may have been a conspiracy against Indians and put up various pieces of evidence to support it.

This was overall a very educative experience that opened our eyes towards the atrocities committed by the Britishers and gave us an in-depth view of the tragic event.

KRISHA'S EXPERIENCE

Upon reaching the venue, the guide showed us newspaper articles and reports about World War I and the forced recruitment of soldiers in Punjab before the incident. These articles clearly indicate that the people had gathered in the Bagh to peacefully protest against the Rowlatt Act and against the arrest of some freedom fighters.

We came across scores of reports, photographs and eyewitness accounts of the people who were a part of the incident and the reactions of the British government and the public after the incident took place.

The poignance and the atrocious nature of the incident was very well portrayed by an installation in which colourful turbans, clothes and shoes lay spilled all over the muddy

round, showing how the bodies were left in the mud for weeks.



It was really a disturbing sight to see the installation of a flogging post and a jail constructed to show the atrocities faced by the people, after the massacre.



We also saw reports of the martial law that was imposed on the people after the incident, which included banning cycles, ordering people to drop everything and salute British officers whenever encountered, etc. These adversely affected the people's lives.

The exhibition also highlights the suspicion of the locals that the firing by the British could have been a trap and a well-planned conspiracy against the Indians.

Overall, the exhibition was quite overwhelming and sad. However, towards the end of the exhibition, we felt a sense of optimism and pride when we read Mahatma Gandhi's speech given after the incident.

Gandhiji in his speech highlighted that the incident was one of the most significant instances of Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity, as they were peacefully protesting together. He also emphasised the need for unity among the citizens to defeat the British.

In the end, all of us paid our respects to the people who had lost their lives in the incident, by throwing flower petals into the beautiful well created inside the exhibition.