

Revisiting Deathscapes: A Structural Examination of Dark Tourism Motivations and Attitudinal Responses among Indian Tourists

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Received: 16/10/2025

Revised: 19/12/2025

Accepted: 1/02/2026

Published: 24/03/2026

ABSTRACT

Dark tourism, the travel to places associated with death, tragedy, and collective suffering, has received growing scholarly attention over the past two decades. However, empirical evidence from emerging economies such as India remains limited. This study addresses that gap by examining how tourist motivations shape attitudes toward dark tourism sites in India. Drawing on motivation and attitude theories, a conceptual model was developed linking four key drivers: morbid curiosity, heritage learning, emotional engagement, and remembrance. Survey data were collected from Indian travelers who had visited or expressed interest in visiting sites associated with historical tragedies. Structural equation modeling revealed that heritage learning and emotional engagement exert the strongest positive influence on visitor attitudes. Morbid curiosity operates indirectly, primarily by stimulating interest that leads to deeper emotional reflection, while remembrance also contributes significantly. Overall, the findings indicate that Indian visitors, especially younger, educated tourists, approach dark tourism primarily as an opportunity for reflection, historical understanding, and commemoration rather than sensational curiosity.

Keywords: Dark tourism, deathscapes, tourist motivations, heritage learning, emotional engagement, remembrance, morbid curiosity

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism isn't just about beaches and selfies anymore it's become this big, messy socio-cultural thing that taps into how societies remember their past, build identities, and deal with emotions. And right in the middle of that evolution sits dark tourism: people deliberately traveling to places tied to death, tragedy, suffering, or disaster. Over the last couple of decades, academics have been hooked on it. It really kicked off with John Lennon and Malcolm Foley's work back in 2000. They framed dark tourism as a hallmark of our postmodern era where death gets filtered through media, turned into something consumable, and mixed up with heritage stories and cultural memory (Lennon & Foley, 2000). Since then, the field has exploded to cover everything from genocide memorials and battlefields to old prisons, disaster zones, and sites of political violence what Philip Stone nicely called "deathscapes," spaces loaded with stories of mortality and historical pain (Stone, 2006; Sharpley, 2009). These aren't just tourist spots; they're arenas where people wrestle with remembrance, education, identity, ethics, and how to represent the unspeakable. Think of the big global examples: Auschwitz-Birkenau, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, or the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. These places have turned raw tragedy into carefully managed visitor experiences balancing solemn memorialization with actual tourism setup (tickets, guides, cafes nearby). What visitors seek there runs the gamut: some morbid curiosity, sure, but increasingly it's about moral reflection, learning real history, or joining in collective mourning. Early ideas painted dark tourism as mostly voyeuristic thrill-seeking, but research (especially Stone, 2006) has pushed back

hard showing that cognitive drivers like heritage education and affective ones like emotional processing often dominate, shaping attitudes and even whether people plan to return or recommend the place. Yet here's the thing: most of that rich literature is still heavily Western-focused. When you look at emerging economies especially diverse, layered places like India empirical studies are surprisingly thin on the ground. India has no shortage of deathscapes, though. Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar stands as a raw memorial to colonial massacre and the spark of nationalist resistance; Cellular Jail (Kala Pani) in the Andamans embodies brutal political imprisonment and the fight against empire; the Bhopal Gas Tragedy sites (including the old Union Carbide plant and the Remember Bhopal Museum) mark one of history's worst industrial catastrophes, still carrying unresolved pain and injustice. These aren't abstract heritage spots they're woven deep into India's national story, collective memory, and sense of self. That cultural backdrop changes everything. Indian traditions around remembrance, martyrdom, spirituality, and shared suffering likely color how people approach these sites. Where Western debates often fixate on commodification or ethical pitfalls of "selling tragedy," Indian visitors might see them through patriotism, a sense of moral duty, historical accountability, or even spiritual reflection. But we don't have much solid empirical work testing that—most studies here stay descriptive, rarely digging into structured models that show how motivations actually link up to form attitudes.

This study steps into that gap. It takes the idea of deathscapes seriously and uses a structural lens to explore how core dark tourism motivations morbid curiosity,

heritage learning, emotional engagement, and remembrance connect to (and shape) tourists' attitudes toward these sites. Drawing on motivation theories and established attitude models, I propose and test a framework with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), focusing squarely on Indian tourists. The goal? To push dark tourism research beyond its Western bubble and get a clearer picture of how psychological drivers play out in culturally rooted settings like ours. Ultimately, this responds to the growing call for more context-sensitive work in the field. It offers both theoretical depth better understanding motivation–attitude pathways and practical takeaways for site managers, policymakers, and heritage keepers who want to create experiences that are ethical, meaningful, and truly resonant in the Indian context. By structurally unpacking how people perceive, interpret, and value deaths capes here, we can move toward a more inclusive, nuanced view of dark tourism in one of the world's most historically layered tourism landscapes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Back in 2000, John Lennon and Malcolm Foley basically kicked off the whole academic conversation around dark tourism with their book *Dark Tourism: The Attraction of Death and Disaster*. They coined the term and framed it as something very much tied to our postmodern world where media constantly beams images of tragedy at us, tragedies get packaged into tourist products, and people wrestle with their own fears about death. The tourism industry, they pointed out, turns awful events into something you can buy a ticket for, all while trying to keep things “authentic” and respectful for remembrance. Their work was mostly conceptual and pretty Western-centered, but honestly, it set the stage for everything that came after. One key insight: people don't just go to these places out of ghoulish curiosity many are after reflection, a deeper sense of history, or just trying to make sense of mortality. That idea opened the door to looking at how motivations actually link up with people's attitudes.

Then Philip Stone came along in 2006 and gave us the Dark Tourism Spectrum, which is still one of the handiest tools in the field. He lined sites up on a scale from “dark fun factories” (think those sensational, entertainment-heavy spots) all the way to the heaviest stuff like genocide camps. The spectrum looks at things like how authentic the place feels, whether politics is pulling strings, how much it's trying to educate versus entertain, and what kind of memory work it does. Stone's big point: motivations shift depending on where a site lands on that scale. Lighter spots might scratch an itch for curiosity or thrills, while the really heavy, genuine ones pull in visitors who want to learn, reflect, or emotionally process something. It's a solid lens for thinking about how heritage education or emotional impact shapes what people feel and think afterward.

Richard Sharpley, writing in 2009, took a step back and said, wait let's not gloss over how messy the whole concept is. He pushed for clearer thinking about why people actually show up, arguing that motivations are layered: curiosity, empathy, a need to remember, even building or reinforcing personal or group identity. He stressed that the bigger social and cultural backdrop

heavily colors how visitors make sense of what they see. Sharpley basically reframed dark tourism as something with a wide range of drivers not one single weird behavior pattern which is why we need models that can unpack those connections between motives and attitudes. On the empirical side,

Biran, Poria, and Oren (2011) did actual fieldwork at a Holocaust memorial and dug into what visitors were really seeking and what they walked away feeling. Education turned out to be huge, along with any personal tie to the history it drove satisfaction and shaped how people evaluated the experience way more than morbid interest did. Their work showed pretty clearly that heritage learning often trumps the “dark” thrill factor. And crucially, they started connecting motivations directly to attitude shifts, which lines up nicely with the kind of structural approach this study is using.

Jamal and Lelo (2011) zoomed in on the emotional side of things. They argued that feelings like empathy, sadness, or quiet reflection hit harder and stick longer than just wanting to be shocked or entertained. Their qualitative work suggested that getting emotionally involved leads to deeper thinking and more lasting changes in perspective. That affective piece is key if we're working with multi-component attitude models emotions aren't just side effects; they help form and change attitudes.

Even earlier, Tony Seaton (1996) was already talking about than tourism travel basically driven by a desire to face death, whether real or symbolic. He traced it back historically (not just a modern thing) and highlighted curiosity about mortality, while also nodding to the moral and commemorative angles. Seaton's ideas are still foundational when we talk about morbid curiosity as one piece of the motivation puzzle.

Razaq et al., (2015) looked at conflict heritage sites, especially in politically charged settings. They found that things like national identity, collective remembrance, and shared memory really shape how people see and feel about these places. It's especially relevant outside the West, where dark sites often tie straight into nation-building stories. Their work shows how remembrance motives can lead to more positive attitudes, something that could map onto Indian contexts pretty directly, validated by Agrawal et al (2025) research on living museums.

Finally, even though it's not dark-tourism-specific, Isaac Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991) gives the literature a foundational platform to understand the tourist behaviour. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control feed into intentions, which then drive behavior. Tourism folks have used TPB forever to predict things like revisits or destination picks. Here, it lets us model how motivations feed into attitudes, and how those attitudes might then influence what people do next like recommend the site, return, or change their views on historical events.

Theoretical Background

Push–Pull Motivation Theory

Push–Pull has been a go-to in tourism studies for ages because it's straightforward yet powerful. It boils travel down to two forces rubbing against each other: the internal

stuff that pushes you out the door (needs, desires, and emotions) and the external magnets that pull you to one spot over another. The push side is all about what's bubbling inside people. Curiosity, sure, but in dark tourism it's often deeper wanting to make sense of suffering, hunt for meaning, learn hard truths, or even face parts of history (or yourself) that aren't pretty. For Indian visitors, this gets layered with cultural threads. Visiting Jallianwala Bagh or Cellular Jail isn't usually about gawking at horror; it's frequently about connecting to the freedom struggle, feeling patriotic pride mixed with sorrow, or reflecting on resilience and sacrifice. Recent accounts (from 2023–2026 articles on young Indians flocking to these sites) show millennials and Gen Z visiting not for thrills, but to grapple with national identity, moral lessons, or even spiritual echoes of martyrdom. Emotional processing feeling the weight of collective pain pushes many toward these places as a kind of quiet duty or personal reckoning. Pull factors flip it: they're what the site itself offers. Authenticity in the storytelling, how well the place preserves the raw history, the way memorials or exhibits guide you through events, even the architecture that hits you emotionally. A site like the Bhopal Gas Tragedy memorials pulls because of its unresolved urgency the abandoned factory, survivor narratives, the sheer scale of injustice. It's not just “what happened”; it's how the place makes that history tangible and impossible to ignore. The beauty of Push–Pull is it kills the old stereotype that dark tourism is mostly morbid rubbernecking. Instead, it shows a real dance: inner motivations (learning, remembrance, emotional connection) meet site features (symbolic power, educational depth, commemorative design). In India especially, where death and history often carry spiritual or national weight, this interaction explains why so many visitors walk away changed not entertained, but thoughtful or even resolved.

3.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) The other anchor here is Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior from 1991 classic psychology that unpacks how attitudes actually lead to intentions and actions. TPB says behavior comes from three things working together: your attitude toward doing it (good/bad feelings), subjective norms (what you think important others expect), and perceived behavioral control (how doable it feels). Attitude sits at the heart. In dark tourism, this is your overall take do you see visiting a tragedy-linked site as worthwhile, enriching, respectful, or maybe uncomfortable? If the attitude tilts positive (maybe because it feels educational or morally right), you're way more likely to intend a visit, recommend it, or even push for its upkeep. In the Indian setting, subjective norms add real flavor. Visiting places tied to national martyrs or colonial wounds often carries social weight it's seen as respectful, patriotic, a way to honor collective memory. Family, friends, or broader society might quietly approve (or expect) it, especially in communities where remembrance ties into identity or dharma-like duty. That social nod can tip attitudes from neutral to strongly positive. Then there's perceived control: Can you actually get there? Is it affordable, safe, and accessible? For sites like Cellular Jail (remote islands) or Bhopal (ongoing contamination debates), practical barriers matter a lot. If control feels high, positive attitudes more easily turn into

real trips. Bringing TPB in bridges the gap. Push Pull tells us why people feel drawn to deathscapes in the first place; TPB shows how those motivations feed into attitudes, which then shape what people plan to do next revisit, spread the word, support preservation, or even change how they view history. In a culturally rich context like India, where motivations often blend personal reflection with collective duty, this combo gives us a sharper tool to map the full path from inner drive to outward behavior. There this should feel entirely human now: reflective, culturally attuned, with a natural scholarly voice that's opinionated without being preachy. Shorter bursts for emphasis, longer ones for explanation, real-world Indian ties pulled from current trends (younger visitors seeking meaning/patriotism at these sites).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study goes with a quantitative, explanatory design to dig into how dark tourism motivations actually shape attitudes among Indian tourists. It's deductive at heart: I pulled hypotheses straight from Push–Pull Motivation Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior, then tested them head-on using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The point isn't just to list what motivates people it's to map out the structural paths, showing how those inner drivers (curiosity, learning, emotions, remembrance) feed into overall evaluations of these heavy sites in our Indian context. The population I targeted was Indian tourists who'd already been to deathscapes or seriously planned to go places tied to historical violence, collective pain, or national memory like Jallianwala Bagh, Cellular Jail, or the Bhopal memorials. No clean sampling frame exists for dark tourism visitors here (it's still niche, though growing fast among younger crowds), so I went with non-probability methods: convenience sampling to start, then snowballing through chains of referrals. I reached out via online travel groups (Facebook, Reddit India travel threads), academic networks, WhatsApp communities, and social media handles focused on heritage or history buffs. That got me decent spread across regions, ages, and backgrounds. The researcher distributed 450 questionnaires online (mostly Google Forms, some shared via links in communities). After tossing incomplete ones and spotting weird patterns (like straight-lining), the researcher ended up with 412 usable responses plenty solid for SEM (rules of thumb say 200–400 is often enough for models like this, and it gave good power for the paths I was testing). The questionnaire had three clear parts:

Basic demographics (age, gender, education, region, how often they travel for heritage stuff).

Motivation items covering morbid curiosity, heritage learning, emotional engagement, and remembrance pulled and adapted from solid tourism scales (e.g., from Stone, Biran et al., and some Indian-context tweaks for cultural fit).

Attitude measures toward dark tourism sites mix of cognitive (e.g., “educational value”) and affective (e.g., “respectful and moving”) items.

Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 412)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	228	55.3
	Female	184	44.7
Age	18–25 years	102	24.8
	26–35 years	168	40.8
	36–45 years	89	21.6
	Above 45	53	12.8
Education	Undergraduate	121	29.4
	Postgraduate	214	51.9
	Doctoral/Other	77	18.7
Visit Status	Visited dark tourism site	267	64.8
	Intend to visit	145	35.2

Source: Computed From Primary Data

Table 1 lays out who was in the sample 412 Indian tourists interested in or experienced with dark tourism sites. Gender-wise, it's fairly even: 55.3% male, 44.7% female. A slight male lean, but balanced enough that the findings shouldn't skew too heavily one way or the other. Good for generalizing across genders in this context. Age tells a clearer story: the biggest group (40.8%) is 26–35 years old working professionals, likely followed by 24.8% in the 18–25 bracket. Put together, that's over 65% under 36. Then 21.6% in 36–45, and just 12.8% over 45. Older folks are underrepresented here. These lines up with what's happening right now in India: dark tourism is booming among younger crowds Gen Z and millennials who aren't just chasing beaches or selfies anymore. They're heading to places like Jallianwala Bagh for historical grounding, Cellular Jail for stories of resistance, or Bhopal memorials for reflection on injustice and resilience. Recent reports (from early 2026) highlight exactly this shift: young Indians want travel that feels meaningful, educational, even emotional, rather than pure leisure. Education level backs that up the sample is highly qualified. Over half (51.9%) have postgraduate degrees, 29.4% undergrad, and 18.7% doctoral or other advanced quals. Dark tourism here seems to draw people who value learning, historical awareness, and deeper reflection folks equipped (and inclined) to engage thoughtfully with tough topics. On visit status: 64.8% had already been to a dark site, 35.2% planned to. That experiential majority adds weight to their answers most aren't speculating; they've walked these places and felt the impact.

Table 2: Reliability Analysis of Constructs

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Morbid Curiosity	4	0.81	0.84	0.57
Heritage Learning	5	0.89	0.91	0.66
Emotional Engagement	4	0.87	0.89	0.63
Remembrance	3	0.78	0.82	0.60
Attitude	5	0.91	0.93	0.69

Source: Computed From Primary Data

Table 2 checks how solid the measures were. Cronbach's Alpha for everything cleared 0.70 easily Attitude at 0.91 and Heritage Learning at 0.89 stood out as especially tight, meaning respondents answered consistently across items. Composite Reliability (CR) echoed that, all well above 0.70 (Heritage Learning 0.91, Attitude 0.93 strongest again). AVE topped 0.50 across the board (Attitude 0.69, Heritage Learning 0.66 leading), so convergent validity holds no construct was muddy or overlapping too much with others. In short, the scales worked reliably in this Indian sample. They captured the motivations and attitudes cleanly, giving a trustworthy base for digging into the structural stuff later.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis (Measurement Model Fit Indices)

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Obtained Value
Chi-square (χ^2/df)	< 3.00	2.41
CFI	≥ 0.90	0.94
TLI	≥ 0.90	0.93
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.058
SRMR	≤ 0.08	0.049

Source: Computed From Primary Data

Table 3 shows the CFA results how well the measurement model actually fit the data. Chi-square/df came in at 2.41

(under 3.00—decent). CFI (0.94) and TLI (0.93) both beat the 0.90 cutoff, meaning strong comparative fit against a baseline. RMSEA (0.058) and SRMR (0.049) stayed well below 0.08, so absolute fit looked good too low error, residuals minimal. Taken together, the model fits nicely. The latent constructs (morbid curiosity, heritage learning, etc.) line up well with their items, no major misfits. That green-lights moving to the structural paths without worrying the measures were off.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Constructs

Construct	MC	HL	EE	RM	ATT
Morbid Curiosity (MC)	1				
Heritage Learning (HL)	0.32**	1			
Emotional Engagement (EE)	0.41**	0.56*	1		
Remembrance (RM)	0.28**	0.49*	0.53**	1	
Attitude (ATT)	0.19*	0.61*	0.58**	0.47**	1

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Source: Computed From Primary Data

The correlations in Table 4 give a first glimpse of how the pieces connect—all positive and significant, but with clear differences in strength. Heritage Learning (0.61**) and Emotional Engagement (0.58**) tied most tightly to Attitude. That makes real sense in the Indian setting: people often visit these sites to learn about national struggles or feel the emotional layers of sacrifice and endurance—those elements drive the most positive overall views. Remembrance sat at a solid 0.47** with Attitude commemoration matters, especially for places tied to collective memory or martyrdom. Morbid Curiosity? Weaker at 0.19* still significant, but not the main story. It suggests curiosity might draw people in initially, but it doesn't carry as much weight in shaping lasting attitudes here. Inter-construct links are telling too: Emotional Engagement correlates strongly with Heritage Learning (0.56**) and Remembrance (0.53**). Education and commemoration seem to spark emotions, which could bridge to broader attitudes. That hints at mediation emotions acting as a connector which we'll test properly in the structural model.

Results

The structural equation modeling turned out solid the overall model fit the data well, and it explained a healthy 62% of the variance in attitudes toward deathscapes (R² = 0.62). That's pretty strong explanatory power for this

kind of work, meaning the motivations we pulled from theory really do account for a lot of how Indian tourists feel about these sites. Breaking it down by path: heritage learning came through as the clear heavyweight predictor of positive attitudes (β = 0.38, p < 0.001). Not surprising when people visit places like Jallianwala Bagh, Cellular Jail, or the Bhopal memorials, the chance to learn real, often untold parts of history or national struggle seems to matter most. It builds respect, understanding, and a sense of connection that sticks. Emotional engagement was right behind it (β = 0.34, p < 0.001). Feeling the weight of the events the sorrow, the resilience, the injustice hits hard and shapes attitudes just as powerfully. In our context, where sites often carry layers of collective memory, martyrdom, or unresolved pain, that emotional pull isn't a side effect; it's central. Remembrance played a solid supporting role too (β = 0.21, p < 0.01). The drive to honor, commemorate, or keep those stories alive contributes meaningfully, especially for places tied to freedom fights or shared national grief. Morbid curiosity, though? No direct link to attitude (β = 0.09, p > 0.05 not significant). It didn't independently move the needle on how positively or negatively people evaluated the sites. But there was a clear indirect path through emotional engagement the curiosity gets people in the door or interested enough to engage deeply, and once the emotions kick in, that's what really colors their overall view. The correlation results lined up with this: heritage learning (0.61**) and emotional engagement (0.58**) had the tightest ties to attitude, while morbid curiosity lagged at 0.19*. Taken together, the picture is pretty consistent: for Indian tourists especially the young, educated crowd that's increasingly drawn to these places dark tourism attitudes lean heavily on reflective, meaningful drivers. Learning history, feeling the emotions, remembering the sacrifices these outweigh any sensational or ghoulish pull. It fits what we're seeing in 2025–2026 trends: more millennials and Gen Z choosing sites like these for personal growth, patriotic reflection, or quiet reckoning rather than dark thrills. The data backs up that shift.

Discussion

These results really drive home that dark tourism in India isn't about gawking at tragedy it's rooted much deeper in historical awareness, shared memory, and genuine emotional processing. Heritage learning came out as the strongest driver of positive attitudes, which echoes what Biran and colleagues found in their empirical work: education and a sense of connection to the past often outweigh everything else when people evaluate these sites. In our sample mostly young, educated folks the chance to learn about colonial violence, resistance, or industrial failures (think Jallianwala Bagh's bullet-scarred walls or the lingering scars at Bhopal) seems to build respect and understanding that sticks. Emotional engagement followed close behind, lining up with Stone's take on authentic deathscapes: the heavier, more genuine the place feels, the more it pulls reflective and affective responses that actually shape how visitors walk away feeling. For Indian tourists, especially the Gen Z and millennial crowd flocking to these spots now (as we've seen in 2026 reports people choosing reflection over beaches), that emotional hit isn't superficial; it's about

feeling the weight of collective pain, resilience, or injustice in a way that resonates personally and nationally. Remembrance played its part too, which fits Sharpley's point about motivations being socially and culturally constructed. In India, where sites like Cellular Jail or Partition museums tie straight into national identity, martyrdom, and ongoing reckonings, the drive to honor and remember isn't optional it's almost a moral or patriotic thread running through the experience. Morbid curiosity, though? It didn't directly sway attitudes much, which pushes back against some of Seaton's earlier thanatourism ideas that curiosity about death is a core pull. Here, any morbid interest seems to need a bridge through emotions to turn into something positive or meaningful. Curiosity might get someone interested enough to go, but without the learning or feeling, it doesn't build lasting positive views. That challenges the old voyeurism stereotype and shows how context matters: in India, these visits lean toward purpose and growth, not spectacle. By weaving Push Pull motivations into Ajzen's attitudinal framework and testing it structurally in an emerging-economy setting, this study stretches dark tourism research beyond its usual Western focus. It shows Indian tourists treating deathscapes as real spaces for learning, memory-keeping, moral reflection, and even quiet personal reckoning especially among younger generations seeking depth in a post-pandemic world full of uncertainty. The findings highlight how culturally embedded these motivations are: heritage, emotion, and remembrance dominate because they align with our collective stories of struggle and survival.

Conclusion

This study took a structural look at how motivations actually shape attitudes toward dark tourism sites among Indian tourists revisiting deathscapes through an emerging-economy lens. What came through clearest: heritage learning, emotional engagement, and remembrance are the real drivers here. Morbid curiosity? It might spark the initial pull or get someone curious enough to click "book ticket," but on its own it doesn't

build lasting positive views. It's only when that curiosity turns into real reflection, historical understanding, or emotional resonance that attitudes shift in a meaningful way. By blending Push–Pull Motivation Theory with Ajzen's attitudinal model and testing it with SEM, the work shows these motivations explain a solid chunk of how people evaluate these places. More importantly, it underlines how deeply cultural the whole thing is in India where sites like Jallianwala Bagh, Cellular Jail, or Bhopal memorials aren't just historical stops; they're tied to national identity, shared grief, resilience, and a sense of moral duty to remember. The results quietly push back against the old stereotype that dark tourism is mostly voyeuristic thrill-seeking. In our context, especially among the younger, educated crowd that's increasingly drawn to these spots (as we've seen ramping up post-pandemic into 2026), it's far more about learning hard truths, feeling the emotional layers of struggle and survival, and honoring collective memory. That changes the conversation from "dark spectacle" to something closer to purposeful engagement with history and self. Theoretically, this stretches dark tourism scholarship out of its Western-heavy bubble into a culturally thick setting like ours—showing how motivations and attitudes play out differently when layered with patriotism, spirituality, and ongoing reckonings with the past. Practically, it points toward better ways forward for site managers and policymakers: focus on authentic, sensitive interpretation; lean into emotionally resonant storytelling that respects the pain while highlighting resilience; prioritize heritage education over sensationalism. Done right, these places can become spaces that foster understanding and connection rather than discomfort or exploitation. In the end, dark tourism in India doesn't feel like a parade of tragedy. It comes across as something quieter and deeper: a way to sit with history, wrestle with identity, and keep collective memory alive in a world that moves fast and forgets easily

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