

The street names of New Delhi

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Introduction

Unravelling Street Names

The study of street names highlights some important points. First, street names indicate about the geographic characteristics or geological past of the local area. The geographical location of a place influences street nomenclature. For example- if a street is located on higher ground, then it is named as High street.

Second, historic stories may be derived from street names. Some of them are named after the monuments located near to them or some memorable event. Religious sites also play an important role, for example- Mandir Marg. Third, street names are given to honour dignitaries for their service to nation.

Fourth, as a place is discovered by kings, queens or colonial rulers, the streets are named by them. Every ruler had distinct perspectives of reflecting landscape. Over successive stages of discovery of land, streets are named. Fifth, the changes of language impact street names. The names have evolved over

the years in terms of linguistic changes. Language in turn is related to the race or communities inhabiting that place. Therefore, distribution of communities also helps in understanding the value of street names.

Sixth, study of street names of recent origin help to unravel the present factors which cause regulation of street names. The principles of street naming are affected by the pattern of urban growth and economic activities which are found in the nearby areas like commercial, residential or recreational places.

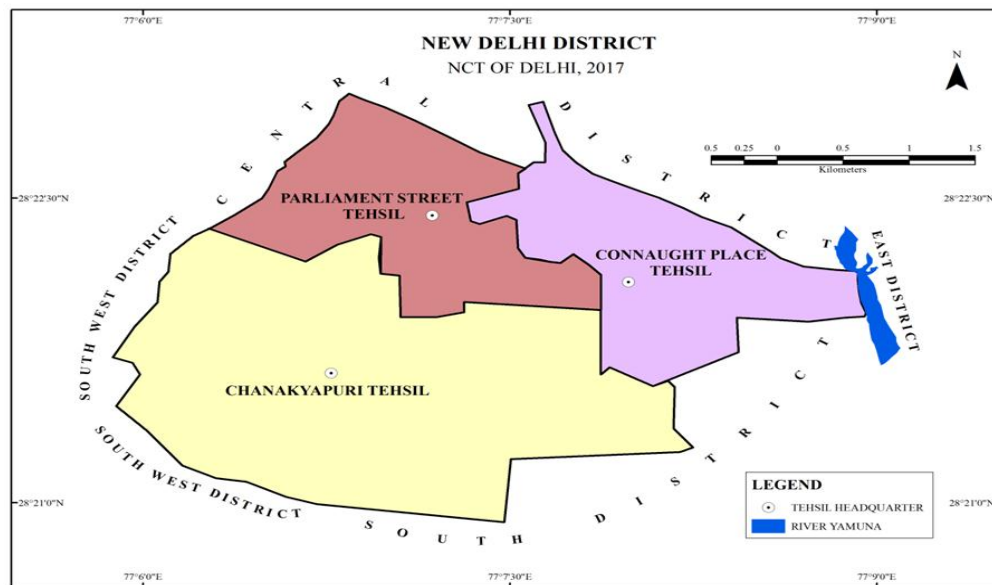
Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is as follows:-

- To study the meanings of Street names of New Delhi.

Methodology

New Delhi district is a part of one of the eleven districts' of New Delhi, capital of India. It consists of three Tehsils- Chanakyapuri, Connaught Place and Parliament Street Tehsil.



Source: Census of India, 2011

Fig 1: Map 1.1 Tehsil Map of New Delhi District

Chanakyapuri Tehsil- is a prosperous neighbourhood and diplomatic commune established in 1950s in New Delhi. Major streets in Chanakyapuri include *Shantipath*, *Nyaya Marg*, *Niti Marg*, and *Chandragupta Marg*. It play congregation to majority of foreign embassies and is official residence for both politicians and civil servants in Government of India.

Connaught Place Tehsil- has remained one of the largest financial and business centres of New Delhi. It was developed

as a showpiece of Lutyens Delhi with a prominent central business district. Major streets are Janpath, Barakhamba Road, Chlemsford Road, Minto Road, Baba Kharak Singh Marg and Kasturba Gandhi Marg.

Parliament Street Tehsil- is the seat of administration in New Delhi. Parliament is located in this district. It consists of President's estate. Parliament Street is one of the most important Street of New Delhi. It is also known as Sansad Marg. Major streets are Talkatora road, Vande Mataram Marg,

Mother Teresa Cres and Panchkuian Marg.

The study is indeed a fruitful interplay of both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Database will consist of both primary and secondary source.

Selection of Study Area and Streets

A total of thirty streets were selected for the study. Selection of streets was based on importance in terms of coverage and road system hierarchy. Therefore, streets of every type

(arterial, sub arterial and local) covering all three tehsils of New Delhi were selected. The numbers of arterial streets selected for the study are more than the sub – arterial and local streets. The selected Streets provide connectivity, between major financial, commercial and residential areas. Some of the selected Streets were planned and built in colonial time and were renamed after independence. Therefore, the Street names can be compared along with examining implications or renaming.



Source: Prepared by Researcher

Fig 2: Map 1.2 Location of Streets selected for the study

The New Delhi district was selected for the study because it was the site of Lutyens Delhi in colonial time and at present holds a special status in terms of serving as a memoir which needs to be maintained and preserved. Therefore, historical

analysis of Street names in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times can be undertaken. Also the change of Street names in this area has wider implications.

Table 1.1: Streets selected for the study

S. No.	Street Name	Type of Street	Name after termination	Tehsil	Length (km)
1	Janpath	Arterial		Chanakyapuri, Parliament street and Connaught place tehsil	4.3
2	Rajpath	Arterial	terminates at India Gate circle	Parliament Street and Connaught Place	2.0
3	Tilak Marg	Arterial	terminates at roundabout made by Bahadur Shah Zafar Road, Sikandar Road and Mathura Road	Connaught Place	0.6
4	Panchkuian Marg	Arterial	Radial road 3, Bhim Rao Ambedkar Marg and Rani Jhansi Marg	Parliament Street	2.6
5	Sardar Patel Marg	Arterial	Parade Road	Chanakyapuri	3.0
6	Kasurba Gandhi Marg	Sub Arterial	India Gate Circle	Connaught Place	2.0
7	Mandir Marg	Sub Arterial	Roundabout made by Talkatora Road, Park street and Panchkuian Marg	Parliament Street	1.9
8	Teen Murti Marg	Local	Teen Murti Circus	Chanakyapuri	1.2
9	Bangla Sahib Marg	Local	Roundabout made by Baba Kharak Singh Marg and Panchkuian Marg	Parliament Street	1.0
10	Kali Bari Marg	Local	Gol Dak Khana Roundabout	Parliament Street	0.85
11	A.P.J. Abdul Kalam	Arterial	Safdarjung Road	Connaught Place	1.8

	Road				
12	Ashoka Road	Arterial	India gate circle	Parliament Street and Chankyapuri	3.0
13	Akbar Road	Arterial	India Gate circle	Connaught Place and Chanakyapuri	1.0
14	Sansad Marg	Arterial	Connaught circle, Parliament roundabout	Connaught Place and Parliament Street	1.3
15	Mother Teresa Cres	Arterial	Teen Murti Circle	Parliament Street and Chankyapuri	3.2
16	Baba Kharak Singh Marg	Arterial	Radial Road 2, Connaught circle	Parliament Street	1.6
17	Safdarjung Road	Arterial	Teen murti, Akbar Road and Lok Klayan Road roundabout	Chanakyapuri	1.4
18	Lodhi Road	Arterial	Sri Aurbindo Marg, Sabz Burj circle	Chanakyapuri	3.0
19	Panchsheel Road	Sub Arterial	Sardar patel road and simon bolivar marg roundabout	Chanakyapuri	2.0
20	Shantipath	Sub Arterial	Teen Murti marg, Kautilya Marg roundabout	Chanakyapuri	3.0
21	Raisina Road	Sub Arterial	Windsor place	Parliament Street	1.0
22	Talkatora Road	Sub Arterial	Mother Teresa cres, Park street and Baba Kharak Singh Marg Roundabout	Parliament Street	1.2
23	Lok Kalyan Road	Arterial	Teen Murti road, Akbar road and Safdarjung road roundabout	Chanakyapuri	0.7
24	Dara Shikoh Road	Local	Vijay Chowk	Parliament Street	1.2
25	Humayun Road	Local	Subramaniam Bharti road, Shahjahan road	Connaught Place and Chanakyapuri	0.65
26	Tughlaq Road	Sub Arterial	Akbar road, Krishna Menon Marg and Tees January Marg	Chanakyapuri	1.5
27	Prithviraj Road	Sub Arterial	Shah Jahan Road	Chanakyapuri	2.0
28	Tees January Marg	Local	Janpath, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Road and Rajesh Pilot Marg roundabout	Chanakyapuri	0.28
29	Zakhir Hussain Marg	Arterial	India Gate Circle	Connaught Place	2.5
30	Bara Khamba Road	Arterial	Connaught place circle and Mandi House circle	Connaught Place	2.0

Source: Prepared by Researcher, 2017

Street Names and Adjuncts

Street names can be organised on the basis of their adjuncts and then further classification can be made. There are four types of adjuncts attached with thirty streets. These can be

grouped into two. The first makes a direct reference to “way”. In this category, path, marg and avenue can be included. The second are those which indicate the shape. Within this is crescent.

Table 1.2: Adjuncts that are commonly used to the names of streets

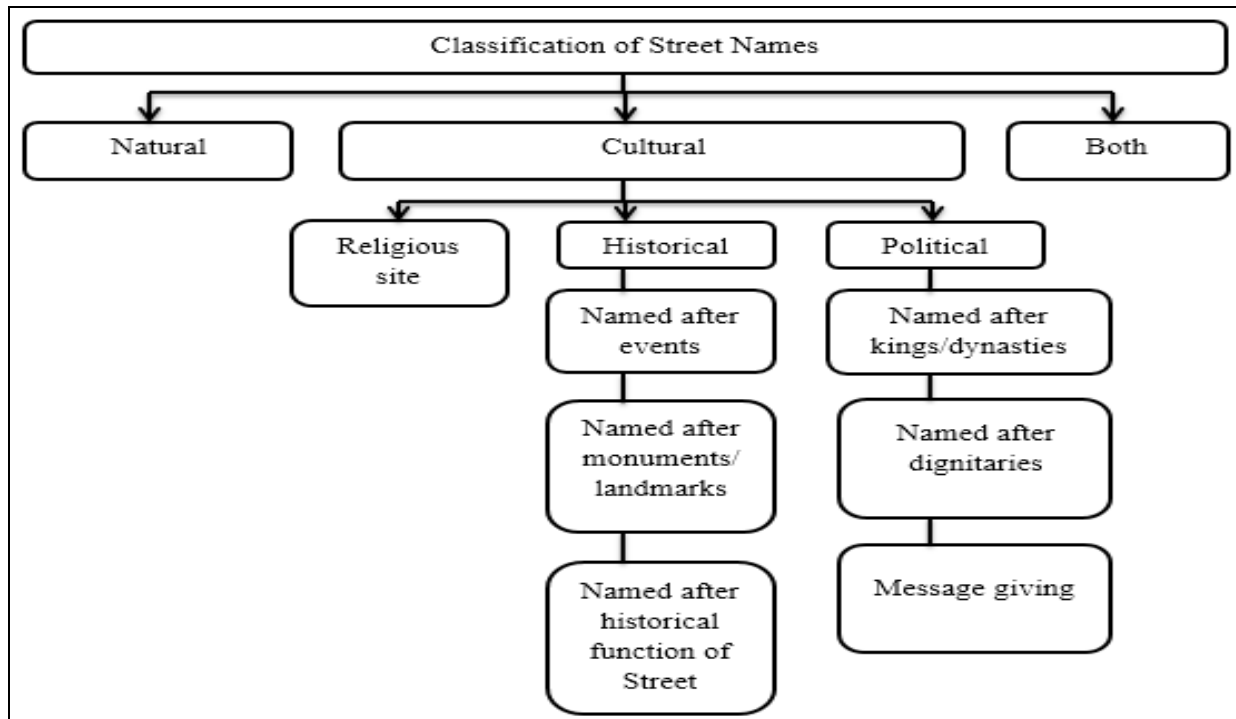
Adjuncts	Meaning	Total Number	Street Names
Avenue	A broad street in the city, typically having trees at regular interval along its sides	1	Africa Avenue
Crescent	Shape of single curve that has two pointed ends	1	Mother Teresa Cres
Marg	A road	12	Tilak Marg, Panchlujan Marg, Mandir Marg, Teen Murti Marg, Tees January Marg, Sansad Marg
Path	A way or track laid down for walking	3	Janpath, Rajpath
Way	Roadway affording passage from one place to another. Usually not as straight as an avenue or street.		Kingsway, Queensway

Source: Prepared by researcher, 2017

Classification of Street Names

A Street is an identifying name given to a street. Names are often given in a two-part form: an individual name known as the specific, and an indicator of the type of street, known as the generic. Examples are Main Street, Fleet street etc. When thirty diverse street names were classified, they fell into

three groups- Natural, Cultural and both. Those with natural meaning were two, ones with cultural were twenty seven and the remaining one was both a combination of natural and cultural meaning. If a count of sub-classification is done under three broad groups, the meaning of streets fall under nine categories. An explanation of them is made as follows-



Source: Prepared by researcher

Fig 1.1: Classification of Street Names

1) Natural

The streets which fall under this category consist names which indicate location or geometry (shape, size, direction) of the place. The geographic characteristics of the local area are mentioned in the street name.

- **Raisina Road-** The road leads to the seat of power located on Raisina Hill. Hence, it is called Raisina Road. Raisina is derived from ‘Rao’ meaning ‘Aristocrat’ and ‘Simha’ meaning ‘Lion or Brave’. It was the title of estate ruler Kalda Rao, descendant of Maharaja Karna Singh, consisting of Delhi city in late 1600s to mid-1700s. Delhi city was called Raisina during this period.
- **Talkatora Road-** The Talkatora Road is named after a tank close by. A Tal (Tank) situated at the west side of the garden, is surrounded by hilly tract (part of the Delhi ridge) forms a Katora, bowl shaped natural depression, which gives street its name.

2) Cultural

Some street names which contain cultural characteristics or are indicative of peoples’ belief, faith, religious values, political ideology, history and events fall in this cultural group.

- 1) **Religious site-** the street is named after god, goddess, demon or saint.
 - **Kali Bari Marg-** The name comes from Kali Temple dating back to 1930s. Kali is the name of Goddess and ‘Bari’ is derived from the Arabic language which means ‘creator’. After several years of demands by the Bengali population living in the nearby areas the land was allotted on Mandir Marg for the construction of the temple. In 1931, it was shifted to its present location.
- 2) **Historical-** the Street is given name after some past events or historical monuments which are located close by in the neighbourhood. The streets have great historical value and

serve as memorials.

- a) **Named after Events-** this may include battles, war, epidemics or any other occurrence which great historical significance.
 - **Tees January Marg-** the name of the street commemorates the martyrdom of Gandhi, on 30th January 1948. Mahatma Gandhi spent last five months of his life as a guest of Birla family and was then later assassinated in the premises of the bungalow on this street. It was first Street to be renamed in 1948.
- b) **Named after Monuments/Landmarks-** this comprise of old monuments or landmarks after which the streets are known, as they provide accessibility to such places. Such names are retained even after the landmark disappears.
 - **Mandir Marg-** The Street take its name from the famous Laxmi Narayan Temple, also known as the Birla Mandir. It was built in 1939.
 - **Teen Murti Marg-** The street is named after three statues memorial by British sculptor, Leonard Jenings, built at the street junction. It comprises of the life size statues of three soldiers, built in 1922 in the memory of Indian soldiers from three princely states (Jodhpur, Mysore and Hyderabad) who served under British army during World War I. Therefore, the street commemorates the Teen Murti statue after which the Teen Murti Bhawan is named.
 - **Bangla Sahib Marg-** The street name comes from Bangla Sahib Gurudwara situated here. The eighth Sikh guru resided here. Originally it was only a Bungalow in 1664, but it was rebuilt in 1783 and current structure mostly built after 1947.

- **Bara Khamba Road-** The name of the street is derived from the 14th century tomb building from the Lodhi period called Bara Khamba. Bara Khamba means 12 pillars in Hindi and Urdu languages. The number 12 in the monument, an observation recorded is that Mughals were fond of mystical figures on their buildings as evidenced in Delhi, Agra and Lahore. Figure 12 in particular seem to have mystical significance to real time events such as 12 hours in the night and 12 hours in the day; 12 signs of Zodiac, 12 Apostles, 12 kind of men and women. 12 tribes and so forth. The name Bara Khamba road is thus derived from a twelve pillared house of the noble man. It was originally erected on this street, but now one can hardly find any traces.
 - **Panchkuian Marg-** It derives its name from five wells. Not so long ago, when the Delhi's underground water table was not good enough, there were five wells in the vicinity of what is today's Ramakrishna Ashram Marg Metro Station. The wells believed to be of Mughal era had water till about 1960s, but later gave way for road widening.
 - **Sansad Marg-** The street leads to Parliament House and hence named after it. It is also called Parliament Street. It is the only street with two official names. The Parliament Street Tehsil is named after this street.
 - **Safdarjung Road-** The Street is named after the Safdarjung Tomb which is located in the vicinity.
- c) **Named after historical function of the street-** such streets were established in the colonial past to serve a function and are still important nerves of the city in terms of usage, function and traffic.
- **Janpath-** The name literally means "Peoples' Way". The name of the street was changed in 1950s from Queensway. It was built as processional route, aligned north-south. It was an important part of Lutyens design of New Delhi, upon the inauguration of city in 1931. The street was intended to be used for display of British power by military parades and carriageway.
 - **Rajpath-** The street name is Hindi translation of its old name Kingsway. It is a ceremonial street in New Delhi that runs from Rashtrapati Bhawan to India Gate. It is used for the funeral processions of key political leaders. It was of central importance to the Lutyens Plan with a panoramic view of the city from Viceroy's Place. It was built as main processional route.
- 3) **Political-** The names are allotted for honouring Kingdoms, King/Queen who had once conquered the city and had contributed to give it the present form. Also, the streets are named to commemorate dignitaries for their contribution to the nation/city.
- a) **Kings and Kingdoms-** Some of the streets are named after kings and kingdoms which once ruled the place and had affected the cultural characteristics of the people living in the city.
- **Ashoka Road-** The street is named after 3rd BC ruler, Ashoka the great. Chandragupta Maurya was the ruler of Delhi in 4th Century. His city was located in the southern part of the city.
 - **Tughlaq Road-** The street is named after Tughlaq dynasty which ruled Delhi between 1321-1398. Tughlaqabad is a memorial of Delhi's embattled past. In 1334, Muhammad Bin Tughlaq built a new city called Jahapanah which was located between Mehrauli and Siri.
 - **Lodhi Road-** It is named after Lodhi dynasty. The Lodhi Gardens, which are also named after Lodhi dynasty are located in the vicinity of Lodhi Road. The street leads a 14th century dirt track connecting Bagh-I Jud (from which the present day Jor Bagh id derived) with the Ghiyathpur (now Nizamuddin), one of the earliest orchards mentioned in Sultanate records. This street has been used by invading armies, most famously by Timur's troops in 1398.
 - **Humayun Road-** The street is named after Mughal Emperor Humayun who ruled the city of Delhi. Humayun's Tomb is located in the vicinity, which is also named after the emperor, built in 1572.
 - **Akbar Road-** The street serves as a memorial to Mughal Emperor Akbar who ruled between 1655-1667.
 - **Prithviraj Road-** The street was named to commemorate Prithviraj Chauhan who was the last Hindu king who ruled ancient Delhi. The rule of Prithviraj Chauhan continued till 1192 AD.
- b) **Dignitaries-** Streets are named after distinguished individuals, sometimes people directly associated with the street. Naming a street after an individual is very common in many countries. However it also, controversial type of naming, especially in cases of renaming. It is also a way to eliminate a name that proves too controversial.
- **Baba Kharak Singh Marg-** The street was named to commemorate Baba Kharak Singh who was freedom fighter. He was also the president of Central Sikh League.
 - **Kasturba Gandhi Marg-** The street is one of the main access road to Connaught Place, named after social and political activist Kasturba Gandhi.
 - **Sardar Patel Marg-** The street name serves as a legacy to Sardar Vallabhai Patel, popularly known as the "Iron man". He was the first deputy Prime Minister of India and the founding father of the republic of India who played a prominent role in country's struggle for independence and supported integration of the nation as united one by proper guidance. He was addressed as Sardar, which means 'chief' in Hindi, Persian and Urdu.
 - **Tilak Marg-** It was named after freedom fighter freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak.
 - **APJ Abdul Kalam Road-** APJ Abdul Kalam road was renamed from Aurangzeb road on 29th August 2015, by New Delhi Municipal Corporation on request of Mahesh Giri (Bhartiya Janta Party member of the Indian Parliament for east Delhi). Mahesh Giri wrote "As a tribute to peoples' President, I propose to rename the Aurangzeb road in New Delhi to APJ Abdul Kalam road. In my

opinion, this will be a great way of preserving his memories and legacy forever’.

- **Dara Shikoh Road-** In 2017, Darjeeling road was renamed to Dara Shikoh road. New Delhi Municipal Corporation member and New Delhi Member of Parliament said that council had first come up with the proposal in 2014, when it considered renaming Aurangzeb road to Dara Shikoh road. Ms Lekhi said “However, former President APJ Abdul Kalam passed away then. So we decided to change Aurangzeb road’s name to honour him”. She added that the decision of the council to honour Dara Shikoh was made for “bringing Hindus and Muslims together”.
 - **Zakhir Hussain Marg-** In 1969, after the death of Zakhir Hussain, former President of India, Wellesly road was renamed to Dr. Zakhir Hussain Marg. His funeral procession was carried out on this Street on the way to Jamia Milia Islamia burial ground.
- c) **Message giving** – Such street names give a message to highlight the characteristics of usage of that area.
- **Lok Kalyan Marg-** In 2016, the name of Race Course road was changed to Lok Kalyan Marg. “There is nothing bigger than Lok Kalyan (Public Welfare) and everybody is inspired by it” said Bhartiya Janta Party lawmaker Meenakshi Lekhi. She had proposed the name ‘Ekatma Marg’ as a tribute to her party’s icon Deen Dyal Uppadhyaya, who wrote on the philosophy of “Ekatma Manav”. The Bhartiya Janta Party suggested a new name as a middle path after Mr Arvind Kejriwal came up with his own suggestion- Guru Gobind Singh Marg.
 - **Panchsheel Road-** It is located in Chanakyapuri Tehsil which is diplomatic enclave. The tehsil is home to foreign embassies. The street name is in sync with the home for foreign embassies to indicate peace among the nations. ‘Panchsheel’ translates to ‘five principles of peaceful co-existence’ which are-
 - Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty
 - Mutual non-aggression
 - Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs
 - Equality and cooperation for mutual benefit
 - Peaceful coexistence
 - **Shantipath-** Since the street is constructed in the diplomatic enclave, the name is given so as to inspire peace among different countries whose embassies are located in this area. ‘Shantipath’ translates to ‘Way to Peace’. It indicates direction towards peaceful existence.

3) Both Natural and Cultural

Mother Teresa Cres- The street is half-moon (crescent) in shape, which explains the use of crescent at the end of its name. Mother Teresa here is in reference to honour the social services conducted by her for the mankind.

Group of Street Names

Parliament Street or Sansad Marg is the only street which has two official names in New Delhi. Both these names are just

Hindi/English translation of each other. Although, street like Rajpath is also Hindi translation of its old English name Kingsway, but both of these two names were not adopted as official names. It is only in the case of above listed street that dual official names exist. Rajpath (Kingsway) and Janpath (Queensway) are known as Processional Routes. These streets were used by Britishers for parades and carriageways to display military power. These streets are still used by Government of India for republic day parades, funeral processions of dignitaries and Ceremonial purposes.

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