OF MUSES, MUSEUMS & MUSEOLOGY
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Message from the Vice Chancellor

The hunger to gain knowledge and enlighten has always been prevalent with the human community. For this enlightenment, the substantial source is a Museum, as it creates a platform, which promises to be communicating, educating as well as entertaining.

Since inception, museums have been famously known and operated as “storehouses” of historical objects. However, in present context the role of museums goes beyond just being storehouses or display tangibles. Today, the aim of museums is to educate its audience through linking the objects with the intangible stories behind them and making the museum visit relevant and entertaining.

The visitors come to museums expecting that the learning offered will get will not be in a didactic approach. The focus from conventional ways of learning has shifted to quick and convenient ways of gaining knowledge. Sufficing this need is challenging, as people not only want to learn, they want to experience learning in an entertaining manner.

It is time that the museums develop strong out-reach programmes to make the museum space and content livelier, relevant and offer non-formal learning.

To meet the international standard and reach out the public, Indian museums are putting their best effort by organizing timely exhibitions, some of which have been mobile in nature. Major Indian museums are also conducting workshops, lecture series and similar academic courses for the museum personnel and general public as well. Museum professionals are collecting knowledge from diverse sources to be imparted to the museum audiences and other researchers in different and interesting ways. The present volume, “Of Muses, Museums & Museology is a result of various researchers talking about the practices in the growth of Museums and Museology, especially in the Indian context.

I leave “Of Muses, Museums & Museology” to the readers with the avid wish that they read, understand and interpret in their own way.

Dr. B.R. Mani
Vice Chancellor, National Museum Institute
Director General, National Museum, New Delhi
Preface

The publication “Of Muses, Museum and Museology (2nd Series)” is in continuation with the book, “Of Muses, Museum and Museology (1st Series). The 1st series was a welcome initiative from the National Museum Institute. The 2nd series serves as a follow up for the prequel. Both the series welcomed researchers to write articles about the role of Museums and how they can be more relevant for today’s society.

The article ‘Revisiting Museum Education-Experience, Process, Pedagogy and Performance: Developing outreach agenda in Indian Museums-A theoretical Framework’ discusses the scope of Museum Education in Indian context. Of how various educational and communication theories can be implemented for Museum Education and help in making the museum outreach programmes stronger. The article offers various suggestions and models that can be implemented for imparting education through museums in a better way. This paper focuses on building tools that don’t just rely on imparting knowledge in a didactic way but focus on the whole experience of learning as well.

The article ‘Prospect of Conducting Visitor Studies at Mumtaz Mahal Archaeology Museum, Red Fort’ talks about how a visitor’s experience is important for a museum, and how that experience can be evaluated through “Visitor Studies”. This subject is vast and prevalent in other fields, still barely used in Indian Museums. In this article, a case study of Mumtaz Mahal Archaeology Museum, Red Fort is taken to elucidate the subject. In today’s world where museums face competition from other leisure and entertainment sources, museums have to prove themselves as places where people come to enjoy. The article further talks about analyzing both qualitative and quantitative approaches to study the visitors and do the needful, wherever needed.

To make sure that a museum is relevant for its society, most of the Indian Museums are trying to reach International Standards. At the same time, it is very important to ensure that the Indian Cultural Heritage is preserved and presented properly. This has been discussed through a case study in the article, ‘A Walk Through the Musical heritage of India: ‘Asavari’. This paper has discussed the importance and success of preserving the Musical Heritage of India done by ASAVARI: the gallery of musical instruments at Ravindra Bhawan, New Delhi. It has also discussed various kinds of instruments and how preserving the age-old jewels will be a benefit for the music industry in India. It further talks about how the gallery as a whole lacks some of the museological aspects; suggestions are given for the same.

Indian Cultural Heritage is enormous. It includes various elements since the beginning of Indian Civilization. The presence and mythological stories of Gods and Goddesses,
through various oral and written tools have been travelling through time. One such story is of Krishna, which is also talked about in the article ‘The Krishna Lore: A museum Perspective’. It talks about how Sri Krishna Museum, Kurukshetra, Haryana tells the lore in a unique way at an unusual place through 6 different galleries. Although the subject of the museum is a religious figure, still the museum has managed to keep the museum as a secular place. At the same time, as it is a theme based museum, the museum focuses on dealing with both tangible and intangible aspects of Krishna lore, helping in making the museum more interactive, entertaining and learning. The article, ‘Relevance of Natural History Collection across Epochs’ suggests that the use and need to preserve Natural History Collection has been happening since pre-historic times. The use of plants and animals was essential for survival of the human and they collected them from various sources for varied reasons. It also talks about how the relationship between man and nature evolved through ages. The initial museums in the world and in India began as having the Natural History Collection only. It is sad to see that in Indian context, the focus has entirely shifted to collecting, preserving and exhibiting only cultural objects. Very less attention is given to the Natural History Collections. Thus, it is important to add on more tools for the Natural History Museums to be relevant and communicate well with its audience. The most important role of Natural History Museum in the present scenario would be to cater to the environment issues and this can be done in the most efficient way, if the visitors are rolled in. If Community Participation happens in Natural History Museums, it will be a holistic approach serving various fields at once.

An extensive study of the history and making of Indian Miniature Paintings has been presented extensively through an article ‘The Preparation of Indian Miniature Paintings-a short note’. Each and every step of the preparation of the intricate Miniature Paintings is discussed in the article. The history and evolution of changes in the process of the painting have been duly noted in the article, especially the Mughal Miniature painting, which went through various changes under various Mughal Emperors. Different schools of Miniature Paintings have also been discussed in the article. The whole process of preparing the colour, base for the painting, brushes, etc. have also been brought in light, as they are the important factors of preparing Miniature Paintings. ‘Art of Calligraphy and Beyond: An Exhibition for Creating Cultural Awareness’ is an attempt to show the art of Calligraphy, its origin, history and the way it is done on various artefacts. It has been discussed through a case study of an exhibition ‘Art of Calligraphy and Beyond’ that planned and displayed the Arabian and Persian Calligraphy in a way that it was the most relevant to the audience. The exhibition imparted the knowledge of Calligraphy through two workshops as well, giving the whole exhibition an interactive and hands on appeal. The exhibition and the article were attempts to revive the fading art of Calligraphy. ‘Care of Acrylic Paintings
in Art Galleries-A Survey Report’ has viewed the pros and cons of the usage of Acrylic paints in the paintings. Special attention has been given to the way Acrylic Paintings are stored, how they may or may not cause damage and what all preventive measures can be taken to save the paintings from any damage at all. For this, few of the major art galleries have been surveyed and compared in this article. Suggestions are given wherever needed, especially for the tropical climatic conditions in India.

‘Of Muses, Museums and Museology’ provides various articles with extensive research in the field of Museology. The articles have been combined together as various colours to a rainbow, making it a guide in a nutshell for laymen as well as researchers. The book provides a vast and versatile research in the field of museums and museology. This is indeed an academic gem from National Museum Institute.

Manvi Seth
Acknowledgement

The Department of Museology, National Museum Institute is happy to launch the second issue of the Research Series “Of Muses, Museums & Museology”.

This research series intends to give an opportunity to the research scholars and students of the Institute to share their research work and experience. It is hoped that this academic initiative of the Institute will be beneficial to its students and museum practitioners.

This research series is the result of ideas, untiring efforts and encouragement of the staff and students at National Museum Institute. I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to all who extended their helping hands at different times towards the design, compilation and publication of this research series.

This series would not have been possible without the constant backing and encouragement of the Vice Chancellor of the National Museum Institute, Dr. B.R. Mani. Prof. Anupa Pande, Director, National Museum Institute and Head of the Department, History of Art and Prof. Manager Singh, Head of the Department, Conservation have been very supportive of this idea. I would like to thank Dr. P.K. Sharma, Registrar National Museum Institute and Mr. Ravindra Goel, Finance Officer, National Museum Institute for their kind support. I convey my gratitude to all the senior members of the staff for their cooperation.

I would like to thank my colleague Juhi Sadiya, Assistant Professor, Department of Museology and Dr. V. Kalyani, Assistant Registrar, National Museum Institute. I would also like to thank Ananya Sharma, Ankan Guha, Huma Khan and Sakshi Kukreti, Research Assistants, Department of Museology NMI for their efforts.

My sincere gratitude extends to all the students of the National Museum Institute who have been constantly pushing us to newer horizons.

Manvi Seth
Abstract

This paper highlights the government’s ongoing efforts to promote museum education and capacity building of Indian museum professionals, and offers suggestions to further develop museum education in a holistic manner. By considering outreach more as an extension of the museum’s educational role, Indian museologists will be able to enhance access to those who are unable to visit museums and also contribute to the growth of a new museum pedagogy and the cultural democratization of the museum. A deeper understanding of various educational and communication theories will help them develop programmes to meet the needs of target groups that museums want to serve in accordance with their mission.
Introduction

For generations, museum collections have triggered curiosity and put many on the path to self-discovery and life-long learning at a global level. Moreover, for their part, museums have embraced education as a mission in reaching out to the larger society. In India, premier museums like the National Museum, New Delhi; Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai and Indian Museum, Kolkata, among others, offer workshops and activities, talks and lectures, for students and educators alike as well as the general public including those with special needs.

A recent British Council report sounded an alarm about education in museums and a lack of interest in museum studies as seen in India’s educational curriculum. “Very few museums have dedicated education departments or staff...Museums are generally not part of the curriculum of the educational system across India,” the report says.1

The harsh comment is not off the mark. But importantly, policy makers in India already have outlined steps to usher in museum reforms. A focus on museum education and outreach is included as part of a capacity building exercise for Indian museum professionals.2

This paper aims to highlight the ongoing efforts to improve museum education and make suggestions to further develop it in a holistic manner. By reaching out to those who are unable to come to the museum, Indian museum professionals will be able to foster the growth of a new museum pedagogy and help the cultural democratization of the museum. In order to develop museum outreach that can meet the needs of target groups that museums want to serve in accordance with their mission, museum professionals need to develop a deeper understanding of various educational and communication theories. Hooper-Greenhill mentions, “museum education is part of a cultural institution surviving within a contradictory and unequal social framework.”3

A familiarity with the theoretical models of education and communication will help museum professionals apply the knowledge of cognitive development and teaching practices to foster lifelong learning that will focus on experience, process, pedagogy and performance in outreach programmes. Good outreach will complement good in-reach programmes and vice-versa. It will promote the educational goal of the museum as well. An increased sensitivity to multiple approaches and perspectives to learning
will help them engage diverse community groups. It will also help museum educators to work together for professional development within the museum community.4

**Museum Education**

Museum education in India is at a nascent stage, because our museum model continues to remain collection oriented. Also, as most museums are funded by the government, there is no push for innovation -- often attributed to a lack of initiative at the leadership level and an absence of trained staff. A museum professional, George Jacob once told *Times of India*;

“There is an obvious problem of inadequate resource allocation. But more than the money, the problem is with the lack of proper training of staff, often stemming from a systemic vacuum in informed leadership and creative vision to bring about transformative change,”.5

The Indian government’s 14-point museum reform agenda is geared to upgrade human resources in Indian museums: To broaden the vision of museum professionals and to help them improve skills, leadership and management qualities to international standards. The aim is to provide them with world-class training so that they can inculcate best practices for collection management, design, marketing and providing access to those who can’t visit the museum. One of the core areas for attention is museum education and outreach, and to help Indian museum professionals with this, the government has offered new financial assistance to museums.6 Importantly, the most recent Memorandum of Understanding agreements between the Ministry of Culture, Government of India and about a dozen prominent museums in India to make outreach programming a key museum performance indicator.7

**Outreach as education**

The preliminary research for this paper shows Indian museums, particularly those with collections of art and archaeology, have largely ignored outreach. In many cases, a museum’s existing outreach programmes may consist of random group activities that are rarely, if ever, evaluated for efficacy on a regular basis.

Museum outreach can help India’s diverse social, educational and cultural needs as the nation modernizes. It can help to contribute towards social unity by showcasing
a link between the past and the present, as related to the need to preserve Indian arts and crafts traditions. It can be crucial in triggering curiosity in young minds and complementing formal education systems.

Not many Indian museums have developed relationship with educational institutions to promote learning. Various studies show that only few teachers rely on museum visits to supplement their teaching, particularly of history. History teaching, particularly in Indian schools, has suffered a great deal with its singular emphasis on “read, recall and recite” approach. There is no attention paid to “process, critical thinking, communication, or library research.”

Museum outreach is also about providing access to those who are unable to visit museums. The growing importance of the museum as a public-service institution that uses “it’s very special competencies in dealing with objects to contribute positively to the quality of individual human lives and to enhance the well-being of human communities”, has turned the site for informal learning into an instrument of social change.

While scholars may continue to debate the usefulness of a museum’s social role and the museum’s mission to promote scholarship, it’s hard to deny the role of outreach programmes (as participants come to see museums as cultural resources) in creating awareness about museum collections and develop audiences for the future. It is possible for museums to tie in their programmes to help develop social campaigns that are required in a developing society -- be it about eradicating gender discrimination or educating the public about a cleaner environment, or developing sensitivity to the changing urban landscape and respect for monuments.

Being conversant with modern applied theories of education and communication will help Indian museum professionals to think critically about their instructional strategies and provide a shared vocabulary to educators, in particular, as they develop both outreach and in-reach programmes. “Theories that are field tested and vetted by other educators show that a successful educational encounter can be repeated in different disciplines, contexts and cultures, and over the course of time.” This means they will also be able to design outreach with better outcomes that are measurable and open to improvements.
Learning, knowledge and meaning-making

Scholars agree that primarily educational theory includes two major ideas viz, how do people learn (theory of learning) and what they are trying to learn (knowledge), and education practice entails a pedagogy that complements what is being taught. Education theorists have also suggested that knowledge exists independent of the knower and that knowledge is constructed individually and socially either through stimulus-response or action. Since the early 20th century, museums have used “object-based” learning that relies on “inquiry and problem solving”. That the learner’s mind is active and that previous experience, culture, disposition, and development of the learner, influence learning. It is called constructivism -- a combination of active learning (Learning Theory) and personal meaning making (Epistemology). John Dewey, who emphasized experiential learning, has particularly influenced museum educators. These educators following Dewey’s approach try to make experiences not only “hands-on” but also “minds-on.” Thus, learning - a constant restructuring of the mind -- is an active process that requires engagement.

Issues in the development of cognitive representation or how children learn new concepts may seem to converge in the works of educational psychologists such as Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner, because they all value, though to varying degrees, prior experience; physical action; interaction with the environment; use of the senses; emotion; social relationships and personal meaning, as factors. Piaget talks of cognitive development in a child as a sequence of discrete phases. However, he doesn’t view it as a gradual accumulation of knowledge or skills, but rather as a sequence of structural transformations. He takes these changes to be abrupt and intermittent and they affect a child’s way of thinking and construction of meaning as the child deals with experiential learning at different environmental events.

For Vygotsky, true education relates to the development of a child’s learning abilities. It is not the mere learning of specific knowledge and skills, but the capacity to think clearly and creatively, plan and communicate, relying on a set of cultural tools that are important. “Piaget placed the emphasis on structural aspects and on the essentially universal laws (of biological origin) of development, whereas Vygotsky stressed the contribution of culture, social interaction and the historical dimension of mental development.”
According to Vygotsky, one who emphasized the importance of meaningful action to a person, it is believed that humans while interacting with the environment have the ability to change it.

Piaget also said that education should go hand in hand with the actual cognitive level of the child. This implies that the museum professionals must understand their target demographics and the social and cultural capital they possess before designing outreach programmes. The need is to create the right environment, where the emphasis is on engagement to help learners make their own meanings. It is about a process that is action oriented and performance based and evokes in participants a sense of doing something meaningful.

Borrowing the concept of “experience economy” from business as advanced by Pine and Gilmore (1999), museums can engage potential “users” by transforming events into happy memories, where “memory” becomes a unique product or an experience. The value-added by museum programmes using four realms of an experience -- entertainment, education, escape and aestheticism -- can be a valuable source of long-term support for the institution in the community.

For example, one can develop a photo documentation project along the lines of the Pine and Gilmore model for the urban youth in New Delhi that can turn them into potential museum users and explorers of history and culture. As part of the outreach programme, the participants can be asked to use their smartphones to take pictures of their neighborhoods on the theme of “Old and New” with a promise that “good
ones” will be exhibited publicly. The photo taking exercise, easy and simple, would end up teaching them basic photo composition and perspective. Later, the programme coordinator can direct the participants to look for changes over time and talk about them. It can be complemented with historical walks in select areas. Participants will be able to make connections with existing knowledge and experiential frameworks. This unpressured learning offering a broad canvas for the appreciation of history, architecture, urban growth, photography and even community building could easily be an entry point for participants to become interested in history. Such a programme will especially be useful for National Museum to draw the attention of non-museum goers to its collections. This interaction potentially can help museum professionals to develop effective in-reach programmes as well, and allow them to fine-tune their approach as to what works.

More than two decades ago, Dahiya suggested that the inclusion of Archaeology in secondary school curricula would help students get a better sense of a shared past, and showed through an experiment that field and museum trips offer tools to enhance students’ abilities to understand history and material changes. As possible solutions, she also suggested setting up of school museums and the use of replica and models of archaeological and historical artefacts.¹

Here again, museums with collections of historical artefacts can use this opportunity to expand their education missions by setting up partnerships with schools. Outreach professionals can coordinate with history teachers, develop loan kits with replicas of historical objects and organize field trips. They could even develop simulated computer games with period settings. That could be a great draw to spark curiosity and keep students involved.

In the United States, a project to encourage learning among children was seen in a partnership between the Science Museum of Minnesota and the St. Paul School District. The programme relied on the “the exhibit development process used by museums and its attendant activities - collecting, research, observation, experimentation, interpretation, and presentation” to stimulate children’s creativity and critical thinking

so that the children can understand an interdisciplinary framework for more effective learning in classrooms. Museum educators and parent volunteers helped children through the learning process, bridging the gap between formal and informal education and instilling in kids a love for lifelong learning.²

People learn from experience, through participation in events and through reflective observation opined Kolb, referring to his two primary dimensions of learning. “The first dimension represents the concrete experiencing of events at one end and abstract conceptualization at the other. The other dimension has active experimentation at one extreme and reflective observation at the other. Thus, in the process of learning, one moves in varying degrees from actor to observer and from specific involvement to general analytic detachment.”¹⁸

A case for the use of multiple learning approaches for effective education and to showcase respect for cultural pluralism is seen at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at the University of Oregon. The inquiry-based approach -- used to develop “Family Backpack,” a flexible self-guided museum tour to fit a family’s needs -- helps bridge international cultures through the arts, provides a place for discovery and education, and promotes community building.¹⁹ Lee says the museum draws from various educational theories including Howard Gardner’s Multiple intelligence theory -- that people learn through “linguistic, logical mathematical, musical, visual/spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal” abilities, the 4MAT Method and the Visual Thinking Strategies.²⁰

The 4MAT Method, developed by Bernice McCarthy, is “an eight-step cycle of instruction that capitalizes on individual learning styles and brain dominance processing preferences.”²¹ McCarthy identified four types of learners: innovative learners, analytic learners, common sense learners and dynamic learners. She says different individuals perceive and process experience in different preferred ways. Essential to quality learning is an awareness in the learner of his/her own preferred mode; becoming comfortable with his/her own best ways of learning; and being helped to develop a learning repertoire, through experience with alternative modes.

The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) is a method of inquiry developed by Abigail Housen and Philip Yenawine that relies on open group discussions to explore meaning in art. It helps “viewers develop a rapport with art and increase their aesthetic understanding -- a broad and deep amalgam of intellect and emotions” and also expands their ability “to solve problems cooperatively.” “Watching VTS discussions, one sees an exciting process of discovery that sticks with students as both an experience and a strategy, and interactions among diverse beings that stress individuality as an essential ingredient in group productivity.”

Elliot Eisner sees the arts or the aesthetic mode of learning as contributing to the creation of mind, becoming an important part of education itself. He talks about how human cognition helps individuals learn because of their ability to experience different qualities of the world they pick up through their senses -- a follow up development based on the establishment of self-in-relation to the world. “For Eisner, the essence of mind is reflected in the process of making qualitative distinctions in response to the environment, forming concepts, and representing those concepts. Accordingly, he says that the arts play a critical role in the development of mind because they fundamentally engage a process in which ‘perception is refined, imagination stimulated, judgment fostered, and technical skills developed’ — all of which directly contribute to Eisner’s conception of mind.”

Liz Hall highlighted various projects in the 1990s in the UK, particularly the “Surprising Regions of the Mind” at the Mappin Art Gallery in Sheffield that used art to initiate a dialogue among a marginalized group-- people living with mental health issues. It was a more integrated approach to help remove psychological barriers so that individual users could “use museums on their own terms.” As part of the National Gallery’s Take Art project, education workers took prints of art from the famous art gallery for students in 14 London hospitals and sought their reactions with the belief that art is therapeutic. It was a way of initiating a dialogue with the paintings and art in general. It reflects Wilbur Schramm’s communication model where messages are decoded and encoded and the dynamic interpretation aids the construction of meaning within the shared field of experience.

A major challenge of outreach programmes is to find a balance between feasibility of design and taking care of the needs of the potential audience. For example, art outreach
programmes can differ in their approach to delivery, their programmatic content and their approach to participant involvement.\textsuperscript{27}

It would not be out of place, hence to suggest, the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, to develop outreach programmes for art appreciation and to understand the relevance of modern art as investment given the popular global interest in contemporary

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**Schramm’s Model of Communication, 1954**

![Schramm's Model of Communication, 1954](image)


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Indian artists. By combining art and financial literacy, the programme may draw a large number of people, who depending on their interest may be able to focus on one (art) or the other (financial) component of the programme.

A growing interest in creativity and innovation, particularly in the business schools in the US and China, has come to recognize a designer’s fundamental skills and cognitive processes, particularly holistic thinking, empathy, imagination, creativity, visualizing problems and solutions. Design-based learning is more consistent with the digital age marked by learning through sound, word and images in varying modes.

New pedagogical practices that emphasize holistic thinking, active learning, visual media and problem-solving is a way of educating that can safely be used in museum programmes. Incorporating digital technology is suggested to enhance the storytelling and live demonstration of arts and crafts at the Crafts Museum in New Delhi. Both visual, aural and hands-on exercises will promote engagement of participants. They will be able to develop a sense of tradition and its place in Indian culture.

Epilogue

This conceptual outline to help improve the educational component of museums may appear to be ambitious, but it’s in line with the “post museum”. It is geared toward encouraging collaborations in meaning-making, facilitating universal access, and highlighting the public service component of the institution. The ideas presented in this paper are untested and need to be fine-tuned, particularly keeping in view the mission and aims of the museum, and the availability of resources to design and offer programmes for the intended demographics to promote education.
Endnotes


19. Ibid.

References


The tradition of Indian Miniature paintings can be traced back to the period when Mughals arrived in India. Before that, this art form could be seen on palm-leaves and on cloths as the Prajnanaparmita and Kalpasutra text around the 12th century CE. But in terms of paintings, the murals of Ajanta caves have an unforgettable attraction for all viewers and the artistic style of Ajanta paintings is an inspiration to many artists itself. The miniature paintings of central India were inspired by 12th century’s palm-leaf manuscripts but lacked proportion and perspective which made text the prime factor to understand the paintings. With the arrival of Mughals in India, the study of these miniature paintings became intense as it was influenced by the Persian art.
The tradition of Indian Miniature paintings began with the arrival of Mughals in India. Before that, the art form could be seen on palm-leaves and on cloth as *Prajnanaparmita* and *Kalpasutra* text around 12th century CE. Prior to this, the art in India was best exemplified through the murals of Ajanta caves. These caves have left an indelible impression in the minds of viewers and proved to be an inspiration to many artists.

The miniature paintings of central India were inspired by 12th century’s palm-leaf manuscripts but lacked proportion and perspective which made text the prime factor to understand the paintings. With the arrival of Mughals in India, the study of these miniature paintings became intense as it was influenced by Persian art. Persian miniature paintings have different features and styles. When Mughals came to India, they combined the Indian styles with Persian and created a new style, which came to be known as the Mughal style of Miniature Paintings.

The Mughal kings contributed to the development of miniature paintings in India. Babur, who established the Mughal Empire in India, ruled for four years. He was not only fond of art and literature, but was also a great poet. His autobiography, written in Turkish and later translated in Persian by his grandson Akbar the great, is a testimony to his love towards art. Babur mentioned in his autobiography about the art and artists of India and of his native, Persia. He mentioned the great artist of Persia named Bihzad known as Raphael of East.

The advent of Mughal style in Indian art can be marked from the period starting from the reign of Babur’s son Humayun, after his return to India from Persia to re-claim his Delhi throne from then ruling Sher Shah Suri. Humayun was earlier defeated by Sher Shah Suri and went back to the court of Shah Tamasp in Persia for rescue. In the court of Shah Tamasp, two Persian painters named Mir Sayyed Ali and Abd-ud-samad were recruited. Humayun learnt painting in their supervision and before going back to India, he convinced Shah Tahmasp to let him take both the artists to India with him as a return gift. This changed the face of Indian Miniature Paintings. The son of Humayun and real founder of Mughal Empire, Akbar, was a great patron of art who rewarded artists for their efforts. He held the throne since the age of fourteen and spent his lifetime fighting wars and expanding his empire. He was similarly tender for art and culture. The best works of art were produced during Akbar’s reign like *Akbarnama*, *Anvar-suheli*, *Hamzanama*, *Mughal Ramayana*, *Baburnama* etc. Thousands of artists in the
court of Akbar worked under the supervision of Mir Sayad Ali and Abd-ud-samad. The hub of miniature painting studios was situated in Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. (Plate I)

Akbar used to give awards and sometimes Mansabdari to the painters on their amazing artworks or masterpieces\(^2\). The studio works flourished with the artists producing their best artwork under rulers who were patrons of art and culture.

Work of Indian Miniature Painting was on its peak at the time of Jahangir, successor of Akbar, who was fond of art especially paintings and was a painter and poet himself as he had seen and learnt all kinds of art in his childhood. He was a lover of birds and animals and hence most of the paintings of his period bear presence of birds, animals, flora & fauna. The visibility of broad borders (Hashiyas) can also be noticed in the paintings of his period. Another perspective was also displayed in the paintings of Jahangir period as European art also influenced the work of artists.

Many past instances indicate the reason behind the European influence in the Mughal Miniature Paintings. It is said that when the Portuguese came to India, they sent a copy of painted Bible to the court of Akbar with the hope of converting the local people to Christians, but with the help of these paintings, artists started learning the aspects of European Art. Eventually, perspective and proportion became visible in the Indian Miniature paintings and the full fledged presence of such influence could be seen in the paintings of Jahangir Period. It can also be identified with a portrait painting of Jahangir in which he holds the picture of Madonna in his hand. This highly sophisticated painting can be appreciated in the Indian Miniature Painting’s Gallery of the National Museum, New Delhi. This painting is also the evidence of the visit of Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador of King James I in 1615. He stayed in his court for three years and brought some of the paintings on the theme of Christianity\(^3\). By this time, miniature paintings had become a usual part of the court of these emperors and the studios became Tasveerkhanas, which were painting studios/galleries where the emperors used to take distinguished guests for a formal visit and inspection.\(^4\)

When Shahjahan held the throne, the focus from the painting studios then shifted towards architecture. The condition of paintings became worse at the time of Shah Jahan’s son and successor, Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb was a shrewd politician. He showed little interest in artistic endeavors. As a result, the artists of Mughal court started taking shelters in other provinces and began mixing Mughal influences in the provinces they
Plate I: Work in an Imperial Atelier Folio 196 from an Akhlaq-I-Nasiri Manuscript; Painters of the Akbar Period c. 1590/95; Aga Khan Museum Collection
worked in. This new style came to be known as Provincial Mughal style of Paintings. The main centre of these paintings was Oudh (also known as Awadh, a region presently part of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India). Some Rajput paintings also fell in the category of Provincial Mughal style.

The other type of Indian Miniature Paintings is the Deccan Miniature paintings which too originated between 16th and 19th centuries and contained the influence of indigenous Deccan art along with the reflection of Persian, Iranian and Turkish art. The migration of Mughal painters to different provinces and states led to the disappearance of the Mughal court and a new style of paintings originated.

The Rajasthani Miniature Paintings was one such style and had different sub-schools in it such as Mewar, Bundi-Kotah, Bikaner, Kishangarh, Jodhpur and Jaipur. These schools were denoted by their different subject matter based on mythology and their daily lives. The system of taking refuge in other states and courts reached the hilly areas as well and the art form that came out is known as Pahari School of Miniature Paintings. This style flourished in the environs of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. The softness of features and lines makes this school different from others. However, the subject matter would be similar.

One could say that this vast journey of the evolution and development of miniature paintings was not simple. The preparation of miniature painting is a time consuming and an arduous task for the artists. A finished miniature painting passes through different stages of preparation. It is not only restricted to drawing and painting, instead it first involves the preparation of the base on which the painting has to be drawn. The paintings that have been produced 300-400 years back are still surviving because of their strong base. The grounding of the base was another challenge for the artists as they themselves had to prepare colours, brushes and paper for the artwork. (Plate II)

As mentioned earlier, the Mughal Miniature Paintings were different from the existing miniature paintings in India due to the use of different material, i.e., paper. Paper was introduced in India after the advent of Mughals. It was not known to Indians, except the Gujarati traders who transacted with other countries through sea. The paper was manufactured in Sialkot, (presently in Pakistan) where Mughals established a manufacturing unit of paper.
The paper for Rajasthani paintings was imported from Sanganer, a small place near Jaipur (Amber). The paintings have a base of Wasli or Basli on which artists drew image that had four or five layers of paper. The paper is little buffy in colour. Separate labourers, hired for preparing Wasli were known as Wasligaar, but later on, artists themselves started preparing the base. After pasting the layers of paper, the Wasli was dried in shade.

The technique of making paintings by the Indian Miniaturists was quite uncommon in the West. They used natural pigment, which was generally mixed with Gum Arabic as binder media and applied with water most often on thin layer of paper. Each layer of the paper was carefully burnished. The burnishing process was essential to produce shiny surface of the paper. It is done by placing the paper on flat hard base i.e. marble, ivory or glass and an egg shaped Agate stone was stroked horizontally and vertically on the reverse side of the paper using both hands. The process was repeated during the entire course of painting after each layer of colour was applied on it. Only the gold layered surface of painting at the end of the process was polished with small piece of Agate stone from front. Very often, the thin layers were pasted on the Wasli.

The method of preparing colours is another interesting aspect for the Indian miniaturists. They used organic, mineral, synthetic, earthy colours, which they obtained from nature. The pigments could be minerals extracted from stone including Lapis-Lazuli (blue), malachite (Green), cinnabar (Red); metal colours i.e. tin and gold etc.; earthy colours i.e. calcium carbonate, red and yellow ochre;
organic material i.e. lamp-black, ivory-charcoal, indigo, red lac dye and gamboge (orange/saffron) and synthetic pigments i.e. copper-oxide (black), smalt (cobalt blue), vermilion (scarlet red), verdigris (green), zinc and lead-white. (Plate III)

The Indian miniaturists/painters were aware of the quality and quantity of the colours, therefore they knew about the possible permutations and combinations and the right proportions to get variety of colours. Of all these pigments, the so called ‘Indian Yellow’ colour, usually known as peori or gau goli, was famous for its production method. It was prepared with cow urine. For this colour, the cows were fed with mango leaves in high amount which helped them to produce yellow urine. After boiling the same, Indian Yellow or peori or gau goli came up. It was later banned by the government as it resulted in development of liver disease in cows. (Plate IV)

The Indian painters used to sit on the floor and keep a small table/board bent on their thigh to sketch the artwork in a relaxed pose. The Indian miniaturists usually made free-hand style sketches and drawings. In the sketches made by the Indian red
(Gairika) colour, the oxidized iron shade was not mixed with any gum or adhesive as it can also be erased for any alteration in the painting. The sketch was finished with black colour as it is required to complete the drawing in dark. The black colour has been used in Mughal style for monochromic paintings and calligraphic work\textsuperscript{10}.

The Qalam (brush) used by these artists was made up of the hair of squirrel’s tail for fine outlines in paintings. The major work was done by the large brushes, which were made from the hair inside the ears of calves and medium-sized brushes were made from goat’s hair\textsuperscript{11}. (Plate V)

After completing the drawing, artists applied a thin layer of white colour (Khadiya) over the sketch, as the lines would fade but stay visible to the artist. This first coating was necessary to paste other paints over the drawing. The prepared colours discussed above were applied over this coating as per requirement. The master painter used to put one stroke of each required colour in certain places on the painting and accordingly all colours were filled in the paintings. (See Plate VI Fig-1 & Fig-2)

The work of gold colour took place in later stages, as it was required to fill it in the jewellery and other decorations on the paintings. The artists used different terms for different work on the painting. The text to be written in the end was usually written by the calligraphist. The next level was to provide the finishing touch by the master artist and the same paintings were sent to the binder to prepare an album, if the painting belonged to some sort of series.

The fine paintings used to be finished in six stages after preparation of wasli and burnishing the paper. They are as below:

1. The painting began with a freehand drawing in red ochre or black colour (charcoal)
2. A thin layer of white colour was applied over the drawing and if required, the lines were redrawn as after putting the layer with the main drawing still visible.
3. The human figures, landscapes and surroundings were drawn. The face of human figures was finished first.
4. Before filling the colours, the excessive white colour was erased with a sharp knife and the surface was burnished again by agate stone.
5. One-by-one, the pigments were applied in thin layer and left to be dried. The picture was then burnished from reverse side again and followed by the second coat of pigments followed by burnishing.
Plate IV: Artist Preparing Puree (yellow colour) from cow dung Mewar, Rajasthan, c. 1850 BCE.

Plate V: Brushes made of squirrel's tail hair Studio of Padmashree Awardee Shri Tilak Gitai Jaipur

Plate VI; Figure 1: Appropriate colours were indicated on the drawing for guiding the pupil to finish it accordingly. Kotah, Rajasthan, c. 1750-60 BCE

Plate VI; Figure 2: The miniature finished by using colours as indicated by the master artist. Kotah, Rajasthan, c. 1750-60 BCE
6. When all the colouring was finished, the outlines were traced and all detailing work, i.e. shading and depth was done on the painting. The gold work was finally applied on jewellery and decoration along with the touch of white drops on pearls and background. The process of applying gold leaf is another aspect, which was known as suikari (needle work). (Plate – VII)

In this way, the painting finally gets prepared and ready for being attached in an album if it was part of a series.

The tracing process also took place later on with the use of deer skin and the perforated outlines were completed to create copies of a single painting. The significance of mechanics, can also be seen in the world of miniature paintings.

The paintings produced by painters does not involve only technical processes but also the morality viz. their honesty, their belief in their revered deities for giving them this gift of producing magical art work. This is what their source of income had been as artists in the past, surviving merely on the earned reward and money for their art work.

The miniature paintings are still well known everywhere around the world and people research this fantastic form of art work which was on its peak in early stages. The more these miniature paintings are researched, the more scientific they appear.
Endnotes

http://www.rietberg.ch/media/804233/technique_of_indian_painting.pdf
9. Ibid.
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We humans have a deeply curious nature. Sometimes our curiosity leads us in doing completely unproductive things and we just love to know the answers to things, even if there’s no obvious benefit. But this curiosity also draws people to explore and learn about the role and significance of a particular thing, for instance, people started to explore natural world, millions of years ago. In every society, through the ages, people have been using plants, animals and/or their products as essential elements for their survival which defines the relationship between man and nature in the spatio-temporal context. Later, people themselves began to collect as an instinctive desire to possess natural curiosities such as corals, shells, minerals, plants, animals and their body parts i.e. bones, horns, teeth etc. Subsequently museums were conceived where evidences of Natural History and its relationship with society were collected, preserved and decoded. Most of the museums in India and abroad started with the collection of Natural History. However, the transformation from collection-oriented museums to one that are mostly focused on the concepts and don’t have much specimens to display, has brought about the need to sustain public interest. So, what is the potential of Natural History museums at present? Is there any specific role of Natural History museum in our society today? How will museums present the relevance of their Natural History collections and thrive in a changing world? This paper aims to explore significant uses of Natural History collection to meet present and future environmental challenges. This paper also discusses the social relevance of Natural History collection across epochs.
We humans have a deeply curious nature. Sometimes our curiosity leads us in doing completely unproductive things and we just love to know the answers to things, even if there's no obvious benefit. But this curiosity also draws people to explore and learn about the role and significance of a particular thing. It was also because of curiosity that people started to explore natural world, millions of years ago. In fact, the quest for Natural History collection is not a result of urbanisation, it can be traced back to prehistoric societies, where understanding the natural world such as usefulness of plants as food and medicine and observing animal behaviour was must for their survival.

In every society, through the ages, people have been using plants, animals and/or their products as essential elements for their survival which defines the relationship between man and nature in the spatio-temporal context. These natural products provided context for societies to interact through which objects of natural origin pass among people. For instance, throughout the Paleolithic period, humans generally lived as nomadic hunter-gatherers and they survived by gathering plants and hunting wild animals. They used stones and bones as tools. Bones were also required for making shelters as evident from the research article ‘Paleolithic Archaeology: The search for our Human Heritage’, which reflects that due to lack of building materials on the cold steppe of Central Europe, shelters were made of large bones from woolly mammoths.

Similarly, prehistoric cave paintings contain evidences that reflect role and usefulness of nature at that time. Prehistoric men painted their caves using natural colour extracted from flora. In these cave paintings, animals being common subjects that give the evidence of naturalistic images while humans mainly appear as images of hands which reveals that Natural History collection was of utmost importance since the prehistoric times. Apart from decoration purpose, these paintings were also a means of communicating their stories of daily experiences to others.

Mutual dependency of nature and human is evident from the transition of Late Paleolithic to early Mesolithic cultures, which is strongly associated with the major environmental and climatic changes which brought about changes in the life style of Paleolithic people. This period is marked with melting of ice sheets which resulted in comparatively warm climate and which led to the increase in the variety of flora & fauna and made it possible for humans to move to new areas. Hunting and gathering of food became easier and human survival rate increased. This adaptation
to nature is evidenced by the development of microliths, curved backed points and crude flat bone harpoons and pebbles with geometric drawings. Mesolithic period transformed the hunter gatherers to farmers.

The Neolithic period saw the development of agricultural practices, domestication, communities, management of plants and animals, religious belief and artistic styles. People relied on agriculture, surplus for food thus existed only where production of agriculture surplus was easy.

These primitive understandings and usage of Natural History resulted in a more formalized investigation around 3,500 to 3,000 B.C.E. in Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Indus Valley civilizations, which produced the material evidences of the same. Settlement pattern of the early civilizations reflect that natural resources were crucial for the survival of these civilizations because rivers were responsible for providing a source of water, irrigation for good farmland and a way for people to trade with other people through water transportation. For instance, Mesopotamian culture is linked with the Euphrates and Tigris River, Egyptians with the Nile River, Indus with the Indus River and Chinese civilisation with Yellow river.

Religious belief also reflects the importance of Natural History collections. For example, people use flora and fauna as offerings to their Gods. Many religious rituals, motives and iconographic representation are portrayed by flora and fauna. Natural History is also being used in healing practices. All these examples reflect that cultural, religious and social practices are engaged with natural wealth. The concept of exploration, collection and usage of Natural History products was prevalent even when people did not realize the significance of Natural History.

In ancient Greek culture, Natural History was the main point of discussion among great philosophers. Pre–Socratic philosophers also discussed natural phenomena. Starting from the worship of the Earth as a goddess, they proceeded to examine its position in the Cosmos, proposing a spherical shape for our planet. They assumed one element as the basis for everything in the Universe – this element was water for Thales, air for Anaximenes, infinity for Anaximander and fire for Heraclitus.

Three great philosophers of ancient Greece: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle discussed Natural History among their philosophical discussions. Socrates was not as interested
about the nature of the universe as in questions like, “What sort of life should we lead?” Plato, student of Socrates presents the ‘Theory of Forms’ and argued that purely mechanical explanations never provide the reasons why things happen and indicates the need for the Forms. Aristotle, however, a student of Plato, paid closer attention to the natural world in his philosophy.

From the ancient Greeks until the work of Carolus Linnaeus and other 18th century Naturalists, the main concept of Natural History was the Scala Naturae or Great Chain of Being. Jean-Baptiste Lamarck, a French naturalist was interested in adaptation, or the manner and process by which organisms are able to adapt physiologically and morphologically to their environment. Charles Darwin, an English naturalist was also interested in the phenomena of natural selection and he later formulated the ‘theory of evolution’. Thus, these people analysed the natural evidences in order to understand the natural phenomena.

However, nature collected its own sample of biological diversity in different forms such as fossils of plants and animals and other organisms from the remote past. Therefore, nature preserved the ancient most data of the natural species & presented in the aforesaid forms which is now being interpreted by humans.

Later, people themselves began to collect as an instinctive desire to possess natural curiosities such as corals, shells, minerals, plants, animals and their body parts i.e. bones, horns, teeth etc. It could be the collection of curiosities, souvenirs brought by explorers, trophies resulting from hunting expeditions and collections made by scientists. People not only collected for sustainability and physical security but it also gave their possessor’s social distinction i.e. power, prestige, and status. For instance, several generations of the Medicis had collected great artistic treasures along with a wide range of natural treasures like fossils, animals, minerals and exotic plants.

Subsequently, museums were conceived where evidences of Natural History and its relationship with society were collected, preserved and decoded. In the context of world, most of the museums started with the collection of Natural History. The first public museum, the Ashmolean Museum established at Oxford University in 1683 was started with Natural History collection of John Tradescants (father and son-who were two gardeners) and contains the collection of preserved birds, animals, fish, insects, minerals and gems, fruits, beautiful and exotic plants, shrubs, and trees. The British
Museum (1753), the first great national museum in the world also started with Sir Hans Sloane’s collection of Natural History. In Asia too, one of the first museums i.e. the Indian Museum, Kolkata was established with collection of natural history along with cultural history.

In spite of the fact that most of the museums in India and abroad started with the collection of Natural History, Natural History museums today are at a critical juncture. According to the figures furnished by the directory of Usha Agrawal, majority of existing museums in India are devoted to Art and Archaeology and only few museums contain Natural History collection. At present, greater emphasis is given to the museums of Art & Archaeology. India has a rich cultural heritage which needs to be showcased and interpreted by museums, but at the same time, India also has a varied natural heritage which can be represented through diverse flora, fauna & mineral wealth of Natural History museums. Although, there are some museums having Natural History sections and a very few of them are exclusively devoted to Natural History, India stands far behind as compared to western countries in the standard of development of its Natural History sections and Natural History Museums.

It is a matter of concern that in India, people have still not realised the actual role of Natural History museums as S.M. Nair has so well stated, “Educators in natural history museums realize that the museum is only a promotional agency for nature education and not a substitute for nature itself.” When people think of Natural History collections, images of stuffed specimens kept in dull showcases or the exhibits interpreted in unsatisfactory way often come to mind. With such a reputation, is it correct to expect visitors to visit these museums? If the thematic and communicative exhibits of Natural History museums of the west are considered, it can be exemplified how highly educative and extremely popular Natural History collection can be if they are organised on the proper lines.

Natural History collections are not merely showpieces for display; they are important evidences of the richness and diversity of a national Heritage. They are significant tools to represent the natural wealth of the country. Today, Natural History collections are meeting diverse learning needs. They are much more than mere accumulation of facts. Natural History collections play a substantial role in understanding biodiversity, evolution, changes in populations, man’s dependence on nature, necessity to maintain
our ecological heritage and the environmental impacts of climate change. They are also benchmark for nature conservation programmes. These natural curiosities provide evidences of the usage and significance of nature which in turn can help to cope with current environmental issues. Museums of Natural History can be of great interest for the public and can have strong appeal if they are organised with a realistic approach to present and communicate Nature’s own creations with original beauty and structural uniqueness of the specimens. Well trained and capable museum professionals can decode the encoded messages contained in these natural data sources which will be of interest not only for scholars and students but also for the curious minds in general.

S.M. Nair classified Natural History museums into three distinct categories. The first consists of the collection-oriented museums, where collections and related to research (taxonomy in most cases) occupy a pivotal role. The second represents those museums that give attention to exhibit presentation and education along with their traditional collection and research functions. The third comprises of those contemporary museums that consider education as their primary purpose and relate all other functions to a supporting role. If we look at these categories, Indian Natural History museums come under the second and third category. However, Natural History museums which are now emerging contain very few original specimens because of the non-availability of the original ones, so what is the potential of Natural History museums at present. How will they overcome lack of original collection?

Is there any specific role of Natural History museum in our society today? How will museums present the relevance of their Natural History collections and thrive in a changing world? Are they supposed to be visited as a compulsory visit by school groups only? Are they supposed to present endless labels in the form of three dimensional textbooks? Should they leave responsibility on the visitors to correlate textual information with the exhibits?

Although Natural History museums of India have adopted techniques like Dioramas depicting natural habitats of animals and plants, Discovery room concept which is basically based on hands-on learning, participatory exhibits using specimens, models or live exhibits, outreach programmes and audio-visual aids which have added a new dimension to communication. Still, communication of information in Natural History museums in India is not so clear today and more research is required for understanding
visitors’ needs. It is also necessary to engage visitors as active partners rather than passive receivers.

Eilzk Granquist has rightly mentioned in his article, ‘Back to basics’ that “A Natural History museum does not need to be expensive. The vast array of electronic technology available today should be used if money is available, but it is not indispensable. What is needed is know-how, and this is rarely found.”

Some museums have installed new exhibit cases, but the interpretation of collection is still like the cabinet of curiosity, with no obvious educational objectives and probably beyond the average visitor’s understanding. The specimens are usually exhibited with basic identification along with lengthy textual information and least focus is given to project over-all picture or relevance of the collection. For a country like India, where majority of the visitors come from the rural area with varied educational background, museums have to explore new methods and ways for furthering education and serving society.

Moreover, the transformation from collection-oriented museums to one that are mostly focused on the concepts and don’t have much specimens to display, has brought about the need to sustain public interest. Apart from this, these museums have to face increasing competition from zoos, biodiversity parks and sanctuaries which are also popular attraction among the visitors. At this point, Natural History museums should undertake the task of conveying information and of creating public awareness by customizing the style of presentation according to the needs and demands of the visitors. Museums should develop such communication strategies, which in turn will result in exhibitions that would enlighten the people about their urgent socio-cultural needs for development. If Natural History museums are to be accepted and recognised as unique non-formal learning centres for the contemporary society, they must work on the communication strategy to make visitors understand the basic phenomena of nature in a simple but interesting manner.

In a country like India, which is multilingual, multireligious having multicultural societies; natural specimens preserved, documented and displayed in museums may have more meanings beyond the interpretation possible in ‘Natural History’ and ‘Scientific’ terminologies as these objects have more to tell about the communities deeply linked with them. Therefore, Natural History museums’ curatorial team besides working with the science experts, also needs to bring the voice of the associated
communities in order to make a balance between the natural and cultural dimension of the natural heritage. Community participation is also necessary, not only to present their received opinion about sacred or socio-cultural aspects but also to draw attention of the public towards issues related to man and nature in changing time and cultural space. Museums can employ new and indigenous strategies of documenting and presenting natural and cultural stories in which multiple themes are developed and strategically selected to enhance the visitors’ interest. For this, museum may use various ways to source data in order to achieve a multidimensional approach towards displaying Natural History collection, which imbibe multiple contexts in itself.

Moreover, the increasing importance attached by governments to issues of conservation of nature and protection of the environment also presents an opportunity for Natural History museums. For instance, one of the objectives of Natural History museums of India is to create environmental awareness. If these museums utilise this opportunity in a better way, it will enable them to obtain a treatment of priority from the government as well.

Museums need to adopt significant new uses for Natural History collections in collaboration with other institutions to meet present and future challenges. Natural History museums are obliged to share with their visitors, relevance and potential of Natural History collection in society. Natural History museums have a social responsibility to be relevant and communicative. They should progress according to the needs of society and should involve visitors as active partners. In this way Natural History museums can bring their true strengths, their collections, to work on broader issues for both science and society. This holistic approach will result in progressive Natural History museums, that is, museums going from unfamiliar to familiar, from exclusive to inclusive, from ignorance to knowledge, from simple to complex, from past to present and future, and from nature to culture.
Endnotes

1. Paleolithic period refers to a time period, from approximately 2.6 million years to 12,000 years ago
3. Pre-Socratics were group of early Greek philosophers (before the time of Socrates), who attempted to find rational explanations for natural phenomena. Among the most significant were the Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Zeno and Pythagoras
4. Socrates was a Greek philosopher whose thoughts influenced ancient and modern philosophy
6. Plato argues that all objects we experience through our senses are particular things. We don’t ever sense anything ‘abstract’, but always some individual thing or other. For example, we only see particular beautiful things, but we never see ‘beauty’. However, more than one thing can be beautiful. Beauty is a characteristic that more than one thing can have. So, Plato claims, if many different things can be beautiful, then there is something they share in common i.e. beauty. So there must be something which is ‘beauty’, even though we never experience beauty itself through our senses.
8. Carolus Linnaeus was a Swedish naturalist and explorer who formalised the modern system of naming organisms called binomial nomenclature and originated the classification scheme.
9. Aristotle ranked animals over plants based on their ability to move and sense. The scala allowed for an ordering of beings, thus forming a basis for classification where each kind of mineral, plant and animal could be slotted into place.
10. Medici was an Italian banking family, political dynasty and royal family that began to gather prominence in the Republic of Florence during the first half of the 15th century.
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Abstract

Indian classical music and musical instruments has a very long and accumulated heritage of centuries. Our musical instruments are remarkable for the variety of their forms as well as for their magnificent range of expression. Musical tradition of India has a very rich background and its importance in our society is immense. It is the base where today’s fusion music has established. This paper mainly focuses on a case study of ASAVARI; the gallery of musical instruments at Ravindra Bhawan, New Delhi. The main aim of the paper is to show how in a broader context this gallery is preserving the musical heritage of India. To serve the purpose of this paper, a very brief discussion on the musical traditions of India has been attempted.
Indian classical music and musical instruments are among the oldest unbroken musical traditions of the world. Its origin can be traced back to Vedic period, nearly two thousand years ago.

Musical Instruments can be described as any material used for producing sound in music. In this sense, the oldest instrument is the human body itself, especially the voice. In our musical text it is called the *Gatra Veena*. The flexibility of Indian music, both rhythmically and tonally, requires instruments that allow great freedom. An examination of the Indian instruments in an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art reveals their amazing variety and their relation to musical style. It is extremely difficult to date these instruments with any degree of certainty, as their forms, like the formal elements of the music itself, have persisted, virtually unchanged, since antiquity. The ancient sages of India were the first to give a systematic way for the classification of all musical instruments:

- **Tata Vadya** - the instrument of strings, which is played either with nail or a striker (plectrum/pick) or even with a bow.
- **Avanaddhya Vadya** - such instruments that are covered with hide or skin called drum species.
- **Susira Vadya** - wind instruments.
- **Ghana Vadya** - instruments of solid metal.

In India, the role of different cultural groups to the general pool of instruments is noteworthy. Indian instruments include those used in classical, folk and tribal music. Through a diverse transition, a lot of changes and development occurred in this field, yet their importance remains unchanged. Now Indian instruments are studied globally and various museums and galleries across the world are displaying them.

Like other objects of intangible heritage, musical instruments go beyond their physical structure and serve as cultural symbols. They have great sense as ritual icons, as mediators with spirits and as bearers of innovative technology. They may provide aural symbols evoking musical ideas that become communicator between ideas and feelings which are inexpressible in any other way. The cultural importance of music can be given shape with the setting up of musical instruments museums. It is rather important that those objects are housed not only in museums but also in other institutions, for e.g. art, technology, natural history museums; colleges and universities / music libraries.
and historic homes. Displaying and preserving musical instruments helps to draw attention of the people to diverse musical traditions across time and space, aids visitors in making connections between disparate cultures and helps to preserve our universal musical heritage.

In India, National Museum has a large collection of musical instruments; both folk and classical instruments are preserved there. The instrument section of the Indian Museum, Kolkata, has the rare collection of instruments. Govt. Museum, Chennai has the collection of South Indian musical instruments.

ASAVARI, the musical instruments gallery at Rabindra Bhawan, New Delhi, acquired a large number of musical instruments. The establishment of the gallery of performing arts at Sangeet Natak Akademi, was on the agenda of the authority since its outset in the 1950’s; small collections were being made over the years. The musical gallery on the ground floor of Ravindra Bhawan, New Delhi was inaugurated by renowned violinist Lord Yehudi Menuhin in February, 1964; the era when east meets west. It showcases the rich heritage and legacy of instruments from different regions of the country. The collection begun in 1968 with an exhibition organised by the academy about 400 folk & tribal musical instruments in Delhi. Since then acquisition has been made regularly and the holdings supplemented by gifts from musicians and visiting troops.

There are about 600 instruments; out of which 250 are on permanent display representing musical instruments from different streams of music. The instruments in the gallery have been classified as Chordophones, Aerophones, Membranophones and Idiophones.

**A glimpse of the collection**

In the *Chordophone* section, one of the rare instruments on display is *Gottu vadyam* from Tamil Nadu. It is a fretless instrument, which is plucked. It is one of the important concert instruments of the south, manufactured mainly in Thanjavur.

The earliest instrument played with a bow is believed to be the *Ravanhatta*. This is used for vocal accompaniment by Bhapas in Rajasthan in a traditional narrative called, *Pabuji-Ki-Phad*. The instrument consists of a resonator made of half a coconut shell.
Among the bow instruments, Sarangi occupies a very important place. Various kinds of Sarangi seen in the gallery are the Dhani Sarangi of Rajasthan (used by Jogi community), Jogi Sarangi of U.P. (used by Jogi community), Gujaratan Sarangi of Rajasthan used as an accompaniment to traditional song and dance. A popular plucked instrument from North India is Sarod. Entire body covered with a single block of tun wood, Sarod is used in North Indian classical music for solo concerts. There are few instruments made of wooden boxes. One is the Santoor from Jammu and Kashmir. Sri mandal of Rajasthan is a temple instrument, also taken out during religious processions. One of the simplest instruments of the gallery is the das-kathi from Odisha, a pair of hard wood pieces are held in the right hand and banged together in a skilled manner. Veena is said to be the ‘mother of all instruments’. One of the most important Veena in the gallery is the Duttatreya Veena, an improvised composite instrument. Among the Sitars, Kachwa Sitar is rare and beautiful.

Among the instruments of Aerophones group, the Devalai sangu from Tamil Nadu is an exquisitely decorated instrument. It is a conch shell with a funnel shaped brass mouthpiece fitted on the blowing end. It is used in the Panchavadya ensemble and also on religious and auspicious occasions in temples. The best-known wind pipe of north India is the Shehnai. The Jodia pepa, a folk instrument from Assam is made from two buffalo horns. The Khung from Manipur is a different-looking flute. It has a bowl-shaped gourd with a long neck. Nagphani flute from Rajasthan is a bronze tube with serpentine bents. It resembles a snake hood and has a metal tongue inside, painted with bright colours. It is used in religious and social ceremonies as a part of the procession.
The **Chordophone** collection of the gallery contains rare folk and classical instruments. Drums were grown out of man’s desire to create a sound by beating. An ancient and most popular two faced drum of South India is *Mridangam*, which is used as accompaniment in the recital of classical Carnatic music. One popular drum in India is the *Damaru*, a small drum shaped like an hour glass. The *edaka*, on display in the gallery is an hour glass shaped two headed drum, slung from the left shoulder. It is used as an accompaniment to Kathakali and Mohiniattam classical dances. The *Thimla* from Kerala is an hour glass shaped wooden shell covered with skin and suspended from the waist.

Most prominent instrument of North Indian classical music is the *Tabla*. It consists of two drums – *bayan* (made of plated copper) and *dayan* (made of wood). It is a rhythmic accompaniment to solo and instrumental music. *Makra yazh* is a beautiful instrument. It’s a replica of an old instrument and has a hollow fish shape wooden body.

From the **Idiophone** group in the gallery, *dhana kolia* from Odisha is an instrument, which consists of four separate parts (a round earthen pot painted with folk motifs, a winnowing part, a bow and a wooden stick with jingle bells stick in both ends). It accompanies traditional narrative forms in Ganjam district of Odisha. *Ghatam* is used in South Indian classical concerts with *mridangam* and *khanjira*. It is a pitcher shaped pot made of baked clay with a large belly.

*Lebang-ti* is a long bamboo tube split in half keeping the end node intact. This instrument is used in Tripura particularly in a form called ‘lebang bumani’. *Pujari-Kaichlambu* is a pair of elliptical hollow metal rings, with a number of solid pallets filled inside. It is associated with *Holi* festival and other occasions.

Other instruments of this group are *Cheng hung* (Manipur), *Popatik* (Sikkim), *Mieng* (Meghalaya) etc.

**Brief overview of the gallery**

‘Asavari’ gallery is a long hall where display cases are attached to three walls. Size of the gallery is 19×80 feet. There are display cases from A to G (division). The folk and classical instruments have been divided as percussion instruments, wind instruments, string instruments and idiophones. Along with the existing instruments there are personal collections of Pt. Kishan Maharaj and Sri Buddhadev Dasgupta who donated their instruments to this gallery.
There is no circulation pattern; visitors are left to explore the gallery on their own. The walls are fixed, panels and movable walls are not used. The ceiling is separated from the cases. The gallery has complete artificial light inside. This facilitates the control that is necessary both for lighting effects and conservation purpose. CFL bulbs are used
for lighting. There is no direct light put on the objects. Inside the cases, Perspex sheets are used, which cuts maximum of UV radiation. It has a non-slippery and easy to clean tiles. The floor is levelled without any steps.

They maintain accession register for the collection. Elements of display are divided into three parts; (i) text label, (ii) showcases and (iii) supportive illustrative technique. Text label includes the name and region of the instrument. Accession no. is attached on instruments and they are hand written on paper. The labels are in English language. Showcases are glass made with wooden frames on the bottom and upper portion of the case.

The longer displays like that of string instruments have joints between the glasses, which causes visual hindrance. Photographs of some instruments with musicians help visitors to understand the context in which these instruments were played. The collection is permanent and they also conduct mobile exhibition in remote areas.

Various exhibitions and workshops have been held under the supervision of the musical instruments gallery. Recent workshops conducted are ‘The Making of Tabla-An Interactive Session, 2014’ and ‘The Making of Sitar-An Interactive Session, 2014’. Famous personalities from the field of music had joined the programme like expert tabla maker, Ustad Qasim Khan Nizami and expert sitar maker from Kolkata, Shri Mangala Prashad Sharma.

Inside the gallery there is an audio-visual set-up for the visitors. Apart from that, there is an audio-visual room in the documentation unit where researchers and other interested people can listen to the sound of any particular instrument with visuals. There is a library under the supervision of Sangeet Natak Akademi with extensive number of books. From the photo library one can see the pictures of the instruments. The library is a great help for researchers as they provide books and photographs of instruments, photography is not allowed in the gallery. Publication department publishes journals, souvenirs and books on various topics.

This gallery is doing an appreciable job by preserving India’s rare and famous instruments. It is also the largest musical instruments collection in India. The gallery has significantly succeeded in preserving of the musical heritage of India to a large extent. The instruments on display and the entire gallery as a whole are fascinating.
In other words, the gallery presents a unique blend of musical traditions and cultures, which have not been able to find its place in the popular culture of the present time. Each of these pieces are equally significant to have a complete understanding of the musical journey of Indian civilization. The reason behind the excitement of a visitor while entering this gallery is the variety of instruments on display, which are unique and not much popular amongst today’s generation.

As mentioned by the curator, the gallery has some shortcomings, which they want to rectify in near future. Some of them are:

- The displays are crowded as many objects are placed together due to lack of space.
- Uses of advanced methods of conservation are not in practice in this gallery.
- Periodical inspection and cleaning is in practice.
- As mentioned earlier, they do not use any technical equipment to record humidity and temperature.

**Conclusion**

“The musical heritage of India is like a mountain stream that grows into a mighty river reflecting the changing landscape and taking on the colours and flavours of changing
places and times. Yet it remains ever fresh and remains the same ancient river” (Ramakrishna. L, 2002)

Couple of leading personalities carry forward the promotion and respect to the musical instruments. Famous musicians from different countries are also playing our traditional instruments. This is a great hope for the future of Indian musical instruments. Leading museums across the globe are preserving rare Indian instruments. Therefore, we can see how our cultural masterpieces and their values are spreading across boundaries. Some museums abroad have also collaborated with Indian museums to start working together for preservation of these instruments; this is a ray of hope.

In India, significantly less number of museums have musical collections. However, each state has one state museum. If each of these states starts to collect and preserve at least its own folk instruments, we can build a large collection of musical instruments for the country.

India is a vast country and has variety of customs and folk traditions, with a variety of different musical instruments. Many of them have already been disappeared and number of them are on the verge of extinction. It’s high time to collect and preserve those for the future.

At present, ASAVARI has the largest musical instruments collection in India. They are doing a commendable work with the limited facilities. Yet some more instruments can be included in the display. The area of display should be increased so that many more instruments and objects for display could fit in. There is need to adopt better conservation techniques to increase the lifespan of the instruments.

Many future possibilities are there, which can be catered by the authorities in coming years, for example, to collect the personal instruments of eminent musicians, transform the gallery into a national museum of performing arts, resizing of the gallery etc. We hope many more initiatives and beneficial steps are taken to make this gallery, Asavari more significant, prominent and a gallery with large visitation.
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Abstract

Acrylic paints are recent addition to the art materials and their popularity in the art market is expanding. Acrylic paintings are adding to the tangible heritage collection and they are often received in conservation laboratories with problems never seen before, most of which could be due to lack of preventive care measures. It is thus important to find out current practices of keeping them in collection houses as well as the deteriorations and challenges posed by them during storage and exhibition so that appropriate measures of preventive conservation could be devised. This paper presents a report done upon surveying major art galleries in Delhi, which gives an insight into key areas where expertise of art conservators could be merged to prepare guidelines for preventive conservation of acrylic paintings in tropical climate zone. Improvements in collection care could prevent the need of conservation treatments in the future. It is encouraging to note that caretakers in the art galleries think alike and they invite researchers to explore this aspect further.
Introduction

Indian art market, which was worth approximately Rs. 50 crores a decade ago, is today estimated to be worth between Rs. 1000 – 1200 crore with paintings encompassing 99% of the art market. It was all time high in 2007 with Rs. 2000 crore. ‘Untitled’ in oil paints by V.S. Gaitonde and ‘Mahishasura’ in acrylic paints by Tayyeb Mehta were the first and second most expensive paintings sold in 2014. It is interesting to note that 18 out of the 53 top expensive Indian paintings sold in 2014 are done in acrylics, majority of which are works of Tayyeb Mehta and Syed Haider Raza, made from 1972 to 2007 (The Arts Trust, 2015). As a matter of course, popularity and acceptance of acrylic paintings in art world is expanding in government as well as private sectors. Collection of acrylic paintings in National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi and Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi vouch for the rank acrylic paints have accomplished in a short span of time. It was in 1950s that America got the first acrylic paints made specifically for artists. It later moved everywhere on the globe. The captivating properties and positive prediction on the stability of this paint made its expansion obvious. Fast drying of the acrylic paints is a quintessential property which makes the demand and supply quicker and saves the artist from having to wait for a painting to dry, which is always the case with oil paintings. Marked presence of acrylic paintings in exhibitions and assent of contemporary artists surely indicate good business to art galleries and art investors.

Acrylic paintings in the system are transforming into the tangible heritage collection; wherefore, art conservators and curators have the onus of preserving them for the future generations. Some properties of acrylic paints, which make them popular, also make them susceptible to certain deteriorations. For example, low glass transition temperature of polymers used in acrylic paints keeps the cured paint film flexible and prevents development of cracks on it. However, the glass transition temperature nears to room temperature and thus slight increase in ambient temperature makes the paint film tacky and prone to attract dirt. Many artworks require remedial conservation due to faulty storage and transportation measures. Therefore, it is useful to know how works of acrylic paints are kept in art galleries and what kinds of problems are encountered in them. This information can help art conservators to find out root causes of many problems which they find challenging while treating acrylic paintings. Subsequently, measures to improve the conditions could be devised and communicated to art galleries.
for better upkeep of acrylic paintings. In order to understand this aspect, an attempt was made to survey ten art galleries in Delhi, in the form of a written survey, which included questions on documentation, exhibition, storage, packaging and transportation.

**Survey Report**

Two art galleries have 90% of their collection in acrylic paintings. This share is 80% for one art gallery, 60% for three art galleries, 50% for two art galleries and only 2% for one art gallery. Lalit Kala Akademi has around 3000 acrylic paintings in its collection. When art galleries acquire a painting, in addition to detailed documentation of the artwork; they register facts of its artist, which includes his/her name, photograph, homeland and bio-data. Art galleries often categorize artists according to codes and each artist gets a specific category which depends upon his/her achievements. For each artwork, title, theme, year, medium, size and high quality image from front and verso are meticulously recorded. Study on the technique of execution forms an important part of documentation. To make sure the stability of the painting and to be able to distinguish between original and deterioration in the future, condition of the object is thoroughly noted. Art conservators are often consulted for this task. Information on acquisition - date of purchase, consignment agreement with the artist and receipt of paintings – form integral part of the documentation file. Art galleries take copyright certificate, authenticity certificate and approval of sale from artists. Analysis of binding medium in modern paintings is very crucial as visual observation is not sufficient to distinguish between various kinds of modern paints and they often look alike. Most of the art galleries refer only to the label put by the artist. Nevertheless, some confirm it with the artist too. Owing to popularity of mix-media works, some art galleries check with the artist if the same paint medium is used throughout in the entire painting. Few art galleries confirm about paint brand used in the painting to keep a check on the quality of ingredients. Some art galleries keep scientific verification as the absolute mode of identification. In contrast, some collectors go by their own instincts of identification. To improve marketing and customer satisfaction, art galleries photograph the painting at the time of selling to record the condition in which the painting was sold. This helps in distinguishing the condition of the painting when it was sold from later deteriorations and damages. Many art galleries provide digital documentation and certificate of authentication to enhance faith and experience of the customer.
Majority of storage rooms are left at room temperature with relative humidity and no special care is given to light levels. Some storage rooms are equipped with air conditioners so that temperature and relative humidity could be maintained. In some cases, de-humidifiers work better to clear high moisture levels. Three art galleries provided precise range of temperature that is maintained in their storage rooms; these are 20°C – 23°C, 20°C – 25°C and 28°C. One respondent stressed on maintaining 50 – 60% relative humidity in storage for acrylic paintings. To avoid damage from light and Ultra Violet radiations, some art galleries prefer to keep storages dark. Others endeavour to avoid harsh light falling on the collection by keeping the light levels to bare minimum. Emphasising on sensitivity of acrylic emulsion paints with fluctuating climate conditions, one respondent is in the process of implementing measures to maintain specific requirements of temperature, relative humidity and light levels for acrylic paintings. Paintings are usually stacked vertically (Figure 1).

However, sometimes they are kept horizontal too (Figure 2). Some art galleries are very cautious while stacking their paintings so that no two paintings touch each other. Extended frames are used as points of contact. At some collection houses, paintings are hung on racks. Often, paintings are kept covered with materials like cellophane sheet, polythene and bubble sheet. Vis-à-vis, some art galleries keep acrylic paintings uncovered.

For exhibitions, climate ranges usually kept are 18 - 23°C, 20 – 25°C temperature with 50 – 60% relative humidity. Chiefly, air conditioners and dehumidifiers are used for climate control. Diversely, some art galleries keep their exhibition halls at normal room conditions without any climate control. Few art galleries show concern over the light levels and pre-check reliability of focus lights falling on the paintings. Increase in footfall during an exhibition drastically changes the climate conditions. On such occasions, art galleries keep a check on the fluctuating conditions and maintain temperature and humidity with air conditioners and de-humidifiers. Exhaust fans are used in addition to keep air in circulation. Increase in footfall increases chances of vandalism, which too takes attention of the caretakers. Acrylic paintings are kept framed or unframed depending upon the requirement. Paintings done on paper are often framed. Paintings on canvas are usually not framed. Remarkably, some caretakers stress on not framing the acrylic paint works at all to allow the painting to respire. However,
Figure 1: Paintings stacked vertically

Figure 2: Paintings kept horizontally
decisions on framing are often made according to the requirements of clients. À la mode, contemporary art works are often spread to the stretched canvas which limits the possibility of framing. Both glass and acrylic sheets are used for framing. Glass is cost-effective and clearer vis-à-vis acrylic sheet is more durable and does not break like glass during transportation. When framing, mounts and strips are put in between so that paint layer has a free space.

Collection care is of utmost importance in tropical zones. Different art galleries survey their collection according to their schedule - weekly, half monthly, monthly or annually. Whereas some galleries take this opportunity to categorise each painting in the collection as fragile or stable and immediately take deteriorating paintings to art conservator; others are quite confident with their maintenance system and deny possibility of any damage in their paintings. If the symptoms of deterioration occur on the painting before its purchase, they are usually returned to the artist. Some art galleries maintain condition reports for older works but not for the contemporary works, which are only categorized according to the artist. Although art galleries affirm the stable nature of acrylic paintings, there are some problems on record. Stickiness of paint layer in fluctuating climatic conditions leads to attraction of dust and dirt on the surface. This also leads to sticking of butter paper to the paint layer that is often used to cover the paintings, which makes packing a difficult task. Sagging of canvas due to heavy impastos, flaking of paint layer due to inappropriate base preparation, scratches on the paint layer and fungal attack are among the common problems found in acrylic paintings. Since the behaviour of various additives present in the acrylic emulsion paint is unknown, problems in this regard cannot be predicted. One comment suggests using fine grain 10-ounce canvas for acrylic paintings. Some art galleries believe that acrylic paintings are more prone to damage when compared to oil paintings as the former begins to disorient after a period of time. Nevertheless, works in acrylics are less prone to cracking. However, combination of acrylic and oil paints together in mix-media works are strongly feared.

Regular maintenance of acrylic paintings is done by standard methods of removing dust using moist cloth. Vacuum cleaners work good in removing the foreign particles completely from the surroundings. In some cases, acrylic paintings are kept wrapped in plastic to block dust and dirt. Some art galleries maintain climate and light to avoid
problems of stickiness in paint layer and light damage. Measures of ventilation are strictly followed in certain art galleries. In general, exposure to chemicals, like room sprays and others, is avoided in storage and exhibition areas. During pest control, when excess chemicals cannot be avoided, paintings are moved to a temporary location. Packaging and transportation of acrylic paintings is again difficult due to sensitive nature of paint film. Packing materials like plastic sheet, polythene sheet, bubble sheet, butter paper, corrugated brown sheet, thermocol, foam and wood box are normally used. Although some art galleries never faced any problem due to packing of acrylic paintings, others which have had experience of stuck packing material on the painting or transfer of impression of bubble sheet on the paint layer due to soft polymer adapt better methods by avoiding the packing material from coming in contact with the paint surface. In addition, if two acrylic paintings are kept facing each other, the paint layers tend to stick to each other. To avoid this, bubble sheet is put as a separator using extended frames of same size facing each other and touching only at the extended frames keeping a gap of 1” to 1.5”. Transporting big size paintings is a problem too.

**Conclusion**

Acrylic paintings constitute a major share in art galleries. This reflects the market acceptance and forecasts that many acrylic paintings may demand conservation intervention in the near future. Art galleries keep detailed information about the artists whose paintings they acquire. This facilitates a channel of communication wherein artists could be contacted if their inputs are required in designing conservation treatment. This would help in understanding art techniques better and subsequently will be useful in finding out appropriate conservation solutions. Moreover, art galleries keep detailed images of the painting from front and verso, details of execution and record condition of the painting to stand as reference to observe changes from the original over a period of time. Art galleries note the medium of the painting too. If the painting received for conservation happens to have no information about its binding medium written on the canvas by the artist, then the art gallery from which it was bought could provide that information, the primary source of which could be the artist, scientific analysis or visual experience of art collector. Undoubtedly, the first two are more reliable sources. Similarly, year of painting and other legal documents can be verified by the art galleries when solving questions of authentication.
Storage rooms do not always have climate controlled according to the ranges required by acrylic paintings. Same is the case with light (lumen exposure) levels. Guidelines educating collectors about the sensitive nature of these paintings towards climate and light by art conservators would surely be a big step towards preventive conservation. Awareness workshops, informing about effects of incorrect and fluctuating temperature and relative humidity on acrylic paints and effects of light on stability of acrylic painting would be useful in preventing possible deteriorations. Practice of keeping them in extended frames is a good preventive step to avoid touching the surface. Keeping the acrylic paintings covered can be a problem as in many cases, packing material being stuck to the paint layer have been recorded in the past and undoing this has been one of the most challenging tasks. Art galleries are extremely careful during exhibition shows when footfall increases. They maintain temperature and relative humidity levels according to the requirements of acrylic paintings. They are also vigilant to control any accidental damage. Art galleries are aware of the advantages and possible damages that can be caused by framing of paintings, which mostly remains choice of the client. When required, it is done with either glass or acrylic sheet.

Art galleries periodically check their collection for any damage/deterioration and categorize it according to the condition and take necessary steps to fix the problem. Many problems faced by art galleries during handling, packaging and transportation of acrylic paintings could be solved by consulting art conservators. Training programs promoting preventive conservation can reduce the requirement of conservation intervention in future by manifolds. Art galleries invite art conservators and researchers for designing concepts for better preventive conservation of acrylic paintings.
Endnotes

1. Whereas the caretakers confirm evenness of paint medium in the artwork, checking uniformity of the paint brand is not reported.
2. Many respondents have not made any specific comment about maintaining light levels.
3. Acrylic emulsion paints contain polymers with low glass transition temperature to render flexibility in the dry paint film. However, this nature makes them prone to becoming sticky when temperature fluctuates. In such situations, anything coming in contact with the paint layer has a probability to get stuck to it and removal of such foreign materials is very difficult and often results in permanent damages. To avoid this, extended frames should be used while stacking paintings and no covers should come directly in contact with the paint layer.
4. Purpose of framing paintings done on paper is to provide protection to paper and not paint layer.

References


Prospect of Conducting Visitor Studies at Mumtaz Mahal Archaeology Museum, Red Fort

V. Kalyani

Abstract

The article focuses on ‘Visitor studies’ as a subject, which is gaining more importance day by day. So are the museums around the world. Museums in the past were collection-centric but now they are increasingly tending towards serving their visitors too along with preserving their collection. It is the attitude of the museum, which defines how it views its visitors: as strangers, as guests, or as clients. Due to many other leisure options these days, museums have been pushed to a phase of transition where they are left to prove themselves as one of the interesting places people can go and spend time to enjoy. Now the museums want to be accountable to the public so as to make them their clients in the process. In order to achieve this stage where museums can proudly have clients, they must undertake ‘visitor studies’ to understand visitor needs and ambitions. This will only help these institutions is make themselves more friendly and meaningful to the society. The article explores the prospect of conducting ‘visitor studies’ in the Mumtaz Mahal archaeology museum, Red Fort.
'Visitor Studies’ as a discipline is eclectic. It draws different concepts from diverse subjects such as psychology, sociology and education among others. One of the basic definitions of ‘visitor studies’ was given by Harris Shettel for the AAM Visitor Evaluation and Research Committee. Titled as ‘Statement of Goals’, it has four fundamental assumptions, namely, visitor advocacy (mission), multidiscipline view (approach), formal evaluation (for answering questions) and scientific nature (methods and theories). Museums which were more collection-centric are now increasingly becoming visitor-centric too. Thus, visitor studies, which has been previously applied to many disciplines, over the years, has become one of the key elements of museum studies as well. Various definitions of this phenomenon have been penned down and it will be only useful to take note of its definition in the museum context. “Visitor studies” has become the name of the field for those who study the visitor perspective to environmental design issues in museums. ‘Visitor Studies’ and ‘Audience research’ are used interchangeably, however audience research becomes little specific. It is rather one approach to visitor studies as voiced by Hood. It is usually concerned with why or why not people visit and also probes the relationship of leisure values to visitation patterns and satisfaction.

Till early 1970s, the experts conducting visitor studies in museums were from other fields like education and environmental psychology. This trend changed with Roger Miles, a leading museum professional. He was the first museum professional to conduct audience research in the Natural History Museum, London in 1979 along with his colleagues. The basis of the research was using good effective communication models so as to achieve a successful transfer of messages.

Visitor studies has moved from studying why people visit particular places to studying why some people do not visit places meant for education and entertainment.

Coming to the Indian scenario, it is noted that ‘visitor studies’ is still at the stage of infancy. Although lot of marketing practices in the country has given this area a boost, museums are still to take up this activity and make it their regular feature, not to undermine the previous efforts taken in this regard in some of the popular museums like National Museum, New Delhi; National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi, and Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad by some of the leading Indian museologists. The need of the hour, however, is to understand why this particular area of research
has not been embraced fully, and what can be done now to revive it and undertake it incorporating modern tools, techniques and methods so as to make it more diverse and complete in nature. Most of the visitor surveys these days’ focus on qualitative aspects and to support the arguments, quantitative methods are used.

The start can be done by conducting such surveys in well-visited places to understand what drives people to visit those places over the others. The less-visited places must also be surveyed properly to know why people are not interested in visiting. One of the busiest places in terms of visitorship is the Red Fort, Delhi. Being one of the three world heritage sites from Delhi, it attracts between 1,34,000 to 3,12,000 visitors in a month (data pertaining to the period from January 2012 to December 2015, collected from Delhi Circle, Archaeological Survey of India).

While it is good to know that Red Fort is visited by many, equally alarming is the fact that not all visit the museums housed inside this fort. While one of the reasons which can be attributed to this may be the lack of information given about the housed museums, there are lot many things which demands a thought so as to give a boost to the visitor number pertaining to the museums. There are four museums inside the fort complex but the prominent ones are Indian War Memorial Museum, Swantantrata Senani Museum, and Mumtaz Mahal Museum. The nominal charge for Indian visitors encourages the fort and the museum visit.

Once entering the museums, one is transported to the Mughal era and the 19th and 20th century. The Swantantrata Senani museum gives visitors a glimpse of the soldiers who were in the Indian National Army. Shah Nawaz Khan, Prem Kumar Sahgal, Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon and many other soldiers who were imprisoned during the Indian freedom struggle have been highlighted through this memorial museum. Among the notable displays are the INA uniform worn by Col. Prem Kumar, riding boots and coat buttons of Col. Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon, photographs of Netaji Subhash Chandra. Another museum housed in the complex is the Indian War Memorial Museum. This museum was set up to pay tribute to the soldiers who had participated in the world war in India or abroad on behalf of the British. One has to go through a narrow passage, which leads to a stairway as it is housed in the Naubat Khana or Naqqar Khana of the Red Fort on the first and second floors. Visitors can see a diorama on the battle of Panipat, arrows, swords, daggers, revolvers, machine guns, shells, bomb fuses, gun powder...
flasks etc. Communication systems like telephone, telegraph, signal lamps have also been displayed. There is also a museum of “blood paintings”, depicting young 20th-century Indian martyrs and their stories. The fourth museum housed inside is the Mumtaz Mahal archaeology museum.

The visit to these museums does make one think that a lot more could have been done to the display. The interactive techniques in museums, which could have facilitated interpretation, are missing a bit. Visitors are left on their own to decipher for what certain things (which are not commonly in use) were used. Let us take the case of the Mumtaz Mahal archaeology museum. This is housed in the Rang Mahal. Originally, this building used to be one of the six palaces that Shah Jehan built overlooking Yamuna River, which has now changed its course. This used to be the zenana (apartment for royal ladies) before the 1857 mutiny. In 1857, when the Mughals surrendered to the British, this was used as a prison. After sometime, the building also saw itself being converted into a mess. In 1911, this archaeology museum was built. It has been named Mumtaz Mahal as Shah Jehan wanted to dedicate this building too to his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Talking about the collection of this museum, most of the things used by the Mughal kings are on display. There is a separate gallery which houses the belongings of the last Mughal king Bahadur Shah Zafar II and his wife Zeenat Mahal. The letter written by Bahadur Shah Zafar II to Queen Victoria, which has the thumb impression of his son, attracts many. Various farmaans (official orders by the king) have also been put on display, which evokes considerable interest in the visitors, although translation of the verses could have been of much help to the curious ones. What has been observed is the confusion over dates and king’s period of reign, visitors, by virtue of asking questions, start socialising more within their groups. Zahava, refers to some of the experiences one can have while visiting museums which have been broadly categorized into four by her, namely; object experience, social experience, cognitive experience, and introspective experience. It seems that less knowledge here is leading to more social experience.

Some of the exhibits attract more attention than the rest. This may be owing to the physical characteristics of the exhibit, the display techniques employed, or the object being very common and easily understandable or unusual to the visitors. In this museum, people are more attracted towards the Bahadur Shah Zafar II gallery, which
has the photos and the belongings of the king and his queen Zeenat Mahal. The arms and armours section and the holy book of *Quran* also arouse considerable interest. Bitgood says that selectivity of objects depends on various factors like:

Principle#1: Attention to exhibits is selective, visitors attend to one thing at a time and what gets attention is determined by distinctiveness or salience of the element/object and by whether or not the visitor’s pathway is close to the element/object. Principle#2: Visitors must be motivated in order to focus their attention on exhibits. Motivation is a function of cognitive-emotional arousal (e.g., interest level), the amount of perceived work, and the number and intensity of distractions. Principle#3: The resources for attending to exhibitions have a limited capacity and are depleted by mental and physical effort. The rate of depletion and renewal is dependent upon the total amount of effort expended, the amount of cognitive emotional arousal, and the amount of time.

Sometimes, it is the museum fatigue that prevents the visitor in keeping the interest level intact throughout the exhibition. As opined by Edward S. Robinson, museum fatigue may be more a question of psychological than physical discomfort. The display being monotonous or the labels being too long to read or too short to be informative can be some of the reasons behind mental fatigue.

Fatigue can also be a consequence of improper display. Mumtaz Mahal museum has two-sided display. In this type of display, one showcase comes in competition with the opposite case. Also, it becomes difficult for the visitors to turn back or retrace steps to view this kind of a display. It is also noticed that due to the physical discomfort experienced, some visitors stop paying attention to the objects and their associated labels. Another problem is, it can sometimes, be a hindrance to the continuity of the theme/story, which has been exhibited. Interested visitors tend to go to the opposite case again to understand the link between the two cases, which have been installed opposite to each other. All these contribute to museum fatigue. The very fact that people have come to the museum to relax gets defeated when they are required to move more in the galleries. Another noticeable thing in the galleries is that there is absolutely no seating arrangement. This may play a role in visitors not attending to some of the exhibits. As it is, people are jaded when they enter this museum as this is situated in one of the corners of the Red Fort.
There are other important factors that disinterest the visitors here. Firstly, the name itself is misleading, as there is nothing one can see of Mumtaz Mahal in the museum. It is better to either rename the museum so as to put an end to this misconception or add something significant to the collection which is related to Mumtaz’s life. Also, there is no signage when one enters the museum, which tells them which direction to follow. Some of the visitors turn to their left after entering which is the intended way while some others turn towards the right and after observing others, come back and go towards the left. While it has been written that ‘photography is not allowed’, many visitors still indulge in it making other people’s visit a little uncomfortable. This also encourages the others to start photographing. The countless paintings may suffer due to photography. It is the need of the hour to sensitize the audience about the importance of the collection.

Recreating the lifestyle of the royal Mughal kings and queens at one place could have garnered more interest. Although enough has been displayed which gives the visitors a sense of how some of these princely couples looked like and how they made up themselves with the help of royal garments and majestic footwear along with the things they used like vessels and dishes, these are scattered all over the gallery amounting to only tit bits which fail to give the audience a wholesome experience of the bygone era. The museum should have the luxury of having more mannequins of the royals in a typical Mughal palace like structure. This could have been more impactful than the small photographs and smaller mannequins which are already on display. People visit this museum mostly to see how the Mughal emperors looked like and what kind of a lifestyle they led. So it is indeed essential to make the environment as visual and real as possible to give the visitors a fulfilling experience.

If ‘visitor studies’ are conducted in the Mumtaz Mahal museum in a way which can be replicated in other museums of similar nature, museum professionals will be sure of a significant increase in the visitor numbers to their respective museums. In order to achieve replication of the studies carried out, two things have been quoted to be of prime importance: one, a description of procedures in enough detail and two, determining how much data is required to arrive at an inductive conclusion. Then only empirical generalization can be done.\(^8\)

Red Fort is one of the best places to conduct visitor studies as it witnesses visitors from diverse socio-cultural and educational backgrounds. Mumtaz Mahal museum in
particular is an ideal place to conduct observations and tracking and timing studies as it is to one of the corners of the Red Fort. Therefore, most of the people are tired by the time they enter this museum. Moreover, the collection is also diverse. All these may result in visitors exhibiting a variety of mannerisms, which would be interesting to study about. This can give us a better understanding of how people respond to the stimuli (exhibits) and the information panels/labels. There is a big stone fixed close to the exit, which acts as a seat. This may help us understand the physical fatigue of the visitors resulting out of the visit in a better way. The seat, which also encourages interactions among the group visitors can help the museum and visitor studies professionals to know better about the visitor experience in the museum.

**Endnotes**


4. The author obtained the visitor figures from the Delhi Circle, Archaeological Survey of India.


References


The lore of Krishna is a growing one. There is a difference between the two popular avatars of Vishnu, Rama and Krishna. While the former evolved long back and is revered as an incarnation of perfection that stands dated, the latter continues to attract popular consciousness and engages people in India and abroad. Dynamism is the key word that imbues this growing lore as Krishna is an interesting and evolving figure in the realm of spirituality, myth, arts, politics and pragmatics. The Sri Krishna Museum, one of its kind in India, is thus dedicated to understand and re-present this lore. The Museum, through the intangible oral traditions around Krishna, presents the subject matter in a tangible form through artefacts from all over the country, thereby capturing the core beliefs of Hindu thought domain. The paper will attempt to render a study of the Museum from this perspective. It will seek to bring together elements of myth and tradition belonging to antiquity along with a representation of the figure of Krishna in the contemporary arena of art, culture and society.
Introduction

Storytelling is an act that repeats itself time and again in the human fold in various ways. A story once conceived has its source in human experience. It stands on a philosophical ground and survives through being told. Not only does it survive but its interpretation passes onto the story itself. On the community front, popular legends and myths are those that are narrated from time to time. One of the reasons which makes myths popular is the same that compels visitors to come to museums. They provide a ‘slice of history,’ that is a blueprint of the way humans have lived life in the past. The probability for these happenings (or not in case of myths) in history is interesting enough for listeners of stories and for museum visitors to experience the story being told. Myth-narrating works on the threads of past that continue into the present. The focus of this case study is the Sri Krishna Museum at Kurukshetra in Haryana. Its focus lies in tracing the representation of Krishna at the museum and the concurrence of this depiction with the way Krishna is rooted in popular imagination.

Located in the heart of the city, the museum, founded in the year 1987, identifies Krishna as its protagonist and a pivotal figure in the eighteen-day epic battle of Mahabharata that was fought on the ancient ground of Kurukshetra. The museum was established with a two-fold aim: to enlighten people about Krishna’s philosophy and ideals, and to make them aware of the history of the region. A theme-based museum, it has collected a wide gamut of artefacts (through purchases, donations, gifts and excavations) that are centered around some of Krishna’s most popular myths and legends. The ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, the life episodes and exploits of Krishna, Radha-Krishna artworks, and the scenes from the story of Mahabharata are some of the most represented themes in the museum. The exhibits are made of common materials like wood, metal, stone, clay, textile and paper. The artworks are in the form of wood carvings and panels, ivory sculptures, bone carvings, bronze sculptures, brass works, stone sculptures, archaeological findings, manuscripts; and miniature paintings from different schools of art, Tanjore paintings, Madhubani paintings, Pattachitras, Kalamkari and Pichhvaies. A section in one of the galleries is devoted to underwater excavations from the submerged ancient city of Dwarka, datable to 15th century BC.

The Museum’s focus on Krishna stems from his superior role in the Mahabharata war and by the virtue of it being located at the hallowed grounds of Kurukshetra. Curator
of the Museum, Sh. R.S. Rana, sheds light on the protagonist-role of Krishna, “No other character supersedes Krishna in the Mahabharata. He is an epochal hero immortalized in the spiritual annals of the world. Since the early-historic period he was being worshipped and the cult of his worshippers continues even today in different parts of India. Having both divine and human aspects, he is able to carry on with his work without being attached to its outcomes. For this reason, the battle itself is said to be a miracle and maya of Krishna. If he stands for play (leela), he also stands for brutal action to dispense justice. But all his contradictions entwine into the warp and weft of Karma. Kurukshetra is an apt place to locate the museum as it is here that charioteer Krishna delivered the eternal sermon of Gita to Arjuna, who is caught in the ethical dilemma of having to fight against his own kin and is hence reluctant to take up arms. Moreover, ancient Indian literature (the Vedas, Puranas and the Epics) was composed here. Kurukshetra is the birthplace of the first Veda, the Rigveda. The museum has, therefore, tried to collect various artefacts related to the cult of Krishna. Through the tri-themes of Krishna, Mahabharata and Kurukshetra we have tried to best serve the people and educate them about Krishna’s ideals and philosophy.”

Though the Mahabharata is an epic filled with exemplary heroes, numerous characters and significant episodes, Krishna is a hero par excellence. Both a player and a slayer, he encompasses contrasting vicissitudes that make him a dynamic figure. He is benevolent but also ruthless in warfare; he is playful but also serious; he is a loyal friend and a mentor but also an indefatigable enemy who leaves no stone unturned in upholding the law of action (or Karma). To bring about justice he will kill but during the time of war, will not refrain from giving assistance to the opposing side. For the battle of Mahabharata, he gave his army to the Kauravas but himself stayed with the Pandavas. This is a symbolic act, a prefigurement of one of the foremost messages of the Gita. While the body (the army) was with the Kauravas, the soul (Krishna-in-person) was with the Pandavas. And the message of the Gita, the celestial song, is that while the body is perishable, the soul is indestructible and eternal. Similarly, the Raas Leela of Krishna with the Gopis can be seen as a prefigurement of the larger Krishna Leela that he played during the time of Mahabharata war. Thus, he lays level by level of play but himself remains detached. A reason for this detachment is discussed in one of the museum’s publications. The Rigveda mentions three Krishnas – one who is the creator
of the world, the second a clan-member of sage Angiras, and the third a demon residing at the banks of Anshumati river. However, it is the Vasudeva Krishna mentioned in the Chandogya Upanishad that is most likely to be same as the epochal hero of Mahabharata. The basis for this comes from a story related to the spiritual teacher of Krishna, sage Angiras who conducted a yagya (sacred fire ritual) to make Krishna detached from the play of the world. The sermon given in Chandogya Upanishad by the sage to his protégé has essential similarities with the sermon that Krishna delivered to Arjuna in the Gita. In the light of this detail, it can also be said that the episode of Krishna revealing his Vishwaroopa to Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra is an evidence of his embodiment of contradictions and his detached placement in the scheme of Mahabharata War:

Paritranaya sadhunam vinashaya cha dushkritam/
Dharma sansthapanarthay sambhavami yugay-yugay///<
(Shrimad Bhagvadgita 4/8)

[I (the Supreme Being) become manifest, era after era, so as to restore the centrality of do-gooders, to annihilate the pursuers of evil and for the establishment of Dharma (righteousness); translation mine].

The museum represents such events and scenes from the life of Krishna in a total of nine galleries, viz. the Wood, Metal and Ivory gallery; the Archaeological gallery; Miniature Painting gallery; Regional Theatrical Art gallery; Wall Paintings gallery; Bhagvata Gallery. The last of these galleries is sub-divided into three galleries. The collection of the Museum covers mythological, spiritual, historical, social and cultural aspects of Krishna’s lore and the Mahabharata. The display has been arranged so as to keep visitors engaged.

1. **Wood, Metal and Ivory gallery**: The first gallery presents the metallurgical heritage of India that is related to Krishna. The collection here is from various parts of the country – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. The objects serve both an introduction to Krishna’s life and to the museum. Wooden panels depicting ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu are displayed. An intricately carved wood artwork shows two different scenes, one of Krishna playing flute and the other of Lord Vishnu rescuing the elephant devotee. Minute carvings of Krishna and cowherds done on matchsticks is an engaging display. The metal works (bronze and brass) have been done on a variety
of themes: Bal-Krishna, Yashoda-Krishna, Navanita Krishna, Venugopala, Krishna with Gopis, Kaliyamardana, Krishna with Rukmini and Yashoda with Krishna and Balarama. There are also works done in bone and ivory. A scene of Krishna with the Gopis has been done on bone and a sculpture of ivory shows Krishna playing the flute. In the center of the gallery is a 20th century AD silver pot from Rajasthan which shows the exploits of Krishna.

2. Archaeological gallery: The second gallery links the museum and the Krishna theme with the land of Kurukshetra. Visitors entering the gallery get to see Harappan artefacts excavated from archaeological sites (such as Kunal and Banawali) spread across Haryana. Maps put up here attempt to show excavation sites in this region and introduce visitors to the Harappan era. In this section one can find Harappan ritual pots, fragments of perforated jars, necklaces, bangles, terracotta figurines, Mother Goddess terracotta figurines, hair pins and different seals. The gallery shows Kurukshetra’s rich artistic legacy in the form of sculptures, terracotta and pottery. Two important sculptures in this gallery are of Ekanamsa and Hari-Pitamah. The former is a 1st century AD Kushana image from Faridabad, Haryana. The latter is a unique and composite image of Vishnu and Brahma made in buff sandstone. Other stone sculptures depict Vishnu, Vaikuntha Vishnu and Lakshmi, Kuber, Uma Maheshwar, Surya, Varaha avatar, Ganesha and Shiva. One of the earliest representations of Krishna in Indian art which is seen in the gallery is the enlarged replica of a 2nd century BC coin issued by the Indo-Greek king Agathocles. The coin shows Balarama and Krishna on either side and Krishna is seen in Greek drapery holding a disc and a sword. Though the coin is a popular exhibit, the cynosure of all eyes are two stone anchors recovered from sea. The anchors go back in history to ancient Dwarka, Krishna’s kingdom (15th century BC). Also on display are pottery fragments (c.1500 BC), conches and seals (c. 1500-1200 BC). The idea behind displaying these artefacts is to contextualize the Mahabharata and to give weight to its historicity. The museum is in favour of presenting the ancient war and the presence of Krishna as a real, historical event rather than as an imagined myth. Following this view, visitors get a peek into the mythical world of Krishna lore through miniature paintings.

3. Miniature and Manuscripts Gallery: The theme of the gallery is to present Krishna’s world in one of the most delicate and fine mediums of Indian art, that is, miniature paintings. Several of the paintings portray Krishna as the divine lover. Based
The paintings show scenes from the *Mahabharata*, *Krishna-Radha* theme and ‘Krishna with Gopis’ theme. They belong to miniature paintings schools of Kangra, Basholi, Bundi and Mewar. In one of the paintings *Krishna* is showing his *Viratroopa* to *Arjuna* and in another he is seen in the guise of *Radha*. Some of the manuscripts in the gallery include: the illustrated *Bhagvata Purana* in Persian (18th century AD), *Krishna Katha* in *Braj* dialect (18th century A.D., Rajasthan), and the illustrated *Bhagvata Purana* in *Braj* language and Persian script (18th-19th century AD). Apart from these, the gallery has palm-leaf etchings (portraying Lord Vishnu’s ten incarnations), *Picchvaies* (portraying Shrinathji), *Madhubani* paintings, *Tanjore* paintings, *Pattachitras* and *Kantha* work. The gallery also depicts folk arts: Puppets from *Thanesar*; a clay model of ‘nine females in the shape of an elephant with *Krishna* riding over.’ The look of the gallery is completed by two big showcases. In one of them, the idols of *Jagannath*, *Subhadra* and *Balabhadra* are placed and in the second, wooden idols of *Krishna* with *Radha* and the *Gopis* depict the cosmic dance scene. This folk theme continues into the next gallery.

4. **Regional Theatrical Art Gallery:** The folk theme is elaborated upon in this gallery. Here, the objects and dioramas complement each other to further the *Krishna* and *Mahabharata* theme. The dioramas depict *Manipuri Raasleela*, *Bhishma Sharsayya* and *Abhimanyu Vadh*. Special care has been taken to make the dioramas evocative and the faces of characters full of expressions. The ones based on *Mahabharata* especially mirror the drama of oral stories that have been passed through generations. Needless to say, they draw the attention of visitors, who often stand near the showcases to animatedly discuss stories pertaining to the concerned episode. The *Bhishma* diorama has been the most popular amongst visitors since the museum’s inception. The diorama on *Abhimanyu Vadh*, made in *Yakshagana* style, is a dramatic depiction of the helpless and trapped *Abhimanyu* (son of *Arjuna*) in the middle of *Chakravyuha* made by the *Kauravas* to kill him. In the center of this colour-infused gallery, stands a *Krishna Jhoola* (swing) which has a symbolic meaning for visitors who are tempted to touch it. A 20th century *Chamba rumal* shows the cosmic dance of *Krishna*. Also, there are leather shadow puppets from Andhra Pradesh depicting *Krishna*.

5. **Wall Paintings gallery:** With a view to promote contemporary arts on *Krishna*, the museum acquired paintings from the *Mahabharata Utsav* at the annual *Gita Jayanti* festival in 2002. Artists from across India gathered at the festival to execute
Figure 1: Depiction of Balabhadra, Subhadra and Jagannath on wood
Figure 2: Radha and Krishna puppets from Thanesar
Figure 3: Abhimanyu Vadh diorama in Yakshagana style

Figure 4: Bhishma lying on bed of arrows; displayed in the Multimedia Mahabharata and Media Gallery
paintings on *Mahabharata* themes in regional styles. The paintings, that have been put up in this gallery, highlight important episodes from the Epic.

6. **Bhagvata Gallery**: The gallery through nine dioramas portrays the following scenes from the life of *Krishna*: *Vasudeva* carrying baby *Krishna* across *Yamuna*; *Krishna* stealing butter; *Bakasur Vadh*; *Krishna* lifting Mt. *Govardhana*; *Krishna* subduing serpent *Kaliya*, the Cosmic Dance; *Kansa Vadh*; *Krishna* in Kurukshetra on the occasion of solar eclipse; *Krishna* delivering the *Gita* to *Arjuna*. The light in gallery falls on the diorama while the walking space is dark. This attracts visitors as much as the expressive dioramas. The *Bhagvata* gallery has been sub-divided into three parts and this forms the newly constructed wing of the museum. Named the ‘Multimedia *Mahabharata* and *Gita* Gallery,’ the gallery transforms the visual experience of visitors and takes them to the story of the *Mahabharata* through models and dioramas. The tunnel like winding corridors, warmly lit, aim to take back the viewers to the time of the Epic itself. The three sub-galleries are designed so as to take visitors through all the eighteen *Parvas* (books) of the Mahabharata. The dioramas and models here are especially demonstrative of the drama of the Epic especially in scenes such as the dice (*Shatranj*) game, the humiliation (*cheerharana*) of *Draupadi* and *Bhishma*’s body pierced by arrows. One of the sub-sections is devoted to an audio-visual show that crystallizes the message of *Gita*. The imagination of visitors to the gallery is spurred as they get to see the Epic on a larger-than-life scale and try and partake its message. The last scene depicts ‘*Swargarohan* (ascent to heaven) by *Pandavas*.’

**Conclusion**

The Sri Krishna Museum receives around 5 lakh visitors per year. These are visitors from all over India and abroad. They include family groups, school children, tourists and pilgrims who largely come to visit religious sites in the city. To cater to its visitors, the museum amplifies and dramatizes the *Mahabharata* story and for this purpose, the most popular narratives have been chosen. This seems to be aimed at making visitors feel a part of the epic story and to impart the ideals therein, especially those of the *Gita*. The museum has made an attempt to display regional variations in the *Krishna* theme as there are not one but many ‘*Krishnas*’ in the form of *Venugopala Krishna*, *Navaneeta Krishna* and *Jagannath Krishna*. Visitors from different parts of the country can relate with these on spiritual, mythological and cultural planes. Efforts
to link *Krishna* and *Mahabharata* to the present era can also be seen in the case of paintings acquired from the *Gita Jayanti* festival.

Visitors in the museum can frequently be seen recognizing life-episodes of *Krishna*, discussing and narrating them. There is a willingness from the visitors’ side to participate in the narratives. These are stories that they have already heard of and hence relate to. Thus, one story leads to the next. However, behind the more popular exterior of the museum lies a contemplative core that engages with *Krishna’s leela*, that presents play within play, and play after play. This contemplative core is somehow mingled with the objects. Whether it is the stone anchors from the ancient *Dwarka*, the disc-holding *Krishna* (Heracles) from Agathocles’ coin, the flute playing *Krishna*, the cowherd *Krishna*, the *Raas Leela Krishna*, or the *Vishwaroopa Krishna*, the museum tries to delve into the enigma around *Krishna* and probe into the historicity of his life. An attempt has been made to unravel the mystique around *Krishna* but not at the cost of his philosophy and ideals. To bring its aims to fruition, the museum has attempted to collate objects on *Krishna* from all over India. Though the divine aspect is what draws a lot of visitors to the museum, it is the multifarious ‘aspects’ of *Krishna* that makes the exhibition more interesting. In the museum, *Krishna* is not a deity, but a supreme protagonist depicted in his universal role. The museum keeps popular imagination at the centre of its vision and tries to present *Krishna* for all.

**References**

Abstract

India is a country which has one of the richest cultures in the world. The art, craft and culture remains in the form of monuments, household items, seals, sculptures, warfare equipment’s, literary evidences and of course the oldest surviving texts like Vedas and Upanishads which indicates a flourishing culture of bygone era. On the other hand, there is evidence in the art and artefacts produced throughout the ages, which indicates an amalgamation of various cultural traits, which came with people from other countries and flourished during different ages. In keeping with richness of the human, natural and cultural heritage of regions, the Museums as the institution of encyclopaedic knowledge have a pivotal position in the fast-changing regional situation of 21st century. In this article an attempt has been made to outline the Museum’s role in creating cultural awareness through exhibitions with reference to the “Art of Calligraphy and Beyond” exhibition from the collection of National Museum, New Delhi and it was probably an approach to revive the Art in more coordinated ways.
Introduction

Museums began as human society’s equivalent of cultural memory banks. Through the years, they have evolved into much more. Though the prime medium is tangible objects, the essential value of collections is the information embedded in them and what it means to the global community. Other institutions deal in information also, but only museums uniquely collect, preserve, research and publicly display objects as an essential function of their existence. It is an important resource for both formal and informal learning. Visitors describe their reason for visiting as “to learn and experience”.

The functions of a museum may be summarised as:

- To collect art objects of historical, cultural and artistic significance for the purpose of display, protection, preservation and interpretation (research).
- To disseminate knowledge about the significance of the objects in respect of history, culture and artistic excellence and achievements.
- To serve as a cultural center for enjoyment and interaction of the people in artistic and cultural activities.

There is a need to understand how powerful museums can be in shaping cultural meanings, communicating ideas, and forming attitudes about art, history and culture. It has become increasingly important for museums to be able to demonstrate the many benefits that they provide to surrounding communities and to their region. However, one aspect has always been, remains, and will probably continue to be fundamental to the museum institutional identity – public exhibitions. ‘Museum’ means a dwelling for the Muses – a place for study, reflection, and learning. Therefore, museum exhibitions are self-defining as well. They have the mission to provide places for education and reflection. Exhibitions help the museum as a whole to justify its existence and its expectations for continued support. In general, a healthy and well-presented public exhibitions programme affords as institution credibility to its supporting community and to the broader community of museums. The specific goals of museum exhibitions involve the desire to change attitudes, modify behaviour, increase the availability of knowledge and create cultural awareness among societies.
Art of Calligraphy

Calligraphy is the most important and pervasive element in Islamic art because of its association with the Qur’an; the holy book of Islam. This preoccupation with beautiful writing extended to all arts - including secular manuscripts; inscriptions on palaces; and those applied to metalwork, pottery, stone, glass, wood, and textiles - and to non-Arabic-speaking people within the Islamic commonwealth whose languages such as Persian, Turkish, and Urdu were written in the Arabic script.

The Arabic alphabet (used also for Persian, Urdu and Ottoman Turkish) is a cursive script, reading from right to left. Scripts are square (Kufic) or rounded (naskhi, thuluth, nastaliq, a Persian hand, is not known before 1388 CE and is not used on architecture before the 16th century). These terms apply partly to the forms of the letters and partly to the line: Kufic is steadily horizontal, often with a weighted base: the round scripts form lines composed of a series of loops. Kufic is more illegible than the rounded scripts and had plainly become archaic as a current hand over most of Islam by the 12th century.

Another characteristic of Islamic art is a preference for covering surfaces with patterns composed of geometric or vegetal elements. Complex geometric designs as well as intricate patterns of vegetal ornament (such as the arabesque), create the impression of unending repetition, which is believed by some to be an inducement to contemplate the infinite nature of God. This type of non-representational decoration may have been developed to such a high degree in Islamic art because of the absence of figural imagery, at least within a religious context.

In Islamic cultures, the so-called decorative arts provide the primary means of artistic expression. Illuminated manuscripts, woven textiles and carpets, inlaid metalwork, blown glass, glazed ceramics, carved wood and stone all absorbed the creative energies of artists, becoming highly developed art forms. Royal patronage of secular art was also a standard feature of Islamic sovereignty, one that enabled the ruler to demonstrate the splendour of his court and, by extension, the superiority of his state.

Availability of paper encouraged the making of books on various other subjects like poetry, astronomy, travel accounts, memoirs and other subjects that were written in almost all the Mughal courts, in their karkhanas. These karkhanas were the house
of experimentation for creating most artistic and beautiful things in various mediums by the anonymous artists. The identification of those has been based on signed or attributed examples of their works and on textual references, suggest that families of artists, often over several generations, specialized in a particular medium or technique.\(^7\)

It was found that the two arts which remain most creative are architecture and calligraphy. The employment of calligraphy as ornament had a definite aesthetic appeal but often also included an underlying talismanic component. It is principally a means to transmit a text, albeit in a decorative form. It is an artistic expression of written words in Islamic culture. Though these may be devoted to secular purposes, and have been so in the past, they are the arts most closely associated with the Muslim religion.\(^8\)

**Role of Persia in Calligraphy**

In the development of calligraphy, Persia has played a very important role. It is claimed that the fourth caliph of Islam and first Imam of the *Shia*, the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law *Ali ibn Abi Talib*, was the first to write in a peculiar style of the so-called *Kufic* script, and the later calligraphers would inevitably trace back their pedigrees to him. The pen, made of reed and trimmed with great skill according to strict rules, was considered ‘*the cypress in the garden of knowledge*’.

The Iranian Culture is individual and unique. Its characteristic designs and iconography have survived down the centuries. From ancient times until the 19\(^{th}\) century, Persian artists depicted the world around them in reliefs and ceramics on paper, parchment and canvas. The figurative element was never banished from Persian art, although the Qurān discouraged bringing man and beast to life in artistic representations. Yet artists aspired to heavenly perfection in their art as a way of honouring Allah and working in his spirit.\(^9\)

Interesting calligraphic examples are found on a certain group of medieval metalwork in which the letters, often silver inlaid in brass, end in human or animal heads or are completely made of zoomorphic shapes. Early silks use angular characters and their setting can produce interesting effects but later silk and velvet along with coins, seals, rugs, stone carvings, etc. are often decorated with fine examples of cursive writing in various styles.\(^10\)
The extensive use of calligraphy became its hallmark making it a main and sometimes the only element of decoration in Islamic culture. The decoration includes Quránic verses, religious tenets, ghazals (a Persian verse form) by famous poets like Hafiz, Saadi and Jami, with some beyts (lines) from ghazals by Amir Khusraw Dehlvi, Kasim-i-Anwar Tabrizi, Qatibi Turshizi etc.\(^1\)

The decorated calligraphy in all forms is much widely acknowledged, studied and appreciated and different artists with their creative mind and skills constantly worked in the art of calligraphy on different materials, which was the main focus of the exhibition titled, ‘The Art of Calligraphy and Beyond: Arabic and Persian Inscriptions on objects of Decorative Art.’

**Art of Calligraphy & Beyond**

The exhibition *Art of Calligraphy & Beyond* was organised from 15\(^{th}\) May to 12\(^{th}\) July 2015 at National Museum, New Delhi and was an attempt to show the art of calligraphy on some selected utilitarian artefacts, display new mediums and artefacts like metal ware, textiles, costumes, wood, precious stones, mother of pearl etc., along with technique detail, manufacturing process, centre, objects etc. These artefacts represent an era of about four hundred years (16\(^{th}\)-19\(^{th}\) centuries) of Indian culture and are decorated with Quranic verses, religious tenets, Persian couplets, *duas* (blessings) etc.\(^2\)

The inscription increases the value of an artefact, especially when the name of patron or calligrapher or the date is inscribed.

The storyline which is a compound document that serves design and production by providing the framework upon which the educational and interpretive content of the exhibition hangs, i.e. a written blueprint for the exhibition was carefully done. The list of collection objects is coordinated with the development of narrative and outline so that all sets of documents then provide a complete picture of the final exhibition resources upon which the designer can draw in formulating the gallery plan and design. The display of the exhibition (Fig. 1) has been arranged into four broad sections on the basis of their functional use which also makes up the storyline:

1. Calligraphy implements
2. Religious artefacts
3. Artefacts of faith
4. Artefacts for Trade and Tradition
The fine craftsmanship and various ornamental techniques used for decorating these objects is another aspect to be seen especially the artefacts of lesser known materials. This helps in understanding the artistic trend and various influences, which were present due to political, religious, social, trade and culture of the period.\footnote{13}

Some objects in this exhibition are very important as these provide either name probably of the calligrapher or owner and date. A brass shallow bowl (Fig. 2) dated 1495 CE is the earliest object in this group, which belongs to Sultan Sikander Lodi (r.1489-1517) period. It also informs about the name which might be of the calligrapher, Mahmood Bin Mohammad Bin Haji Mahmood Farsi. Another example is brass celestial sphere inscribed with the maker’s name, Mohammad Ibn Illahdad Humayuni Lahori and period which is inscribed as the 2\textsuperscript{nd} reign year of Mughal Emperor Shahjahan (r.1627-1658).

\textbf{Section I - Calligraphy Implements}

The artefacts which are having beautiful decoration of niello, damascening, chasing and engraving besides the inscriptions have been displayed. These artefacts were produced aesthetically indicating the calligraphers' love for their own tools, besides their work like reed pen, ink pen-cases, lamp, scissors and stamps. These have beautiful inscriptions either in Persian or Arabic; like the Qalamdan (Fig. 3) which was used as a symbol of secular power in early Islamic Persia.\footnote{14} This Qalamdan has beautiful decoration of \textit{niello} work and the Persian couplets with a date, 1259 AH / 1844 CE is inscribed on top of the lid.

\textbf{Section II - Religious Artefacts}

The artefacts which are made for religious purposes, reflects religious sensitivity as well as artistic expression of different art forms specially the surface-covering decoration in Islamic art like brass \textit{alam} and prayer symbol, printed \textit{janamaz} and embroidered \textit{Shia} banner/flag were displayed in this section. The \textit{Janamaz} (prayer mat) (Fig. 4) has beautiful decoration of block printed work and inscribed with a praise in Arabic near the top portion which has the meaning: \textit{All Glory and Praise to my Great Almighty God (Allah)}. This is recited while performing Sajda in Namaz (prayer).
Section III - Artefacts of Faith:

This section had objects which showcased the belief that if an object that is inscribed with the name of Allah (The Almighty God), Quranic verses or other religious tenets has some protective powers to ward-off evil and will protect the person, by whom it was used.

The gallery displayed various talismanic artefacts (Fig. 5). It included semi-precious amulets (ta’wiz), bracelets, hand-written and brocaded costumes, and a variety of utensils from cooking vessel to drinking bowls and plates/Thals of different shape, size and material. The brass-copper (abkhora), copper (degchi), bidri (abkhora) (Fig. 6), jade and coco-de-mer shell (kashkul); silk, metal threads and cotton (costumes) are some of the material used for creating these beautiful artefacts and all have inscriptive decoration of Qura’nic verses, religious tenets and Persian poetry of some famous poets of India and Iran.

Section IV - Artefacts for Trade and Tradition:

This section described the great contribution of the Indian weavers in the export market as far as textiles were concerned. The creativity and skills of these weavers, dyers, printers or embroiderers was to such an extent that they were able to modify their products for every market/client. The calligraphic trend on the ceremonial garments and trade activities forms like Muslin dastar (turban) and chaddar (head cover) woven with Persian poetry and holy tenets Nad-e-Ali respectively were displayed in this section. The others are Thalposh (coverlet), Spread (Fig. 7) probably with block printed inscriptions; name of the artist, Haji Muhammad Ahmad Hussain, and Dastarkhan which are cotton block printed, resist dyed and hand painted kalamkaris. These were made for the Iranian market.

The tradition of making celestial sphere and astrolabe were also portrayed here with few examples. The Mughal emperor Humayun had keen interest in astronomy and a number of miniature paintings show his love for the subject. The tradition of crafting these instruments was practiced under Mughal emperor Humayun (r.1530-1556) and his successor’s reigns. These objects are very much scientific and show the development of science as well as the contribution of the craftsman of that period in different scientific projects. It also shows the legacy in different scientific developments during that period.
Figure 1: Gallery View

Figure 2: Shallow Bowl belongs to Sultan Sikander Lodi period
Figure 3: Qalamdan (pen case)

Figure 4: Janamaz (prayer mat)
Figure 5: Gallery View

Figure 6: *Abkhora* (water bowl) with lid and plate inscribed with Quranic verses
Workshops on ‘Art of Calligraphy’

Along with the exhibition, two workshops were also organised on ‘Art of Calligraphy’ in which the recipients of National Award winning experts named Irshad Hussain Farooqui (wood calligrapher); Mohd. Aslam Qasmi (Stone Calligrapher); and Majid Ahmad Mir and Fayaz Ahmad Mir (Kani shawl weaving calligrapher) were invited. They demonstrated their skills and gave hands on experience to the participants of the workshops.

They helped participants to try their hands at various calligraphy crafts. These workshops were conducted in two batches; one was for secondary level students from 29th to 31st May 2015 in which 26 students participated and another for adults from 15th to 17th June 2015 in which 30 people from different fields participated.

These two workshops were a great success and the participants as well as general visitors took keen interest in the workshops and came forward to learn one of the languishing arts.
Conclusion

Calligraphy is regarded as a respectable art form since ancient times. It has been used mostly in writing the religious texts, manuscripts, and for decorating pieces of architecture. Islamic calligraphy encompasses a wide range of both Arabic and Persian styles from the beginning of Muslim rule in India. The artists used to decorate religious texts and verses to preserve the sayings of Almighty God.

The art of Islamic calligraphy on different mediums is fading fast nowadays owing to computerisation of scripts of all local languages. This art is in dire need of revival. Losing an art is a great national loss and museums are one of the prime and best agencies for communicating the social, cultural and historical aspect of each art in a better and coordinated way.

The main purpose of organising this exhibition by the National Museum was to create cultural awareness among the public by highlighting the aesthetic qualities of Arabic
and Persian inscription on the objects representing decorative arts along with its material, technique, reading and its meaning. This exhibition was first of its kind to show the variety of decorative art objects of different means and material as a source of social and cultural history of Sultanate, Mughal and Deccani rulers from sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

**Endnotes**

2. Ibid, 2.
4. Ibid.
7. “Calligraphy in Islamic Art” in *Heilbrunn Timeline*.
13. Ibid.

**References**

Department of Museology
About the Department

The Department of Museology, National Museum Institute, situated within the premises of National Museum has created a niche for itself in the field of Museum Studies. Since its inception the department has been diligently working towards providing quality education, training and capacity building, guidance and research. Apart from offering post-graduate and doctoral courses, the department through its various research projects, educational workshops, outreach programmes, exhibitions, national and international seminars and capacity building programmes aims not only at creating learning opportunities for students and scholars but also endeavours to bring forth the relevance of Museological theories and application of ‘Museography’ in the context of Indian museums. The department works in close collaboration with various organisations and universities on national and international level.

The department has made significant inroads towards creation of various research programmes like- Documentation, Museum Educational Resources, Audio-visual Database and Digital Archive. The projects taken up by the department covers wider areas of research such as Research and Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Museum Education, Exhibition and Communication, Outreach to Villages, Community Engagement and Visitor Studies.

The museums reinvented in contemporary space are no longer just repositories of the past but have transformed themselves into interactive and inclusive spaces where the visitors can connect, contribute, reconstruct and deconstruct their shared cultural heritage. At the Department of Museology, it is part of the mandate to explore study and analyze the changes and growth in the museum field in India, interconnecting the epistemological and practical aspects in the context of Indian museums and visitors.

Manvi Seth
Juhi Sadiya
Department of Museology

Teaching
- M.A. Museology:
  - Museum Collection
  - Documentation
  - Education
  - Exhibition
  - Marketing & Public Relation
  - Architecture
  - Management and Administration
  - Preventive Conservation
  - Communication and Visitor Studies
  - Intangible Cultural Heritage
  - Eco-Museums
  - M.A. Dissertations
    - Seminars
    - PhD Thesis

PhD Course work

Research Projects
- Things Encountered, Things Unbound: Object engagements in museums in India and the UK
- Documentation of Nine Masters
- Yuva Sathi Programme
- Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage
- Museum Goes to Hospitals
- Indo-Dutch Encounters: Visual Stories of Rare Indian Kalamarikas
- Documentary films: ICH of Ladakh: Stone Carving & Traditional Weaving, Navroz Festival & Buddhist Chanting, Losar Festival, Alha Udal & Swang Tradition

Capacity Building
- Workshops
- 'Gandhi for All' workshop series
  - Workshop cum Training on Ladakhi Musical Instrument: Daman & Surna
  - Intangible Cultural Aspect of nomadic life of Kargyam region of Ladakh
  - Intangible Cultural Aspect of Folk Songs and Stories
  - Nomadic Tent Making
  - Workshop series of "Museum goes to Hospital"
  - Eyes on Dyes and Deals: Stories of East-West fascination on and behind 17th century Kalamarikas
  - Peace across borders
  - Conservation & Display Museology & Education
  - Museum Accessibility Sensitization
  - Disaster Risk Preparedness Plan for Museums
  - Mask making at Majuli, Assam
  - Outreach to Villages
  - Community Led Events

Conferences and Seminars
- International Seminar: Museum and Changing Cultural Landscape
  - Seminar on Museum Education
  - CIDOC Annual Conference
  - International Seminar on Cosmopolitan Kalamkaris: Crafting Connections through 17th Century Figural Fabrics

Exhibitions:
- First Frames - In the Footsteps of Early Explorers

Training
Research Projects

Things Encountered, Things Unbound: Object Engagements in Museums in India and the UK, 2015-2016

The research grant for these two projects was awarded by the British Academy and UGC-UKERI jointly to National Museum Institute, Delhi and University of Leicester, UK. The research project was organised by the National Museum Institute and University of Leicester. The project was aimed at researching visitors’ engagements with objects in museums in India and the UK. The project also aimed to explore the place and power of objects in museums, how this might differ across cultural settings, and how the answers to these questions might influence both object theory and museum practice. The project involved field research in different kinds of museums in India and the UK. Each field work was followed by an onsite workshop to deliberate upon the results of the visitor studies in the socio-cultural landscape of the research site.

The project was conducted in four phases; the first phase of the project was conducted in Jaipur, India in February 2015 where field research was done at City Palace Museum (Jaipur). The on-site research was done by the researchers from National Museum Institute, New Delhi; University of Leicester, UK; and Centre for Museology and Conservation, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. The field research was followed by a day-long workshop at the Department of Art History, Rajasthan University.

The second phase of the project was conducted in Ladakh, India where field research was done in June 2015 at Thiksey Monastery and Museum. The field visit and
Phase I: Workshop at Centre for Museology and Conservation, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur
research was conducted by the researchers from National Museum Institute, New Delhi and University of Leicester, U.K. This was followed by a workshop at Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh.
The third phase of the project was held at UK where field research was done during October-November 2015 at **Stained Glass Museum** and **Ely Cathedral, Ely, U.K.**, followed by a workshop at the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK.

For the fourth phase of the project, **Market Harborough Museum** at **Market Harborough, Leicestershire, UK** was taken as a Case Study. Academic field visits were also conducted to various museums in London, Leicester, Oxford, Cambridge, and Ely. The museum visits aimed at understanding how museum spaces are utilized by the visitors.

**Workshops- Things Encountered, Things Unbound: Object Engagements in Museums in India and the UK, 2015-2016**

As part of the project workshops were organised at Centre for Museology and Conservation and Department of Art History, University of Rajasthan, Central Institute
of Buddhist Studies, Leh, School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, UK and National Museum Institute.

The workshop at Centre for Museology and Conservation and Department of Art History aimed to discuss and deliberate upon the results of the visitor studies conducted at the City Palace Museum, Jaipur. The workshop held at Central Institute of Buddhist Studies gave the participants; monks of Thiksey monastery, members of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) and the research team a sense of the project- i.e., research questions, methods, emergent themes and issues and potential outcomes.

The workshop conducted at the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester to discussed and deliberated upon the results of the visitor studies conducted at the Ely Cathedral.

The workshop “Things Encountered, Things Unbound: Object Engagements in Museums in India and the UK” was held at the National Museum Institute followed by discussion and deliberation upon the results of the visitor studies conducted at the City Palace Museum, Jaipur.

**Documentation of Nine Masters**

This project aimed to compile, textually and digitally the works and life history of the Nine Masters of India; Rabindranath Tagore, Abanindranath Tagore, Gagendranath Tagore, Sailoze Mukherjee, Nandalal Bose, Raja Ravi Verma, Amrita Shergil, Nicolas Roerich and Jamini Roy. The purpose of this documentation exercise was to make a detailed inventory of all the existing works of these nine artists for the security of
these art works and for academic access to the scholars. The first phase of the project documented the works of Master Artist **Nicolas Roerich** for the purpose of security, access and retrieval. In this project the information was gathered, compiled and documented successfully in the digital form.

The documented collection of Nicolas Roerich work comprises of high resolution photos and slides from the following museums:

- Chitra Kala Parishath, Bangalore
- Shri Jayarajachamendra Art Gallery Trust, Jagmohan Palace, Mysore
- H.K. Kejriwal collection, Bangalore
- Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi
- Government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh
- Allahabad Museum, Allahabad
- National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi
- International Roerich Trust, Naggar
- Baroda Museum and Picture Art Gallery, Vadodra
- Indian Cultural Research Institute, PUSA Campus, New Delhi

**The Yuva Sathi Programme, 2013**

Department of Museology initiated an action research project in the area of Museum Education called the ‘Yuva Saathi’, the Young Visitor Programme. The programme aimed at engaging young minds in a dialogue with the National Museum. The Programme envisaged the deployment of Volunteer guides, *Yuva Saathi*, to provided guided tours to school children.

The programme entailed innovative practical session, designed by the Department of Museology which has now been adopted by the National Museum for their guiding and outreach programme ‘Yuva Saathi’, for young museum visitors. *Yuva Saathis* are undergraduate students from various colleges of Delhi trained specifically to guide children in the National Museum. The volunteers guide school groups on a special trail through the museum, combining its masterpieces and unusual objects for fun-filled and informative experience for all young visitors. Volunteers also assist teacher in guiding students on designated trails.
'Yuva Saathi'
Young Volunteer Guide Program

National Museum Institute is starting a new program - Yuva Saathi - Young Volunteer Guides. The programme is aimed at training the Young Volunteers in conducting guided visits of the school groups and family groups at the National Museum.

NMI is a Deemed University and offers MA and PhD Programmes in Museology, Conservation and Art History. The Department of Museology has been involved in Research Projects in the field of Museum Education for many years with the purpose of exploring museums' potential for various categories of museum audience. This is the first time a comprehensive training program for young volunteers is being undertaken by the Institution.

National Museum, as is well known, is the first premier museum of National importance to be set up in the post-independence India. Today its collection consists of about 2, 00,000 works of art, both of Indian and foreign origin, representing almost all disciplines of art, archaeology, sculpture, paintings, epigraphy, numismatics, decorative arts, jewellery, textiles, and anthropology.

The Yuva Saathi programme aims to train young people in the field of heritage, museum education, public communication and creative learning in order to design and conduct tours for young visitors to the museum. It also aims to enhance the sense of belonging towards our collective heritage and leadership towards preserving and sharing it. A group of students from various schools have worked with the NMI team on this programme.

The trainees will be trained to fulfill the specific needs of Young Visitors to National Museum. In Museums, young visitors learn when their interests are motivated and engaged. The programme proposes to equip the Guides to make National Museum a place of learning and fun for the young visitors and their accompanying adults.
Yuva Saathi Programme Brochure

Prof. (Dr.) Manvi Seth giving the welcome address at the inaugural function of the Yuva Sathi Programme

Inaugural function, Yuva Sathi Programme

Volunteers participating in the activities of the Yuva Sathi Programme
Programmes for Young Visitors - 'Dharohar Safar' the Trail(s) in the National Museum entailed two different types of trails two inside the museum, *Museum trail* and *Gallery trail.*

**Museum trail**- An informative trail covering masterpieces of National Museum has been designed for young children. The trail has stops in the museum that children will benefit from and enjoy.

**Guided Tours**- Guided tours are given by Young Volunteers, of selected objects, that gives a glimpse of the entire museum.

**Young Volunteer Guide Programme**- This programme aimed to train young people in the field of heritage, museum education, public communication and creative learning in order to design and conduct tours for young visitors to the museum. It also aimed to enhance the sense of belonging towards collective heritage and leadership towards preserving and sharing it.

**Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**

This project initiated by the Department of Museology attempts to document various elements of *Intangible Cultural Heritage* through mediums such as textual, photographic and audio-visual resources, thus creating documented records, reports, publications and documentary films. The department is developing the inventory on ICH in *Uttar Pradesh* and *Ladakh, India.* The purpose of this project is to explore the range and nature of ICH in the Indian context, test the formats, forms and domains for Indian cultural context and list the ICH elements of these two regions as models for other such studies.

The documentation of ICH is being done as per the five Intangible Cultural Heritage domains set up by UNESCO namely, *Oral traditions, Performing Arts, Social practices, rituals & festive events, Knowledge & practices concerning nature and the universe and Traditional craftsmanship.* Through this pilot project, National Museum Institute is documenting age-old human treasures in the field of dance, music, oral traditions, festivals, rituals, social practice, costumes, culinary and agricultural practices, which have evolved over centuries in these two regions.
Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Western Uttar Pradesh
Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ladakh
In **Uttar Pradesh** region, various ICH elements such as *Swang* and *Sanjhi* traditions, *Nauchandi Mela*, festivals of *Holi*, *Diwali*, *Navratre*, *Kawad Yatra*, *Shraadh*, *Govardhan Pooja*, *Eid*, *Ramzaan* were covered in places namely, Samaspur, Sardar Nagar, Hapur Sikheda, Bijrau, Gagsona, Hasanpur Qadeem, Khatki, and Aurangshahpur Diggi.

In **Ladakh**, various Intangible Cultural Heritage elements such as stone carving of *Mani* wall, *Amchi*, *Losar* festival, *Navroz* festival, weaving, musical traditions, folk stories and songs, Petroglyph and Rock art, Nomadic lifestyle and agricultural activities were covered in villages namely Gya, Skurbuchan, Chiktan, Turtuk, Tharuk, Hanley, Choglamsar, Domkhar and Phayang village.

As a part of this project various educational workshops, Outreach to village programmes and community led events are being organised by the department apart from maintaining textual, photographic and audio-visual records. The project not only aims to document the ‘living heritage’ but also to create awareness among people about the rich cultural heritage of India.
Various elements of Intangible Cultural Heritage;
Stone Carving, Losar festival, Traditional Weaving, Agricultural practices

Creation of Audio-Visual database and Digital Archive

Department of Museology, National Museum Institute has taken an initiative to put its research output in an audio-visual & digitized form on a click of a button. The aim of this project is to create digital archive/audio-visual repositories complying international standard and secured dissemination of the content as well as its long-term preservation and accessibility. The process of digitization will also entail identification and categorisation of all legacy material and creation of metadata for easy retrieval. Such an archive would be of great significance to historians, journalists, sociologists, scholars, researchers and aesthetes in general.

The Multimedia content (of previous documentation) related to the department activities, research projects etc. has been collected and as the documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Ladakh and Western-Uttar Pradesh is ongoing, there is continuous inflow of data. The schema/template for creation of the metadata of the digital files for the digital database has been drafted. Search Categories, keywords list of multimedia data for search optimization has also been drafted, which can later be implemented in the software/portal.
Research on the technical model/architecture for the database with online access is ongoing and the department is also in the process of seeking recommendations and advice from the experts globally. The research work done under the documentation project has resulted in four documentaries, ‘Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ladakh’, ‘Jingling Bells and New Dawn’, ‘Losar’, Alha Udal and Swang tradition (post production).

**Workshops related to the Project**

*Workshop cum Training on Ladakhi Musical Instrument: Daman & Surna, 2015*

A Workshop cum Training programme was organized on “Ladakhi Musical Instrument: Daman & Surna” from 26th February-7th March, 2015 in Ladakh to train the local communities in the traditional Ladakhi musical instruments.

*Workshop on ‘Intangible Cultural Aspects of Nomadic life of Kargyam region, Ladakh, 2017*

Department of Museology organised a-day workshop on the theme Intangible Cultural aspect of nomadic life of Kargyam region of Ladakh. The workshop held at Kargyam village in Ladakh on 17th November, 2017.
Speakers for the workshop were chosen from the community, they delivered lectures on the importance of preservation of traditional cultures and nomadic lifestyle. The workshop included activities such as demonstration of Thulu and Lokpa, nomadic tent weaving, shoemaking, Goncha weaving, robe and sack making followed by interactive session with students.

*Workshop on Nomadic Tent making at Kargyam Satoo, Ladakh, 2018*

The Department of Museology organised a day long workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage of *Nomadic Tent Making* at Government High School, Kargyam Satooon 15\(^{th}\) March, 2018. Lectures on the importance and preservation of mother tongue, traditional culture of Ladakh and its nomadic life were given by the experts. The aim of the workshop was to document the *intangible knowledge* and to transfer such knowledge and skills to the younger generation. The workshop included practical sessions where experts shared their knowledge and skills of nomadic tent making, including selection of materials, thread making and stitching.
Workshop on Intangible Cultural Aspect of Folk Songs and Folk Stories at Hanley Village, Ladakh, 2018

The Department of Museology organised a day long workshop at Government Middle School Khaldo, Hanley village, Ladakh on 26th March, 2018. The workshop included storytelling folk singing sessions and acquainting the villagers with different folk stories and songs.

Museum goes to Hospital

This is an Action Research Project which is taken up by the Department of Museology to create appreciation and awareness of museum objects through outreach display. The main aim of this project is to provide children an opportunity to see and experience all types of art. It also benefits the students at the Institute in learning the process of organizing an exhibition, creating outreach activities and to interpret objects for different categories of museum audience. A bilingual activity booklet for children admitted at AIIMS was also designed and published by the Department of Museology in Hindi and English.

Workshops for Paediatric patients, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi

Workshops are organised on regular basis for the patients of the Paediatric Ward, AIIMS with the support of Cancer Patients Aid Association (CPAA). The workshops are organised at National Museum Institute and Paediatric Ward, AIIMS, New Delhi. An exhibition comprising the copies of paintings from different museums was inaugurated 22nd December, 2015 at the Paediatric wards of AIIMS, New Delhi.
Activity Booklet for children

Children from Paediatric Ward, AIIMS being taken around the different galleries of the National Museum

Children from Paediatric Ward, AIIMS participating in the activities after the museum visit
Kathakar- The International Story Teller’s Festival

Puppet making workshop for children, Paediatric Ward, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)

Workshop ‘Khel Khel mein Aao Jaane Apna Itihaas’
Department of Museology organised a workshop for the children of the Paediatric Ward, AIIMS consisting of guided gallery tours, discussions and storytelling within the galleries of the National Museum. It included activities like clay modelling, drawing, painting, puzzles etc, which were centred around museum objects.

The department organised a day workshop at AIIMS with the support of Nivesh as part of ‘Kathakar – The International Story Teller’s Festival’. The workshop consisted of a story telling performance by a Japanese group.

The department organised a puppet making workshop which was also held for the children from the Paediatric Ward, AIIMS at National Museum Institute. The workshop consisted of hands-on activities.

The department also organised a workshop ‘Khel Khel mein Aao Jaane Apna Itihaas’ on the theme of Harappan civilisation and its belongings at the premises of AIIMS on 7th March, 2018. The workshop entailed theatrical show put up by students of Museology followed by a practical session on clay modelling and Madhubani painting.

On the occasion of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Department of Museology organised three educational workshops for children in Paediatric Ward AIIMS, New Delhi, Stakna Monastery and Gya village, Leh, Ladakh.

**Indo-Dutch Encounters: Visual Stories of Rare Indian Kalamkaris**

This ongoing project is a result of collaboration between the Netherlands and India. Kalamkari textiles were one of the most important commodities commissioned by the Dutch traders in 16th to 17th century and subsequently exported to the Netherlands. Some of these exquisite historic pieces have survived the ravages of time and are now part of museum collections in the Netherlands and other countries. As a part of the project the Department of Museology, National Museum Institute had organised a workshop titled ‘Eyes on Dyes and Deals- Stories of East-West fascination on and behind 17th century Kalamkaris’ on 15th November 2017. An International seminar as part of the project was organised on the 30th and 31st October 2018 titled ‘Cosmopolitan Kalamkaris: Crafting Connections through 17th century Figural Fabrics’.
Workshop on 'Eyes on Dyes and Deals’ - Stories of East-West fascination On and Behind 17th century Kalamkaris, 2017

As a part of the ongoing project, Department of Museology conducted a day long workshop in collaboration with the Netherlands on ‘Eyes on Dyes and Deals’ on 15 November, 2017. The workshop was centred around the fabulous Kalamkaris as the sources of information and inspiration. The aim was to explore options for a collaborative, multidisciplinary project on the topic, renewing cultural exchange between India, the Netherlands and possibly other western countries.

Workshops

‘Peace across Borders’, 2012

A four day workshop titled ‘Peace across Borders’ on ‘Peace across borders – learning through Manto, Dickens, Jansuz and Neruda’s work’ was designed for students to initiate them in the process of peace and peace studies. The workshop was organised by National Museum Institute, Nivesh, HHACH and National Book Trust in partnership
with UNESCO as part of the Ghummakad Narain- the Travelling Children’s Festival from 28th July – 1st August, 2012 in which students from India and Pakistan participated.

‘Conservation & Display, Museology & Education’, 2013

A workshop on ‘Conservation & Display, Museology & Education’ was organized by the National Museum Institute in collaboration with University of Applied Arts Vienna at the National Museum Institute from 11th- 15th February, 2013.

Museum Accessibility Sensitization Training, 2014

A three day training programme was organised at the National Museum Institute from 23rd –25th April, 2014 in collaboration with AADI- (Action for Ability Development and Inclusion) to sensitize the students of Museology, National Museum, New Delhi and volunteers from AADI on museum accessibility for the disabled.


The National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology in collaboration with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), New
Delhi organized a workshop on ‘Disaster Risk Preparedness Plan for museums’ at National Museum Institute on 4th and 5th April, 2016. The aim of the workshop was to initiate, deliberate and prepare on a tentative structure of guidelines for disaster management for Museums.

A workshop on Disaster Risk Preparedness for Museums in Ladakh was organised by the Department of Museology in collaboration with National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), New Delhi at Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh, Ladakh. The workshop was conducted for the museum caretakers, managers and professionals in Ladakh. One of the main objectives of the workshop was to inform and create awareness in the participants about the nature of disasters, how to limit and contain damage by using preventive conservation measures and rapid interventions to save cultural heritage. The workshop was designed to actively involve the participants in deliberating about the risk factors keeping in view the hazards, vulnerability and the capacity of the case study (Thiksey Monastery and Museum).
Workshop on Mask Making at the Sri Sai Chamaguri Satra, Majuli, Assam, 2016

The Department of Museology organized an educational workshop for the students of Museology from 19th to 29th October, 2016. The students made educational visits to the Assam State Museum, Guwahati and attended a special lecture on Museum Movement of North East India. The students made educational visits to Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra, Don Bosco Museum, Shillong, Meghalaya, Sibsagar-fort, Uttaran Museum (private collection) and Tezpur ancient town and Sualkuchi Silk Handloom (Industry).

Gandhi for All- Workshops on 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, organised by Department of Museology at Stakna Monastery, Ladakh and Paediatric Ward, AIIMS, 2018-2019

Department of Museology, National Museum Institute organised three workshops on life, philosophy, teachings and beliefs of Mahatma Gandhi as part of the celebration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. One of the workshops was held at the premises of AIIMS, New Delhi and the other two were organised at Stakna Monastery School, Ladakh and Gya village (Sasoma) Leh, Ladakh.

Workshop for monks and students, Stakna monastery, Leh, Ladakh, 2018

Department of Museology conducted a workshop for monks and students at Stakna monastery, Leh. The workshop included demonstration on Thangka painting
by an expert following which children made Thangka paintings on Gandhiji and his belongings. An expression board was used to get feedback and viewpoints of children related to the theme of the workshop. A Discovery box was prepared for the workshop by the department with pictures and images of Gandhiji, replicas of his belongings and his quotes. The purpose of using the discovery box was to provide hands-on experience of the replicas of the objects used by Gandhiji.

Workshop for children, Paediatric Ward, AIIMS, New Delhi, 2018

The workshop organised at the Paediatric Ward included a skit prepared by students of Museology on the life of Mahatma Gandhi. The life journey of Gandhiji was explained using printed photographs, cardboard model of train coach, replicas and models of Mahatma Gandhi’s belongings like working models of spinning wheels, pocket watch, spectacles, stick, cloths, wood-beaded rosary, wooden plates,
paaduka and many other items. The items demonstrated included spinning wheels, how threads are made and value of self-reliance was highlighted to understand the teaching of simple living. *Discovery box* containing the replicas of Mahatma Gandhi’s belongings, his quotes and pictures were used as a medium to provide the children with a hands-on experience.
Workshop on Traditional Rug Weaving, Sasoma, Gya village, Leh, Ladakh, 2018

Department of Museology organised a week long workshop on traditional Rug weaving at Gya, Ladakh. The participants of the workshop were introduced to looms and weaving process. The week long workshop included an introduction about Mahatma Gandhi, Discovery box to give hands on experience followed by a drawing activity based on the replicas of the objects from the Discovery box.

Museum Outreach to Villages

This programme is an initiative by Department of Museology to reach out to the people living in villages and interior parts of the country with a vision to create awareness among them regarding their cultural heritage. As part of this ongoing programme Community led events are organised involving school students and local practitioners.
Workshop for the children of Sikheda village, Meerut, UP at National Science Centre and Bal Bhawan, 2017

The Department of Museology organized a day long workshop for the children of the Sikheda village. The educational workshop was organized on 6th December, 2017 at two museums – National Science Centre and National Bal Bhawan. The aim of this workshop was to make the students familiar with the museum objects and its surroundings and how museum objects can supplement school education.

Workshop for school students of Sikheda village, Meerut at National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi.

Department of Museology organised a workshop in collaboration with National Gallery of Modern Art on 9th March 2018 for school children. The workshop conducted at NGMA included guided lectures on art collections of NGMA, history of art and techniques used in different art forms followed by a storytelling session where students were given reprints of paintings and were being told to make a short story predicting what is depicted on the image.
Workshop for school students of Hasanpur Qadeem village, Uttar Pradesh at National Museum, 2018

Department of Museology organised a workshop for school students of Hasanpur Qadeem village on 13th March, 2018. The school students visited National Museum and were taken to visit various galleries by guide lecturers of the museum. The workshop included practical sessions with detailed introduction on three galleries i.e. Decorative Arts, Indus Valley and Arms & Armour where students were given activity sheets related to drawing/painting based on their favourite objects on the display. At the end of the workshop activity booklets based on the three galleries were distributed among students to fill so that they can write down what they have learnt from their visit. At the end of the visit students were taken to India Gate.
Workshop on Traditional Doll Making and Weaving, for school students of Gya village, Ladakh, 2018

A week long workshop and training program was organised from 10th March 2018 to 16th March 2018 for women of Ladakh, held at Gya village in Ladakh on Weaving and Toy making, conducted by Department of Museology in collaboration with Women Alliance Sasoma of Gya village under Outreach to village programme. Two resource persons were invited from Sasoma and Gya for teaching of making toys of mountain animals like snow leopard, yak, sheep, goat etc. using wool and weaving of fabrics.

Community led Events

‘Sanjhi’, Sikheda village, UP, 2013

On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of Signing of the UNESCO Convention, Department of Museology organised a community led event in Sikheda village, UP on 17th October, 2013. This one day program focusing on live creation of the living tradition of ‘Sanjhi’ was organised in the village of Sikheda (Western Uttar Pradesh). Sanjhi is a living traditional art form prevalent in Western Uttar Pradesh and also in other parts of India. The ‘Sanhji’ design patterns consist of traditional motifs created on certain ceremonies, festivals and life-cycle occasions. The programme included a demonstration of the creation of art forms, narration of stories, myths and legends.
associated with it, followed by an interactive session among the community members, school children and practitioners. Village women and elders were identified as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage documentation.

**Storytelling, Folk Singing, Piraq making and Weaving, Gya village, Ladakh, 2013**

On the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of Signing of the UNESCO Convention, Department of Museology organised a community led event on *Storytelling, Folk Singing, Piraq making and Weaving* at Gya village, Ladakh on 17th October, 2013. The event involved interaction between elders of the Gya village with young students from various parts of Ladakh. Five village elders were identified as part of the ICH documentation Project. Urgen Rigzin (stone carver), Phuntsog Tashi (Amchi) Tundup Chospail, Yangchen Dolkar, and Angchok Namgail were engaged as story-tellers as they had significant knowledge and experience in social and cultural traditions such as rituals around Losar (Buddhist New Year), stone carving, weaving, herbal medicinal practice and vernacular architecture.
Navroz, Turtuk village, Ladakh, 2015

On the occasion of Navroz festival, a community led event was held at Turtuk village, Ladakh in 2015. Folk singing and Polo match were part of the event. Department of Museology organised and documented the event as part of documenting Navroz festival which is celebrated in Ladakh from a very long time.
Capacity Building/ Resource development and Training programmes

- Ten days In-Service training programme was conducted by the department of Museology for the Museum professionals & monks of Ladakh from 13th to 23rd February, 2012.
- Six days In-Service training Programme was conducted by the Department of Museology in collaboration with Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council at Central Institute of Buddhist Studies from 23rd to 28th October, 2013.
- Department of Museology organised a training programme titled ‘Museology and Art Interpretation’ in collaboration with History of Art department of National Museum Institute and Lumbini Buddhist University, Nepal from 5th-9th March, 2018. Two faculty members and a group of four students from the University visited the National Museum Institute to participate in this workshop. The programme included a series of lectures by faculty members of both the departments on Indian Art and Architecture, Museum Studies and the collection of the National Museum.
As a part of the programme curated walks were arranged at National Museum and National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi. This training programme fostered and promoted the collaboration between the two institutions and gave the participants from LBU a deeper understanding and appreciation of Indian Art and culture as well as a broad overview of Museum Studies.

- Department of Museology in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs conducted a 15-day (5th September to 19th September 2018) training programme, “Museology and Conservation Techniques for MGC Countries” for the museum professionals from member countries of MGC (Mekong–Ganga Cooperation). Employees of Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, Vietnam, MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum, Cambodia and Khon Kaen National Museum, Thailand were the participants of this training programme. Department of Museology designed the course with theory, practical sessions and field visits. As part of the programme, the professionals were taken to several museums and heritage sites including Heritage Transport Museum, National Crafts Museum, Gandhi Smriti, National Museum, Humayun’s Tomb, Old Fort and Archaeological Museum, Old Fort.

The programme also included lectures and interactive talk-sessions with experts from the field. Lectures on different subjects and aspects of Museums and Museology were taken by Prof. (Dr.) Manvi Seth and Asst. Professor Juhi Sadiya.
Conference and Seminars

Seminar on Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2012

The Department of Museology organized a working seminar on Intangible Cultural Heritage on 4th and 5th May, 2012. The seminar proposed to identify and discuss the concept, issues and domains of ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage) in order to start the process of developing region based formats in the Indian context. The purpose of the two day working seminar was to bring together the advocates, experts, representatives, researchers and practitioners of ICH to explore the range and nature of varied and vast Intangible Cultural Heritage in India.


The Department of Museology, National Museum Institute (NMI) in collaboration with Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) held an International Seminar in Leh, Ladakh from 1st -5th Sep 2012. The seminar focused on the theme of ‘Museums and the Changing Cultural Landscape’. The aim of the international seminar was to explore museums potential to be platforms for documenting, representing, and communicating socio-cultural change in the context of Ladakh. The intent was that the seminar would help initiate the process of planning a museum for Ladakh in a manner appropriate to the people and region.
Seminar on Museum Education, 2013

A working seminar on ‘Museum Education’ was organized at the National Museum Institute (NMI) on 20th and 21st February, 2013. The purpose of the seminar was to initiate a new round of dialogue amongst museum educators, school educators and in-charges and museologists about the potential of museums as an important multidisciplinary, non-formal education resource for supplementing school education.

CIDOC Annual Conference, 2015

The CIDOC (International Committee for Documentation of ICOM) annual conference for the year 2015 was held at New Delhi from 5th to 10th September 2015. The conference was hosted by the National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation & Museology (NMI), New Delhi. Around 200 people from 36 countries participated in the conference.
The CIDOC 2015 conference programme focused on the challenges of documenting the diversity of cultural heritage in India and other countries, the collecting practices, cataloguing methods, and contextual information that are required to deal with varied other cultural heritage institutions to achieve common goals.

The conference started with a series of six workshops held on 5th and 6th of September 2015 at the National Gallery of Modern Art and National Museum Institute, New Delhi. The workshops were held on various subjects like Role of CIDOC in International Humanitarian Programmes, Documentation, CIDOC-CRM, and Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Parallel sessions on different conference themes took place on the following three days (7th to 9th September) at National Museum Institute and Vigyan Bhawan. Panel discussions and working
group meetings were held from 7th to 9th September at different conference venues. On 8th September, after the conference sessions, a visit to Rashtrapati Bhawan was arranged for the conference delegates. On 10th of September, the participants joined excursion to Taj Mahal, Agra.

**International Seminar on Cosmopolitan Kalamkaris: Crafting Connections through 17th century Figural Fabrics, 2018**

The seminar, ‘Cosmopolitan Kalamkaris: Crafting Connections through 17th century Figural Fabrics’ was an endeavour to raise awareness, invite enquiry, facilitate research about these historic Indo-Dutch Kalamkaris. The focus of the seminar was the figural Kalamkaris of the 17th century, produced in context of the Indo-Dutch encounters and the flourishing international trade of those times; however the thematic range of the seminar engaged various other facets of the art’s past and present.
Exhibitions

First Frames – *In the Footsteps of Early Explorers, 2012*

The exhibition titled, *First Frames – In the Footsteps of Early Explorers*’ was organised by National Museum Institute of History of Art, Conservation and Museology in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay (CSMVS), Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Library, University of Leiden, Netherlands and The Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation (LAMO) from 1st September to 1st October, 2012 at Leh Palace and LAMO Centre, Leh, Ladakh. The exhibition aimed to bring to the people of Ladakh some of the earliest photographs of Ladakh and Tibet. The exhibition traced the footsteps of early explorers, Li Gotami & Lama Anagarika Govinda, and German Archaeologist August Hermann Francke to bring together sets of photographs from their journeys, showcasing the landscape, people, life, culture and religion of the Western Himalayan region.
The exhibition brought together the collection of photographs and Fresco Tracings (1947-49) of Li Gotami from the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sanghralaya (CSMVS), the photographs of August Hermann Francke (1909) from the digital photographic collection of the Library of the University of Leiden and archival photographs (1960s) of Ladakh from the photo archives of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The photographic exhibition was supported by ritual objects from various monasteries and everyday objects of Ladakhi life.

**Documentaries**

Department of Museology is working on the project-Documentation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ladakh and Uttar Pradesh. The documentation led to the production of professional, academic documentary films which were conceptualized to reach the masses to make them aware of the richness and significance of our rich Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The following documentary films have been produced by the department:

- **‘Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ladakh’**
  - covering elements of Traditional Weaving and Stone Carving

- **‘Jingling Bells and New Dawn’**
  - on festival of Navruz and Buddhist Chanting, Ladakh

- **‘Losar’**
  - The new beginning on the festival of Losar, Ladakh

Documentary film of **Alah Udal and Swang tradition**, Western U.P (under post-production). Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) has certified the documentary film ‘LOSAR-The New Beginning’ as an ‘Academic documentary’ in ‘U’ category.
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