



GROWTH OF MUSEUMS IN ODISHA

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Abstract: -

This paper explores different objects preserved in the museums of Odisha focusing Museum's role in safeguarding the cultural heritage of Odisha. The Museum Movement was started in 1903 and later on various kind of museums including state museum, multipurpose museums, specialized museums and university museums were established. The paper specifically highlights the history and culture of different ruling dynasties of Odisha. All the objects of the museum help to reconstruct Odisha's History from the pre-historic period to modern times. Collections of museums are utilized for research work.

Keywords:-

Odisha, History, culture, museum, inscriptions, Coins, sculptures, Palmleaf Manuscripts, armoury objects.

Methodology Adopted:-

The present work has been successful only by data collections through various methods. Both primary and secondary data have been collected. The primary data have been collected through the practical observation and interview methods on the spot study. For the collection of secondary data literary works like, guide books, brochures, booklets, hand books have been consulted.

Introduction

Museum is the repository of the relics representing history and culture of the nation. It is an institution with permanent exhibition where objects either man made or natural are collected and preserved and it is open to the public for knowledge and entertainment. Museums throw light on the history of man showing how he built up his knowledge, how he developed his family life, his skill in art and crafts, his culture and civilisation through its collections. It has various duties to perform such as collection, documentation, storage display, security, conservation and dissemination of knowledge. Till the middle of the 20th century. Museums in India were used as store-houses and a limited number of people such as scholars and intellectuals visited the museum. After independence, the Government of free India has taken initiative to establish a number of museums in different parts of India. There is now at least one state museum has been founded in each state of India to depict a panorama of the totality of the state cultural heritage.¹ Oissa is proud of possessing a good number of museums like State Museum, University and College Museums, Small Multipurpose Museums, Specialised Museums, Site Museums, Temple Museums, Art and Crafts Museums, Natural History Museums, Personalia Museums etc.

Baripada Museum :

The history of the museum movement in Odisha was started towards the beginning of the twentieth century when Maharaja Sri Rama Chandra Bhanjadev established a museum at Baripada in 1903. It was the first museum of Odisha which was located in the Jubilee Library of the Baripada town where it is functioning till today. Till the integration of the Mayurbhanj state, the museum was maintained by the Maharajas of Mayurbhanj and after the integration, the museum was attached to the Odisha State Museum. This museum is essentially an archaeological museum presenting Paleolithic, Neolithic and copper plate grants and stone inscriptions of the Bhanjas and other dynasties, gold, silver, and copper coins of different periods of history, palm leaf manuscripts, seals etc. which provide historical source materials for study of culture. The collections of the museum was due to the efforts of Nagendranath Basu, R.P. Chanda, Paramananda Acharya, E.C. Worman Junior and many other local enthusiasts.²

Khiching Museum :

Khiching Museum second in the series was established in 1922 by the Maharaja Purna Chandra Bhanjadeva of Mayurbhanj. Under his patronisation, R.P. Chanda, the then superintendent of Archaeological Section Indian Museum, Calcutta conducted excavation at Khiching and Viratgarh areas assisted by Paramananda Acharya, the State Archaeologist of Mayurbhanj. It is an archaeological museum which comprises the sculptures of Brahmanical, Jaina and Buddhist pantheons, coins, copper plate grants and stone inscriptions. The colossal image of Hara worshipped as the presiding deity in the broken temple associated with Chanda and Prachanda. The image of Saptamatrukas, Uma-Maheswara, Ardhanariswara, Mahisamardini, Naga, Buddha and Jaina Tirthankaras are considered to be the master pieces of Odishan plastic art. Khichakeswari, the tutelary deity of the Bhanjas now enshrined in an elegant chlorite temple which is an added attraction for visitors to the museum.³

State Museum, Bhubaneswar :

The Odisha State Museum at Bhubaneswar is the third in the state from the point of age. The genesis of this museum dates back to the year 1932 when two notable historians of 'Revanshaw College, Cuttack Prof. Ghanashyam Das and Prof. N.C. Banerjee collected archaeological remains from various places of Odisha. The small museum was then housed within the premises of the college. In 1938, by a suitable order, the Government of Odisha transformed the collections in to the Provincial Museum of Odisha and appointed a committee of management constituting of the principal, the Head of the Department of History and three other professors of the college. With the shifting of the state capital from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar in 1947-48 the Provincial Museum was also shifted there, slowly the collection of antiquities and specimens grew manifold and necessity of having a special building for the purpose was felt. The foundation stone of this building was laid on 29th December 1957 by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Indian Union. Dr. H.K. Mahatab the then Chief Minister of Odisha and a noted historian himself took the initiative for making the institution a full-fledged museum.⁴

The Odisha State Museum is a multipurpose museum with a rich treasure of cultural objects of Odisha. The collection of this museum are divided in to ten sections namely Archaeology, Epigraphy and Numismatic, Armoury, Natural History, Art and Crafts, Anthropology, Palm Leaf Manuscripts, Mining and Geology Contemporary Paintings and Gopabandhu Gallery.

There are also technical sections such as modelling carpentry, taxidermy laboratory, chemical laboratory, drawing, photography etc. The museum has also a well equipped library with an excellent collection of rare and valuable books on Odisha's history and cultures as well on indology. This library is extensively used by research scholars and research students of different disciplines. The publication wing of the Odisha State Museum has brought a series of monographs, edited works and a quarterly journals entitled Odishan Historical Journals. Valuable publications of the museum include the twelve descriptive catalogues of palm leaf manuscript, nine volumes of inscriptions of Odisha. Odisha State Museum has now become a centre of cultural and educational activities in Odisha with the organisation of regular seminars and conferences, popular lectures and number of other activities.

Belkhandi Museum :

Next in chronology to the State Museum comes the Belkhandi Museum which was established in 1946-47 with the archaeological remains excavated from the site. The excavation was conducted by late K.N. Mohapatra, the then archaeologist of Kalahandi district and notable historian. The museum is located at the confluence of the Tel and Utei rivers. The collections of the museum consists of Hara Kartikeya, Lakshmi-Narayana, Mahisasura Mardini, Nataraj, Avalkiteswara, Parvati etc. After the merger of the state, the museum was brought to the administrative control of the Odisha State Museum.⁵

Anthropology Museum, Utkal University :

The Anthropological Museum of Post-Graduate Department of Anthropology of Utkal University was established in 1958 which is open to public on all working days. The museum has three sections such as cultural anthropology, Pre-history Archaeology and Physical Anthropology. In Cultural Anthropology section, hunting fishing, agricultural implements, weapons of offence and defence, basketry, musical instruments, dress and ornaments and household articles of tribal and rural areas have been collected and displayed in well lighted showcases. The pre-historic section has perhaps the largest collections of the pre-historic tools in any university museums of India. The tools have been arranged according to the chronological sequence. The physical anthropology section possesses plastic casts of original fossils representing the various stages of human evolution. This is one of the few Anthropology Department of India where teaching in museology and museum management is imparted to the students of the Post-Graduate level.⁶

Berhampur University Museum :

The Berhampur University Museum was originated in the year 1968 when two eminent professors Prof. K.B. Tripathy and Prof. K.C. Panigrahi started collections of palm leaf manuscripts from various parts of Southern Odisha. The museum was opened in the premises of Administrative Building. Thereafter it came under the Oriya Department from the year 1975 under the supervision of Prof. B.C. Roy and subsequently functioning under the History Department, its present place. The Archival Cell was opened in the year 1985 with the appointment of an Archivist. At present under the supervision of the Head of the Department of History it has a multidimensional concept of a full-fledged Museum-cum-Archival Cell. The collections of the museum includes coins of Sultanate and Mughal period, stone sculptures, tribal musical instruments, ornaments, hunting weapons, brass metal objects etc.⁷

Dr. N.K. Sahu Museum, Sambalpur University :

The present Dr. N.K. Sahu Museum of the P.G. Department of History Sambalpur University was established in 1970 when the first session of Odisha History Congress met in Sambalpur being hosted by the P.G.

Department of History, Sambalpur University. Since then the museum is developing steadily. Now it has become a repository of a large number of valuable collections in various aspects comprising excavated materials, pre-historic tools, sculptures, inscriptions, coins, art and crafts, war weapons, palm leaf manuscripts etc. Recently the museum has been named as Dr. N.K. Sahu Museum after the name of its founder Prof. N.K. Sahu, the first Professor and Head of the Department of History Sambalpur University. The museum contains the palaeoliths, microliths and neoliths collected from different parts of Western Odisha. The Department has conducted excavations at various sites and the excavated materials of some excavations have been displayed in the museum.⁸

Jeypore Museum :

The Jeypore Museum came into being in the year 1975 when the then S.D.O. Sri Subas Pani of the sub-division collected a number of life size Jaina images from Kotpad, Boriguma, Papadahandi, Bhairavasinghpur and other areas of the sub-division and housed it in a building at the sub-division headquarters built by the local municipality. The museum is the store-house of antiquities ranging from the pre-historic period to the modern era. It is a great centre of tourist attraction due to its rich tribal culture. Jeypore is famous for its traditional art objects Gobara Kandhei which has been prominently displayed in the museum.⁹

Balasore Museum :

The Balasore Museum was established in the year 1975 at Santikanan situated at the heart of Balasore town and subsequently it was shifted to the newly constructed Fakir Mohan Memorial Building located at the birth place of the noted literateur of Odisha. Most of the collection was in the form of donation by the late Raja Manoranjandev and other objects were gathered from the locality. The important collections include Buddhist, Jaina and Brahmanical sculptures and a Colossal Portuguese anchor.¹⁰

Khariar Museum :

The Khariar Museum was housed in 1976 in a private building of the Raja Saheb of Khariar. It preserves the archaeological objects of Saravapuriya and Panduvamsi dynasties like sculptures, epigraphs and coins, palm-leaf manuscript, armoury objects and art and craft specimens. Most of the objects were donated by the Yuvaraj of Khariar and the rest were collected from the local sites. Government is planning to have a building of its own in a conspicuous place of the town and to display the archaeological treasures of the Marguda valley which have recently come to light after excavation.¹¹

Dhenkanal Museum :

The Dhenkanal Museum was organised in 1976 in a rented house in Durga Bazar under the leadership of Dr. H.C. Das, the then Superintendent of State Museum, Bhubaneswar. One galley assistant was posted there along with a chowkidar and an attendant. Subsequently the museum was shifted to Mahavir Bazar, Library building in Meena Bazar and at present it is functioning in the building of District Athletic Association at a centrally located place with the initiative of Sri Gopinath Mohanty IAS, the then Collector of Dhenkanal. At present there are two galleries and a big verandah where the museum specimens have been displayed. The museum has a special place on account of its armoury collections acquired from the Dhenkanal Palace.¹² The armoury objects include the canon, jamadadha, shield,

swords, badau, battle axe, gun, ceremonial swords, gauntlets, kantas, kataris etc. In addition to these anthropological specimens, dhokra objects and several other art and crafts items find place in the museum.

Nuapada Museum ;

The District Museum Nuapada was founded in 1976 in order to preserve the precious antiquities of the rural area. Presently the museum is functioning in the District Library Building. This museum is the storehouse of antiquities ranging from pre-historic period to the modern era. It is a great centre of tourist attraction due to its rich cultural heritage in and around it. Every day thousands of tourists come from the neighbouring Chhatisgarh to Pathora Dam and Nuapada. The museum preserves stone and terracotta sculptures, stone tools, arms, palm leaf manuscripts, tribal ornaments. The collections are displayed in three galleries.

Nuapada and its adjoining area especially Rajkhariar is famous for Shakti Cult. Yogini culture also started from this area. There are large number of fragmentary sculptures related to Shakti worship are found in almost all over the district. Before the construction of the Ranipur Jhariar and Hirapur Jhariar temple the Shakti worship was prevalent in this area.¹³ Therefore a large number of female deities have been excavated from the site and displayed in the museum.

Puri Museum :

The Puri Museum was opened in the year 1976 with the local collections and a few loan items from the Odisha State Museum. The museum is functioning in a rented private house. It preserves different Vesas of Lord Jagannatha and traditional art objects of different districts of Odisha.¹⁴ The earliest collection of the museum is few early medieval sculptures of undivided Puri district. The collections are displayed in three galleries namely Archaeology, Natural History and Traditional Art and Palm Leaf Manuscript.

The other important collections are brass metal work, terracotta docra work, mask, wooden objects, natural history specimens etc.

Berhampur Museum :

The Berhampur Museum was organised in the year 1976 and is being functioning in a rented house in the heart of the city. The Berhampur Museum is the storehouse of antiquities ranging from the early part of medieval period to the modern era. It is a great centre of tourist attraction due to its rich cultural heritage and the nearby Gopalpur sea-beach. Everyday thousands of tourists come to this place from the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and West Bengal.

The museum preserves stone, terracotta, arms, natural history specimens, mask, patta painting, palm leaf manuscripts etc. The collections are displayed in four galleries namely Archaeology and Epigraphy, Natural History, Patta Painting and Traditional Art.¹⁵

Salipur Museum :

The Salipur Museum established in the year 1977 by the Government of Odisha in order to preserve the antiquities found in and around Salipur area. The sculptural treasures of the Chitrotpala river valley were collected and

housed in this museum. The pre-historic and historical antiquities which are preserved in the museum prove the cultural richness of the area.

The museum preserves stone and terracotta sculptures, stone tools, arms, natural history objects. The collections are displayed in three galleries namely Archaeology, Armoury and Natural History etc. The important collections of the archaeology gallery are the Buddhist antiquities of the local area which include the image of Buddha, Avalokiteswara, Chhatrabali and fragmentary pieces of Buddhist stupa.¹⁶ The other archaeological collections are Nayika, dancing figures, terracotta, Gajasimha, decorated terracotta tile pieces etc.

There is a large number of arms and armoury collection in the armoury section. The collection basically belongs to medieval period and it includes swords, guns etc. The Natural History section preserves leopard, snakes, sea-fish, insects, new born baby etc.

Tribal Museum, Bhubaneswar :

The Tribal Museum, Bhubaneswar which is located at C.R.P.F. Square has originally conceived in 1987 but materialised on March 5, 2001. The exhibits of the museum represent the elementary human cultural values that had shaped our past are determining our present and will be guiding our future. So the museum of Tribal and Arefacts can be conceptually labelled as “Museum of Man”. In common parlance museum of man means an integrated institution which disseminates knowledge covering the human species in its totality.

This museum has approximately 1900 displayed tribal artefacts in five halls.¹⁷ They exhibit dresses and ornaments, dhokra items, dances and musical instruments, hunting implements, fishing nets, weapons of offence and defence, personal belongings, arts and photographs.

The indigenous tools, technologies weapons, basketry, pottery, textiles, dresses, ornaments and rural objects are losing their meaning to the new generation. Hence protection and preservation of these tools, appliances and material traits in the museum has become a necessity to know the antecedents of human life and living.

Regional Museum of Natural History, Bhubaneswar :

The Eastern Regional Centre of National Museum of Natural History, Union Ministry of Environment and Forests is situated in a prime location inside temple city of Bhubaneswar. Six acres of land was given free of cost by the Government of Odisha. Initial phase of construction began after foundation stone on 5th November 1994. Subsequently the museum was opened for the public on 10th August 2004 with the objective of promoting non-formal environmental education among general public and younger generation in particular.¹⁸

The museum houses four spectacular galleries beautiful aquariums and magnificent osteological exhibits of mammals, birds, reptiles and rare herpetological collections.

Gallery 1 : Unique Creation of Nature :

Temporary gallery which portrays rare extinct and endangered animals of India like whale, pythons, stuffed crocodiles, models of blackbuck, hyena, wild dog and clouded leopard.

Gallery 2 – Biodiversity Gallery :

Permanent gallery depicts vast biodiversity of different habitats like Chilika, Bhitarkanika and Simillipal Biosphere Reserve besides North Eastern Region, Andaman and Nicobar Islands were showed case to captivate young minds towards better understanding about ecology.

Galley 3 – Discovery Centre :

This gallery is specially designed for children to achieve enjoyable learning involving all senses to inculcate interest about environment. Various scientific facts have been displayed with visual aid in a manner of questions and answers.

Gallery 4 : Second Phase Gallery :

Ongoing gallery development activities focused on natural phenomenon also given importance for exhibit design and display. Recently valuable and interesting collection of geological and zoological specimens brought from Madagascar Island were donated by Sri Absar Beuria, Former Ambassador of India. There are interesting fossilised remains of tree, vertebra of dinosaur, ammonites and fish reveals million years evolutionary history related with their origin.

Bolangir Museum :

The District Museum Bolangir was founded in 1995 with the antiquities collected from the locality. The Kalamandala, a leading cultural institution of Bolangir which is looking after the socio-cultural activities of the district played a significant role in the formation of the museum. The District Museum Bolangir has been the repository of the various objects ranging from pre-historic period to the present century. Many seminars, meetings had been organised throughout the district for the development of the museum. Lot of response had been marked and people started to donate museum specimens. These specimens were collected and arranged in a hall and in the year 1996 an independent museum building was constructed in which at present the museum specimens are being displayed.¹⁹

The museum comprises the collections of stone, sculptures, metal images, metal objects, jewellery, terracotta, pottery, glass objects textiles, manuscripts, ivory, miniature painting, oil painting, anthropological objects and others. The archaeological collections of the museum though very few in number but culturally it is very important. The collections include sitting bull, old bricks human figurine etc. The palm leaf manuscripts collection are more attracting than any other object of the museum for the research scholars. The bamboo made manuscript container are also preserved in the museum. But the important collections of the museum are the tribal artefacts and ornaments of the local tribes. The wooden object like Gajabidala is the most attracting one for its minute workmanship. The traditional art objects of the local area are attracting not only the local visitors but also to the research scholars.

Bargarh Museum :

The District Museum Bargarh was established in 1997 with the initiative of Miss Anu Garg, the then Collector of Bargarh district. At first the museum started functioning in a rented house near Kalimandir Chhowk

adjacent to the Panchayat College Road. Subsequently the museum has been shifted to Gandhi Bhawan and at present it is functioning in the District Library Building.

The District Museum Bargarh is the store house of antiquities ranging from early medieval period to the modern era. The museum preserves stone, terracotta, sculptures, arms, masks, tribal ornaments, modern and old coins, tribal artefacts etc. The collections are displayed in three galleries namely Archaeology, Armoury and Traditional art.

The earliest collection of the District Museum Bargarh is the image of Uma-Maheswara, decorated sitting bull, Nayika etc. The museum preserves traditional weaving instruments for which Bargarh is famous. These instruments are though presently used by the weaving community but the collections are belonged to late medieval period. The instruments include wheels, traditional wooden weaving materials and other allied objects. These objects are showing the great traditional culture of weaving cloths in this area.²⁰

The tribal ornaments and artefacts are the priceless collections of the museum. Tribal ornaments of the museum are bangles, necklace, ear stud, pendants etc. The tribal artefacts like bow and arrow, swords and other objects are preserved in the museum. The wooden cycle of the museum is one of the important collections which attracts tourists and visitors.

District Museum, Boudh

District museum is located near the collector office of Boudh. Boudh is famous for history, culture, art, literature and monuments. The building in which the museum objects are preserved is the donation of Boudh king. It was inaugurated by Ex-Chief Minister Naveen Pattanaik on the 27th foundation day of Boudh.

The museum is divided into various sections. Those include royal chamber, teracotta, coins and archive departments, the charu and the charukala chamber, the famous personalities, the tribal chamber, the handicrafts, the sculptures, the canopy, the old archive. In addition, various instruments relating to art and culture ancient artifacts, ancient books, documents, photographs have been displayed. Since Boudh is a district of tourist attraction large number of visitors come to the museum everyday.

Conclusion :-

All these museums which are discussed above serve the purpose of creating consciousness and understanding of the heritage in Odisha. Therefore the collections of the museums of Odisha need proper preservation which will definitely be helpful for study and research for the students, research scholars and teachers. They speak the development of art and crafts of the state ranging from pre-historic period to modern times. Museums serve as educational resource and cultural beacon enriching public understanding and appreciation of Odisha's historical legacy.

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