

INNOVATION AND SUSTANABILITY OF SMALL MUSEUMS

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It is very true to note that museum as such serves as a mirror for a country because it reflects the national scenario of political, economic, cultural and historical past. It is not to be viewed as a book loaded with highly jargonized language by an author. It is in true sense of the term a comprehensible book written down to commoners' digestion, like laborers, peasants, children and foreigners. The significance of museum is all the more being realized in the present context after the World War II when the countries broken free from colonial noose are turning to retrieve their culture and practices.² In the scary context of one country split into many by conflict, war and colony, and embittered by feud and contempt now see the possibility of rebuilding/rejoining with a glue of identical culture and civilization.³

It is also very obvious to highlight that hundreds of languages, castes and cultures stay set in harmony within a country, for instance; Nepal is house for over 120 languages and more than 100 species of caste.⁴ All of them are eager to learn about the origin and present status of their language and culture. The commoners do not sound happy with the history written about the high class ruling elites who for a long time enjoyed high echelons of power, the history, culture, practice and museum singing sweet of them.⁵ It seems that they are demanding the foundation of more inclusive history, culture and museums. And obviously, a state is obliged to have the people of the specific locale realize the glory of their caste, language and culture. The need of doing this is all the more pressing in the poor and conflict ravaged countries. The best way to do so is to found museums of low cost with high public participation. Likewise, museums in advanced and developed countries are likely to strengthen unity, identity and National security, finally. Therefore, the present write up underscores the foundation of small museums with

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² <http://www.beyondintractability.org/userguide/identity-conflicts>

³ Prem Singh Basnyat, *New Paradigm in Global security* (Lalitpur: Sajha Publication, 2004), p.21.

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhesi_people

⁵ Shree Prasad Devkota and Navin Pandey – TRANSCEND Media Service, *Conflict: Causes, Impacts and Post-Conflict Reconciliation in Nepal*, 27 March 2017. <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2017/03/conflict-causes-impacts>

lasting sustainability. The scribe also forwarded examples and grounds to justify the need of such museums for scribe's country Nepal.

On the other hand, in scribe's presentations in international forums, the scribe has been claimed that museums can be set to act as a peace center to build peace in the conflict ridden countries.⁶ And this is possible too. Unfortunate we must call it that in most International conflicts / wars, it is the religious, cultural, historical centers and museums to be targeted first.⁷ The museums flatten to rubbles and the antiques get plundered. Present day Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya offer glaring examples of such devastation.⁸ The museums devastated during the World War I and II number beyond count.⁹ The United Nation's failure to protect such cultural heritage from the feud and fight is no less. Any failure of the present generation to protect the museums, temples, churches and public places built strenuously by the past generation is sure to cause loss of our art and cultural identity. That is sure to terminate the momentum of development of our civilization.

If the 21st century military warfare doesn't spare to plunder and rub the epitome of age old cultural heritage, how else is to describe them? They are not any less than the gang of robbers of the Stone Age! This is a really a sensitive issue. It is therefore a matter of grave concern of all the connoisseurs of art, culture and history. If we still fear to raise the voices against the super powers' guns, bombs and missiles and resort to keep mum even as they destroy the embodiment of our ancient art and culture, there is none but ourselves to be dead alive. From now on, let us speak loud and clear to the world "**No plundering others**" culture in the guise of war'. It is high time we preserved the existing museums and found more museums to preserve the art, culture and history. It is advisable that United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the power centers take a policy to found and provide assistance to small scale museums in the developing countries.

It is very obvious to mention is that another aspect not much attended to is that almost 80 percent of the conflicts happen in the poor countries.¹⁰ Search of race, region, religion and language

⁶ Prem Singh Basnyat "The role of museum in in conflict prevention" at the ICOM -China Expo Conference : 14-19 Sept 2016 & other seminars too.

⁷ <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/destroying-cultural-heritage-more-just-material-damage>

⁸ <https://ciccglobaljustice.wordpress.com/2016/08/18/ten-instances-of-cultural-destruction-during-conflict/>

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_destroyed_heritage

¹⁰ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar>

related identity and poverty coupled with lack of access to resources fan the fire to conflict.¹¹ Identity based conflict outnumber the conflict due to lack of basic needs. As referred to above, what one finds is people seek representational access to resources from their respective castes, religion, lineage, culture and civilization.¹² Such conflicts tend to be detrimental challenging to massive ethnic cleansing. There are abundant examples of such conflicts in the world. Clear enough, all revolt and conflict have their roots to search of identity, and foundation of museums and rewriting of history to some extent calms the fire of fury. Because the museums keep things to represent the ethnic groups, they own up a sense of “**we-feeling**” to generate a sentiment of collective love and ownership. If government offers a little assistance to set up and operation of museums, they will sustain and grow up.

It also would be fair to highlight is that the International Committee of Museums (ICOM) Paris’s turn/move to concentrate its conferences, researches and case studies for development more to developing countries than developed ones would be fruitful. May be the rich and the power centers don’t need small scale museums so much. They need large and advanced museums suitable to their operation viability/capability. To put it in brief, the ICOM, Paris would do well to put foundation of small scale museums for another two decades in its priority. That would be the call of the hour.

In the next hand, another equally important aspect that we cannot afford to overlook is that the poor countries with difficult geographical terrains, sparsely populated areas, winding up and down roads, tall mountains and snow caped Himalayas, flood prone plains and inclement climatic zones, for instance Nepal have their own assets endowed by nature.¹³ But we see underdevelopment turns the blissful nature to limitation. This scribe is proud of his country where visitors from far and near come and return with experience of a world of fun and joy. Fortunately, the incombent Right Honorable President of Republic Korea Mr. Moon-Jea-In and teams of museum experts and other personalities came to Nepal and returned happy with the beauty hereof.

¹¹ Basnyat, f.n. 3,p.34.

¹² https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Cultural_Anthropology/Print_version

¹³ http://www.trekkinginternational.com/nepal/geography_of_nepal.php



President Moon has once already visited Nepal prior to his assumption of the presidential responsibility to help the earthquake victims in 2015.¹⁴ Museum expert Professor Bae Kidong, PhD and his team visited Nepal for archaeological research in several parts of Nepal.

Given many places without access to road transport, inaccessible due to no bridge over the big rivers, sparsely populated areas with people ground under poverty, foundation of museums in those places to represent and conserve their languages, cultures, costumes and practices would prove like a godsend gift there. The communities there would surely join hands to found such museums and upkeep them with a sense of pride. The museums in those places would certainly contribute to enhance local economy from tourists and pacify the flaring fire of identity conflict to a great extent. They would also serve as open school and peace center. In retrospect, the 1995-2005 ten year Maoist war within/ insurgency weakened Nepal when as many as more than 17,000 people lost their lives.¹⁵ Many people in the rebellion period demanded racial and religious identity. Now 20 years down the line since the end of insurgency and arrival of the Maoists in peace process, as many as 120 castes of people are still raising their voice. Small scale museums in the far off places without access to modern facilities would surely address the expectation of the people to some extent. The same is true to the African countries, Balcan region, and underdeveloped countries of the Middle East where foundaton of small museums are long felt.

It also would be very important to note that yet another aspect that needs attention is that museums are the entities of pride and glory of any country. Advanced countries have founded museums to represent their progress and achievement.¹⁶ It has found way to the national policy

¹⁴ <http://www.myrepublica.com/news/19833/>

¹⁵ The Himalayan Times, *Nepal's politicians, army resistant to investigating war crimes (article)*, Published: May 26, 2017.

¹⁶ <http://www.visitlondon.com/things-to-do/sightseeing/london-attraction>

there. But in the poor countries where food, shelter and clothing is the immediate need cannot found museums of advanced quality and are concentrated to the cities only. Mass of the population cannot avail of the museums in the cities. It is better for the poor countries to found small scale museums to represent their art, culture and history. As a start up, they can initiate to found small museums and to grow and conserve them.

To sum up, knowledge, experience and skill grows and expands by sharing. Just as a lit candle can make aflame thousands of unlit candle, so it can spread light too at the same time. For the development of **sustainable small museums**, why not the developed countries initiate to expand the branches of their museums in other parts of the world as help and assistance? Things such as how operate the museums and what to keep there could be sorted out from bilateral agreement. Why delay to start a campaign of **“Museum for Museum”** with International Move? Just as a bank/ industry/ INGO of one country expands/opens its branches across the world, if the same could be done to expand museums in the countries rich and poor, it would greatly contribute to the growth and development of the museums rapidly. For this dream to take shape, **“one for all and all for one”** spirit of benevolence is a must.