

Understanding the Role of Heritage, Culture and Museums in National Identity Formation

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Abstract:

Heritage and Culture are inter-related concepts which interacts with each other in process of forming a larger identity. Both these ideas come together in the institution of Museum which is a tool for the manifestation and expression of Nation and National Identity. This research paper is an attempt of understand the ideas of culture and heritage in the sphere of National Identity formation of any group of people. This paper discusses about the evolution of the concepts of culture and heritage and tries to understand how the new phenomenon of Cultural Heritage evolves from them. The paper also tries to understand the institution of Museum where these concepts manifests themselves particularly, in the Nation-building process of any group or Nation.

Keywords: *Culture, Heritage, Museum, National Identity*

Heritage can be defined as a set of traditions, customs, achievements, practices, beliefs, etc., that are part of the history of any group or nation and this set of things is specifically transmitted from one generation to another (Meriam Webster 2011) both in tangible and intangible forms. The word “Heritage” has been derived from the Latin term *patri-monium*, which combines two terms: *pater* (father) and *munus* (duty). Thus, literally, heritage can be defined as “the duty of the father” or it can be understood as “things belonging to one’s father”. This meaning of the term helps us in understanding the essence of the idea of ‘heritage’. When looked upon from this perspective, it indicates that, the goods that belonged to the father carry a certain sense of emotional value for the future generation. However, in a larger sense heritage can be understood as a set of goods that is inherited by one generation from the previous generation and which is supposed to be passed on to the future generations which becomes crucial for identity of the particular community (Selicato 2016:7). Heritage is generally understood in the sense of the inheritance one gets from one’s predecessors and in