

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Institutional Obsolescence in Heritage Conservation: A Case Study of the Gurusaday Museum, Kolkata

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Abstract

Gurusaday Museum, situated in the Bratachari Gram of Joka, close to the densely populated part of Kolkata city, Behala, was once a place of touristic importance. Cultural tourists interested in understanding the cultural history of the region frequently visit the place. The museum was established after the country gained independence with the efforts of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The museum exhibits various arts and artefacts describing the rich cultural history of pre-independent Bengal. Like all other cultural museums of the country, this museum was once a source of pride for the people of the region.

At a later stage, this museum lost its glory, and a lack of initiatives for its survival led to the significant decline of this museum. This paper will examine the decline and search for the causes of the death of this magnificent cultural heritage of the city of Kolkata.

1 INTRODUCTION

Historians are familiar with the name Sri Gurusaday Dutta, who spent his life as a district collector in rural Bengal within the tenure ranging from 1882 to 1941, during which he developed an interest in rural Folk and rustic arts. He collected a lot of articles from rural Bengal depicting the rural culture of the region. Post-demise, his family members, friends, and relations collected his works from various places and was transferred to Bengal Bratachari Society.

The present museum building was constructed and maintained by the Bengal Bratachari Society. The museum opened on 8th February 1963, by its predecessor. Humayun Kabir, after that it was handed to Gurusaday Dutta, who used to run the Folk Art Society, and with financial assistance from the Ministry of Textiles, the initiative was made into reality. Later, the Bengal Bratachari society and the President of India signed a contract. It was formed after the meeting of the Bengal Bratachari society, and the historical resources of Bengal tradition collected by Gurusaday Dutta were precious.

After his death, the historical things were handed to the Bengal Bratachari society, and after the meeting, they made a decision to safely keep those things in a museum. Thus, the museum was created in Kolkata. The museum building was established by the then chief minister of West Bengal, a renowned National figure, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy in 1961. However, the galleries were eventually opened in 1963 in the presence of Professor Humayun Kabir, the Indian Education Minister. He was a folklorist, archaeologist and a revolutionary at his young age. Rabindranath Tagore opined that without the extreme effort of Sri Gurusaday Dutta, ICS, the District Magistrate of Brigham of that time, the grassroots development of Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan would not be a possibility. In 1924, he created rural and developed agriculture through the local mutual movement as a district magistrate of Bankura and the neighbouring District of Birbhum, of modern-day West Bengal.

In 1928, he completely refused to assist the British administration and did not order the firing on the

agitators of Lilua Railway workshop, near Howrah and as a magistrate gave his judgment against the British Government. He is well known in the area for playing a significant part in upholding the dignity of labour and for his aspiration to create a secular India, which he advocated through his writings and activities via his Bratachari movement. From his youth, he took an active interest in social service and participated in firefighting and assisting in relief work during natural disasters such as floods and others. Truly speaking, he has been regarded as one of the prominent social activists of the nineteenth century, serving the poor of the rural areas. He realised that educating and empowering were important to build a solid foundation for any progressive initiative.

Saroj Nalini Dutta, another eminent Social Worker, was motivated by the work of Gurusaday and decided to establish Mahila Samitis or contemporary Women's Institutes in the year of 1913, in Pabna district, presently located in Bangladesh, where he served as the District Magistrate during that time. The Rural Reconstruction Movement in India at Birbhum was started by him, which later extended to several districts where he was stationed for his job, like Howrah, Bankura, and Mymensingh. This movement was regarded as a daring public movement at the time. He was the initial British civilian officer to establish the worth of workers by operations with a set of followers to eliminate a menace in the water bodies of the region, the water hyacinth, a type of vegetation that envelops the ponds and makes water out of use. He also operated the filled irrigation canals with a group of labourers for their reinstatement and development. In those days, it was literally a challenge for a government servant working as a Magistrate to work along with the *general* people.

Later during the year of 1922, he introduced a Society for supportive irrigation for the farmers of the Bankura region, which later stretched to Mymensingh and Birbhum. He was also given the responsibility to head the Indian delegation to act as an envoy representing the British Indian Government to attend the summit held at the Agricultural Institute at Rome in 1924. In 1925, he

received a setback from his family after his wife's untimely demise. This left a deep mark in his heart, and as a result, he founded the Saroj Nalini Dutta Memorial Association a year after her death. This association was formed to act as a Central Training Institute to provide hands-on instruction in handmade crafts and also to provide essential education to earn a living to those women who were underprivileged from the reception of proper education in the early days of life due to the strong social constraints and were forced to live at the mercy of their relatives.

The most interesting part of the life of Sri Dutta is that he considered giving *non-formal education* to the neglected and women, years before it was officially started in India by the Britishers. This organisation, over time, earned the fame of becoming the top organisation for Mahila Samitis (Women's Institutes) in the eastern part of India, and after a considerable time and devotion, the organisation received its affiliation to the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) and the Women.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

At times it was true that many of the museums exist only in name and are rarely caught the attention of regular people except for a few museum lovers, experts and researchers of the trade. These are run by individual effort and money, which makes it hard to keep things in a good shape through the right ways to show things (Bondyopadhyay, S, 2018). Making Kantha, Making Home: This book goes into great detail about the Kantha collection, which is the most important part of the Gurusaday Museum (Ghosh, P, 2020). It also gives the cultural background that shows why the museum's possible 'obsolescence' is a big loss for feminist and textile history. The Gurusaday Museum has a compilation of 3,300 exhibits of folk art and craft, which showcases a vivid cultural picture of rural undivided Bengal (Shee, S, 2021). Gurusaday Museum stands as an identity to undivided Bengal, showcasing the citizens, its arts, handicrafts, metalware and textiles (kantha, which is a handmade sewn quilt with patterns and motifs of the 19th Century) (Mondal, P and Patel, A, 2021).

Gurusaday Dutt had a collection of art and craft where Kanthas got a prominent place in the Gurusaday Museum (Bardhan, A, Bhattacharya, A, 2022). In British India, Gurusaday Dutt collected various folk artefacts from the rural areas of Bengal, such as the Patachitra - a cloth-based indigenous art form and a living tradition. These collective items of artefacts are preserved in Gurusaday Museum (Mondal, S, and Bhattacharjee, S, 2024).

3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is mentioned below -

- To examine the influence of the museum on the local community
- To analyse the causes of the closure of the museum
- To find out avenues to develop the museum as a tourist product.
- To find out the various issues and challenges in preservation and conservation of the art and artefacts of the museum.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research is a systematic search for pertinent information. Research methodology is the precise procedure or technique used to identify, process, and analyse information about a topic. If any data is required, it can be collected from the following sources.

- Primary Sources: The primary data was collected from the Curator, Gurusaday Museum.
- Secondary Sources: Secondary sources are records, books, websites, journals, etc.

5 PREDOMINANT MUSEUMS OF INDIA

India is a vibrant country of rich its rich heritage and architectural beauty, multilingual culture, local traditions, and a long, prominent historical past. The country has several noteworthy historical monuments, popular among tourists as a place of visit. It has a glorious historical past starting from the Indus Valley Civilisation to the Mauryan, the Palas, the Senas, the Guptas, the Chalukya, the Pandya, the Cholas, the Vijaynagar Empire, the Delhi Sultanate, the Mughals and the British that speaks of the history.

According to the recent data collected from Future Industry Insights (FMI), museums will play an important role in the tourism industry, which is anticipated to grow at a projected CAGR (compound

annual growth rate) of 13% from 2022 to 2032. This means the industry is destined to rise from approximately USD 20.0 billion in the year 2022 to USD 35.0 billion by the year 2032 (Singh, J, 2024).



Chart 1: Showing the Total Number of Tourist Footfall for Museum Tourism in India

(Source: Ministry of Culture Annual Report, 2021 - 25)

Every Indian destination has a museum exhibiting the country's glorious past and historical significance. Many well-known museums in India showcase several neglected truths of a former era of Indian civilisation. In India, museum Tourism during the pre-COVID period had a tourist footfall of 3.0 crores, which declined during the COVID period but gradually recovered and exceeded the pre-COVID numbers in the year 2023 (Ministry of Culture).

NATIONAL MUSEUM

India's largest and iconic museum, the National Museum, exhibits numerous articles from the magnificent ancient era of undivided India. This museum was inaugurated for the people of India in 1949 on the corner of Janpath in the National Capital of India. It exhibits several magnificent museum collections that consist of jewellery, paintings, armours, various ornamental arts, and manuscripts. The Buddhist section of the museum displays a remarkable head and bust of a Buddha statue, and a Buddha stupa containing the remains of Gautama Buddha, which was built in the 3rd century BCE by Emperor Asoka.

The museum has a remarkable set of armours, skeletons, Mughal paintings, and jewellery from various parts of the country. The museum houses six sections, which contain five galleries of artistic and technical works of art: archaeology, geology, economic

beauty, and arts. This museum is one of the oldest museums in the world, and is a must-visit place of touristic interest in India for those who delve into the search of Indian history and civilisation.

INDIAN MUSEUM

The foundation of the Indian Museum is referred to as a noteworthy event towards the conservation and preservation of the culture and heritage of India. The museum was established in 1814 under the influence of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. This museum holds a prestigious status as the oldest and the major multipurpose museum of India and the Asia-Pacific region. With its foundation, this museum movement gained momentum under British patronage in India. Accordingly, at a later stage, this led to the successful establishment of over 400 museums around the country, with Kolkata serving as the birthplace of the museum movement.

To value history of the beginning and rise of the Indian Museum it is to be mentioned here that, Sir William Jones, a thoughtful scholar who devoted his life in the service of India, established the Asiatic Society in 1784 in Kolkata with a broader intention of making this institute an education centre for the expansion of art and culture of the country a centre for the socio-cultural activities, a venue for entertaining the people, and of course for disseminating knowledge and a place for preserving the

cultural and natural legacy of mankind within the geographical limits of Asia. The historic twist came in 1796, when the associates of the Asiatic Society developed a plan of forming a public museum at an appropriate place in this city for the conservation, preservation and public display of the historical objects and to showcase it to the world. It was in early 1808 the Asiatic Society was granted land at the corner of Park Street by the Government to officially construct the museum building. Six years later, in 1814, Dr. Nathaniel Wallach, a Danish botanist's proposal got accepted by the members of the society to form the Society Museum at the property of the Asiatic Society, which was formed on 2nd February, 1814 at the Asiatic Society and its adjoining premises. Dr. Wallach was selected as the Honorary Curator of the then Oriental Museum of the Asiatic Society, where he devoted his time and labour in collecting appealing and curious artefacts from various parts of the country. 174 items in total were contributed by 27 European donors during the year 1816 by Dr Tyler, General Mackenzie, Col. Stewart, Capt. Gillon, Mr Bryan Hodgson. Even some notable native donors started presenting their curios to the Museum.

Out of the 49 contributors of the list, the notable six presenters were Kali Kissen Bahadoor, Baboon Ram Comul Sen, Mathuranath Mullick, Siva Chandra Dass, Maharaja Radhakanta Deb and her Highness Begum Sambroo. In 1837, the museum came into the news when Sir. James Princep wrote to the Government to approve a proper proposition for the creation of a prestigious National Museum at the price of the State where he opined the up gradation of the museum. As a result of which it was in 1862, the Government of British India declared the inauguration of the Public Museum at Calcutta. In 1865, the Government and the Asiatic Society, who were in charge of the management of the museum, decided to transfer the power to the then Board of Trustees for the planned Museum for the assemblage of archaeological, geological, and zoological artefacts, and in this association the British Government would give a fitting space for the Society inside the Museum building. Later, as per the judgment in 1867, the groundwork of the present building of the Indian Museum was established on Chowringhee

Road, beside the current Asiatic Society building near the small Cause Court. Today, the museum establishment counts to one of the most prestigious heritage buildings of the city of Kolkata.

CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ VASTU SANGRAHALAYA

Popularly known as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya to the Mumbaikars, this museum, established in 1922, is one of India's remarkable cultural facilities spreading knowledge and culture to the people. The history dates to 14th August 1905, when several well-known people of the Bombay Presidency assembled at the Town Hall of the city and decided to construct a Memorial to commemorate the trip of the Prince of Wales (later popular with the name King George V). They proposed to form a community Museum which, would be named after him to recognise his tour to India of the British Empire. The great stalwarts of the city like Narotamdas Gokaldas, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, Justice Badrudin Tyabji, Sassoon J. David, Justice Chandavarkar, and many other officials known for their exceptional contributions in their individual areas and also in the growth of Bombay, attended the meeting to conclude having a big museum identical to the Indian Museum in Kolkata (then Calcutta). Impressed with the decision, the foundation stone of the Museum was placed by the Prince of Wales on 11th November, 1905; therefore, this Museum got its name as the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India as a good gesture of the citizens of Bombay. For a long period of time, people of Bombay had also felt the need for a high-quality museum in that region, and ultimately the city's museum came into reality, funded by the public contribution of the city elites and with the help of the then British Government of the Bombay Presidency.

A plot of land was allotted for the museum building construction, which was called the Crescent Site, located at the southern tip of the isle. This building took 9 years to get its shape and was completed in 1914, but, unfortunately, due to various constraints, the museum was finally inaugurated to the commoners much later on 10th January 1922. Till then, it served as a military

hospital of the British Army and for Children's Welfare Exhibitions. Bombay, which is now popularly called Mumbai, and the name of the Prince of Wales Museum has changed to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya. This public museum was built on a well-established garden, retaining its originality in architecture. Even today, this museum is a significant Heritage property of the metropolis of Mumbai. It is considered a Grade I Heritage Building and is in the tourist map of the city. It has been awarded first place by the Indian Heritage Society for Heritage Building Maintenance.

NATIONAL RAIL MUSEUM

The National Rail Museum located in New Delhi, is one of India's oldest transport museums which were initially proposed in the year 1962 but the idea took 8 years to get a concrete shape as a form of a transport museum in the 1970's on the proposal of Mr. Michael Graham Stow a rail aficionado. The foundation stone of the museum was laid by Shri V.V. Giri, the former President of India, in the form of the country's first Rail Transport Museum (R.T.M) at its current spot in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, on October 7th, 1971. The Rail Transport Museum was a part of the planned project of forming a section of a large complex showcasing the historical accounts of Railways, Airways, Roadways and Waterways in India. Later on, the Government of India grew into a complete National Rail Museum in the year 1995.

The museum is spread across an area of a little over 11 acres. The Museums inside the gallery are gracefully planned in an octagonal-shaped building, accommodating six display galleries, with a large open display area to provide tourists a simulated atmosphere of a railway yard. The museum, the first of its kind in India, was inaugurated by Shri Kamalapati Tripti, honourable Minister of Railways, on 1st February 1977. Since then, the gates have been open for the general public. The Museum grandly exhibits its major collection of real-life-size railway components, its engines, coaches and other railway machinery in the country, housing coaches and

locomotives from the princely states of British India. Some notable exhibits on display are the Monorail of Patiala State and John Morris's Fire Engine, one of the best working displays in the entire transportation world.

The Museum also acts as a collection house for the maps, documents, books, drawings, sketches and other operational credentials covering 173 years of the Indian Railway. The museum's best collection includes a grand set of steam locomotives, which were built of iron and steel, and coaches made of wood collected across the country. This Museum takes a huge responsibility for the continuous activity of restoration of these exhibits so that they can withstand the time and remain for future generations to see the glorious past of the Indian Railways. The Museum undergoes regular upgradation from the Ministry of Railways of its collection based on the changing form of communication, with the future operation of the museum. The museum contains the largest number of Rail Simulators anywhere in the world. State-of-the-art, 3D VR technology takes the participants back in the past. This is one of the major motivations for visitors to visit the museum. The Indoor Gallery of the museum uses mobile and digital technologies, which make the visit AI-inclusive with enlightening, interactive and appealing activities within the gallery. The Museum has a collection of mobile applications and websites that permit a train enthusiast to interact with the exhibit remotely.

SARDAR PATEL MUSEUM

The Sardar Patel Museum is India's National Heritage, located in the Moti Shahi Mahal in the Shahi Baug locality. The Mahal was built between 1618 and 1622 by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. The building was afterwards occupied by the British Government, which later housed a British cantonment for the senior officials of the army. The Mahal has a Bengal connection in history, as in 1878, the renowned Bengali poet Kavi Guru Rabindranath Tagore once resided here when he was just seventeen years old. Post Indian independence, from 1960 to 1978, this building played a significant role by converting itself to become the Raj Bhavan, or the official

residence of the Governor of Gujarat. In 1978, the building was declared a National Memorial dedicated to the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Today, the museum has achieved state-of-the-art technological interventions, for a holistic tourist experience who visit the museum.

Set up in 1978, inaugurated by Shri Babubhai Jasbhai Patel, the former Honourable Chief Minister. The museum was afterwards renovated in 2013 to make it more attractive and acceptable with interactive, visitor-friendly exhibits, under the able leadership of Shri. Dinsha Patel and other members of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Society. It was under the leadership of Shri RS Patel; the museum developed according to the international standards. The museum was inaugurated with the attendance of our Honourable Prime Minister of India, Sri. Narendra Modi on 29th October 2013. The present museum showcases different artefacts and the personal possessions of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,

including two multimedia halls that throw light on various aspects of Sardar's life.

The 3D show is the primary attraction of the museum. The show is a salute to all our freedom fighters and martyrs who died during the freedom struggle. The show is a mixture of modern technology with 3D projection techniques, laser projection, light and sound effects, along with a voice narration, which won the hearts of the visitors to the museum.

6 GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GURUSADAY MUSEUM

In West Bengal, the number of museums has been increasing day by day. As per the reports from the Ministry of Culture and the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), there are 79 Museums in the state of West Bengal.

District	Count (Approx.)
Kolkata	42
Darjeeling and Kalimpong	7
Hooghly	6
South 24 Parganas	4
North 24 Parganas	4
Purba Bardhaman	3
Birbhum	3
Bankura	2
Nadia	2
Paschim Medinipur	2
Cooch Behar	1
Malda	1
Purulia	1
Purba Medinipur	1
Total	79

Table 1: Table showing the district-wise distribution of the No. of Museums in West Bengal

(Source: Ministry of Culture PIB Release, 2026)

In 1961, the former Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, inaugurated the museum establishment on 8th February 1963, along with Professor Humayun Kabir, the former Union Minister of Education, Government of India, who announced the

galleries open, and later it was passed on to the Bengal Bratachari Society. The museum is surrounded by plants, trees, a pond, and flowers, making it a green museum. In the colony beside the museum, there is a government school named Joka Municipal School. Gurusaday Museum

is literally the first and biggest folk-art museum in the region.

In the year 2017, the financial assistance for the museum from the Union Ministry of Textiles was withdrawn, which was the main source of sustaining its regular functions. The museum hosts wonderful crafts and artefacts from Bengal and also across the rural parts of India, started to witness extensive losses caused by the lack of funds leading to absences of conservation work. The most catastrophic part in the history of the museum was that this museum had been declared by the President of India established it under Ministry of Textiles way back in 1984, where the ministry authorised Rs. 41 Lakhs.

Previously, the accord clearly mentioned that the Ministry of Textiles should be providing all monetary assistance to bear the daily job of the museum, reimbursement of salary to the staff, maintenance and development of the museum and obtaining of equipment. But this order was later revoked by the Ministry of Textiles, stating that the ministry is running short of funds to cater for the museum, which was developed with private collections of Sri Gurusaday Dutta [1882 - 1941], who was an established bureaucrat of British India, who solitarily spearheaded the movement for conservation of Bengal's folk culture and folk traditions.

The 3,300 displays of the museum were once used to reflect the vitality and vigour of rural life along with numerous motifs and practices, social traditions, aesthetic integration, religious beliefs and cultural influence in Bengal (Shee, S, 2021). It was a cultural institution in the city of Kolkata that preserved extraordinary artefacts from the whole of Bengal, which ran out of funds due to the utter negligence of the Union Government. The management had finally appealed to the State Government for some rescue funds. Some efforts were made to rope in private patrons too, but nothing materialised. The museum has been closed from mid-2025 until today, with all those priceless museum items remaining in dismal condition.

7 ROLE OF GURUSADAY DUTTA IN THE SOCIETY OF BENGAL

Gurusaday Dutta, after getting recognition as I. C. S. officer to serve the British Administration in India, had adopted every bit of the British lifestyle due to his wife, Shrimati Saroj Nalini Dutta, who influenced Shri Dutta towards the fabulous heritage conservation issues for his Motherland and made him readopt the Bengal lifestyle.

After the demise of Srimati Saroj Nalini Dutta at an early age, Shri Gurusaday Dutta, in 1925 initiated the formation of the Saroj Nalini Dutta Memorial Association to uplift the condition of the Bengali destitute widows and other poor women of the region and to enlighten them towards the rich heritage and culture of the region. This initiated the beginning of his long association with Bengal heritage activities and other social works for the people of Bengal. He also established 'Palli Sampad Raksha Smiti' as a revolutionary move towards cultural conservation in the year 1931, when he was the District Magistrate of Birbhum, a district in the present West Bengal. He dedicated his time and effort to the collection, preservation and nourishment through the practices of rural crafts and folk art of the whole of Bengal during the time of the British regime.

He started organising exhibitions in different places, including in Calcutta. However, this smite, or Association, was converted into the Bengal Bratachari Society in 1935. In the year 1931, Shri Gurusaday Dutta, for the first time, organised a training camp of folk songs and dance of Bengal. His contributions are well reflected in the artefacts of the Gurusaday Museum. The main motive of the museum was to respect the work of this person through the conservation and preservation of the artefacts that were collected so that future generations remain aware of his work and life, which he dedicated to the people of rural and deprived Bengal.

8 FUTURE OF THE GURUSADAY MUSEUM

For today's citizens of Kolkata, Sri. Gurusaday Dutta is just in the name of a street weaving through an elite neighbourhood in South Kolkata. Only a handful know the civil servant it is named after left the city a treasure chest of folk-art intricate Patachitra scrolls, blankets or kanthas, along with 17th-century terracotta figures. Even fewer know that the museum, which was established in 1963 and is housed in a massive building in Joka on the outer edge of the city, surrounded by a mango orchard now heavy with fruit, is counting its days.

Today, the worst thing has happened in the history of the museum. Due to a lack of funds from the Government, the revival strategies have failed, and the museum has permanently shut down in mid-2025, apart from the hard battle of its survival. The death of the museum was inevitable. The doors are closed for the visitors. The efforts of the citizens, pro towards the preservation of cultural heritage, have failed too. Though there were efforts from their part to revive the museum.

A collective citizen exists who puts in the effort to save it from the informed residents of the Joka-Behala region of Southwest Kolkata. Bappaditya Biswas, the creative partner of Bloom, a popular boutique situated in Hindustan Road in the South Kolkata region, well known for assisting in reviving India's handloom sari traditions with a modern flair, found it when a Canadian client told him about the museum. Being a tourism enthusiast, he used to regularly fetch foreign visitors to the museum. The foreign tourists visiting the museum used to enjoy experiential tourism activities by learning about the creator of the museum. They used to see the Bengali kanthas woven with great care and attention, the moulds or *chaach* they utilised to make sweets. It gave them a glimpse of life with a little bit of Bengal culture mixed with it. On the 136th birth anniversary of Gurusaday Dutta on 10th May, there was a daylong programme to 'Love the museum' complete with a self-booth, something that had not been heard of at the museums till now. They also had an event with a Facebook group community on the social media platform to save the Bengals folk history

with its own hashtag #savefolkmuseum. It also gained public attention over time.

Today, the museum is closed to the public, and the artefacts inside the museum are passing their time with negligence and dishonour. The vision of Sri. Gurusaday Dutta accepted a quiet death due to the reluctance of the government and its stakeholders. The museum is slowly moving towards its extinction from the history of the city. Counting days waits for the revival of the museum, an extremely difficult revival of this personal museum.

9 FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Collection of data and information for this research was difficult as there was little literary evidence available in the museum premises. Lack of funds and poor infrastructure were among the reasons to get pertinent information for the work. Museums are social institutions for the study of the past and cultural conservation. Based on this fundamental principle of the museum, the following are the activities performed by the museum before its closure.

10 PAST ACTIVITIES OF THE GURUSADAY MUSEUM (1963 - 1984)

- The Philadelphia Museum of Art - Fairmount, USA, organised The Traditional Folk Art of India.
- *Banglar Lokoshilpa Pradarshani - O Alochana Chakra*, organised by The Calcutta Information Centre, a segment of the Government of West Bengal (Department of Information & Public Relations).
- The National Museum, New Delhi's special exhibition on Benga Folk Art from the exhibits of the Gurusaday Museum.
- Bharat Utsab or the Festival of India, held in London, where some exhibits of the museum were sent by the help of the National Museum, New Delhi.
- An exhibition called Golden Jubilee was held at the premises of Max Muller Bhavan, Kolkata-Display of the museum exhibits.
- The Exhibition referred to as Glimpses of Folk Art and Tribal Art is associated with the collections from Gurusaday Museum.

- Exhibition referred to as Kalighat Pats from the exhibits of the Gurusaday Museum. A set (six in a set) of pictured postcards showcasing the Kalighat Pats was published.
- The exhibition referred to Square Paintings from the exhibits of the Gurusaday Museum.
- 'The Art in wood'. A book was published on the occasion of 'Wood Carvings of Bengal of the Gurusaday Museum'.
- 'A meadow of Nakshi Kantha' Display from the exhibits of the Gurusaday Museum.
- "Scroll Paintings" from the exhibits of the Gurusaday Museum.

From past activities, it is quite evident that the museum was previously engaged in popular museum activities, and the officials of the museum participated in cultural conservation and widely spread the wealth of the museum. It played a prominent role in educating the population about the rich history of Bengal handicrafts and art.

11 SUGGESTIONS

The museum once had a rich assemblage of approximately 3300 exquisite collections depicting the rich cultural heritage of folk arts and crafts, which sufficiently reflected the vitality and vigour of country life and presented a bright picture of social traditions and art, practices and motifs, religious beliefs, cultural influences and aesthetic assimilation in Bengal during the British regime.

The need of the day is to reopen the museum under the Public Private Partnership model, if the Government of India denies funding the museum, stating various reasons. This private museum requires attention to preserve and conserve the rich heritage of Bengal. It should be kept open for our next generation. It is our duty to make our next generation aware of the rich cultural background of Bengal and the sorrows faced by the people during our freedom struggle.

If the Alipore Central Jail gets converted into the world's first jail museum, this Gurusaday Museum has

immense potential to showcase the arts and artefacts under its possession. The stakeholders must take necessary steps to form a workshop to restore, repair and treat the objects methodically by expert conservators. Fumigation, de-acidification, lamination of old manuscripts and binding of uncommon books are to be frequently done by the professionals before the restoration of the museum.

Documentation of all the objects has been verified physically and properly documented in the accession register as well as in the classified register. The preparations for the different catalogue cards have to be initiated. Catalogues showcasing the woodcarvings and Kalighat paintings have also been printed as an absolute documentation of the exhibits.

CONCLUSION

Inspired by the fact that there were a lot of challenges to frame this research, I had great curiosity in understanding the past Bengali cultures. It made me proud of the fact that in the 21st century, people care for their cultures and learn about the great personalities. Gurusaday Dutta was a man to be remembered for his service towards the people of Bengal. To revive, preserve and revitalise the extinct folk-art culture and traditions he accumulated between 1929 and 1941, about 2325 exquisite specimens, including several handlooms.

Around the year 1929, he took the initiative to collect both the visual and the performing traditional art heritage of undivided India, inspired by various people, which ultimately motivated him to establish the Bratachari Movement in India. After Shri Dutta's demise, a museum of Folk Arts and Crafts, named in his memory, was established in 1963. The museum used to carry the rich cultural history of Bengal. Museums are always very popular tourist attractions to visit around the world. The cultural tourists' population is on the rise worldwide. This museum has immense potential to become a benchmark for the tourism industry in Kolkata. Initiatives for a fresh new start are the need of the day.

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