



## Impact of the Pandemic on Cultural Institutions; With Special Reference to the regional museum, Tribal cultural Museum

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### Abstract

*The paper on the impact of the pandemic on the cultural institution focused on the impact and challenges faced by the regional cultural institution, particularly the regional tribal cultural museum. This paper majorly talks about preventive conservation impact as well as social and economic impact and challenges during uncertain pandemic disease. And how much significance cultural institutions carry in the educational as well as social life of visitors and so on so far. UNESCO and Icon are two significant organizations for cultural knowledge that present the pandemic report for the Museum of the World and the regional museum.*

**Keywords:** Cultural Institutions, regional museum, Pandemic, Covid 19 and Museum

1. **Culture:-** *The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group (Merriam-Webster, 1847)*
2. **Cultural institution:** *- A cultural institution or cultural organization is an organization within a culture/subculture that works for the preservation or promotion of culture. The term is primarily used by public and charitable organizations. (definition.net)*
3. **Pandemic:** *- occurring over a wide geographic area (such as multiple countries or continents) and typically affecting a significant proportion of the population. (Merriam-Webster, 1847)*
4. **Museum:** *- A building where collections of valuable and interesting objects are kept and shown to the public (Collins Dictionary, 1979.)*

The pandemic was the phase where almost all cultural institutions were shut down worldwide, like museums, libraries, archives, churches, art galleries, theatres, concert halls, and opera houses. Every cultural institution was impacted equally by Covid 19 Pandemic and they felt the same pain and more or less had to face the same challenges in their cultural institutions. However, the regional museums of India had more extreme challenges than the government-funded museums of India, here I discussed the regional Museum of Maharashtra. Museums for instance state government-funded museums tribal culture museum, Pune.

As per the Survey Report of ICOM, they showed several museums around the world have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic because lockdown restrictions have made collections and gallery areas inaccessible to the public for extended periods. International Council of Museums (ICOM) conducted three surveys in April 2020, October 2020, and May 2021 to gain a comprehensive overview. There were severe economic, social, and cultural consequences for museums in April 2020, regardless of where museums were located. Nearly 95% of museums had to shut down to ensure the well-being of staff and visitors situation of museums in the spring of 2021 worsened slightly compared to the previous year, but this was inconsistent across countries, regions, and continents: while the overwhelming majority of museums in Africa and the Pacific were open, in Europe and North America they had only started to reopen their venues. The situation for Asia Country was inconsistent at the local level. This was also included in a report, which finds that 85,000 museums (approximately 90% of all of the world's museums) have been affected by temporary closures as part of the measures taken to combat COVID-19. Additionally, global tourism was heavily disrupted throughout 2020 and 2021, with 2020 considered the worst year on record for tourism, when international arrivals decreased by 73%. In particular, private museums were severely affected, resulting in bankruptcies, and, according to ICOM, more than one in ten museums may never reopen. Additionally, ICOM noted that whilst the majority of the museum staff were able to work from home during lockdowns, many staff members lost their jobs as temporary contracts were terminated. (ICOM, Report, 2020-2021) The tribal cultural Museum is located at *Tribal Research & Training Institute, 28, Queens Garden, Pune 411001*. This museum comes under the government of Maharashtra, India. The tribal cultural museum of Pune was impacted by Covid pandemic in several ways; social and economic impact, Impact on the preventive conservation of museum objects, and Covid also impact on the footfall of visitors to the museum.

### **Preventive conservation challenges;**

**Preventive conservation** can be defined as meaning all indirect actions aimed at increasing the life expectancy of objects and collections; as opposed to the direct treatment of individual objects (**remedial conservation**). Preventive conservation requires the assessment of objects, deterioration agents, and the environmental context (surveys and investigations); as well as long-term judicious management and farsighted planning. Preventive conservation includes the agents that cause deterioration in a cultural institution in general and particularly in a regional museum. Here are the following agents of deterioration. (Smithsonian *N. P. Museum, 2017*)

- **Physical Force** - Can damage artefacts directly by causing rotation, deformation, stress, breakage, and pressure. Examples of force: impact; shock; vibration; pressure; and abrasion. Most physical force is caused by general use but also by accident. The museum prevents physical force damage by displaying artefacts in cases or behind barriers and storing artefacts in cabinets. At home, artefacts can be placed in cabinets or out of reach.

- Theft and Vandalism – Wilful damage to artefacts that are either premeditated or a “crime of opportunity”. Museums take precautions against theft and vandalism by putting artefacts in cases and having high-tech security features. At home, similar precautions can be made based on the value of your collection, but locking high-value artefacts away is an easy step to prevent theft or vandalism.
- Neglect - This is the loss of the artefact or the information associated with the artefact, such as names, dates, or locations. Also, not providing proper preservation is another form of neglect since the collections will continue to deteriorate. NPM keeps thorough paper and electronic records pertaining to every artefact in its collection relating to its history and provenance. This is equally important for individuals trying to preserve and track family heirlooms.
- Fire - This can cause of smoke damage or partial or total loss of the artefacts. As a result, it is important that fire prevention be given the highest priority possible. Fire suppression systems are used at the museum to control any fire that may break out, but at home, it is important to have a fire extinguisher accessible. If some artefacts are of very high value it would be worth looking into acquiring a fire-proof safe.
- Water - Damage can result from natural occurrences, technological hazards, or mechanical failures. Water leaks and floods are the most common causes of water damage, but can also simply be caused by spilling a beverage. Water damage causes warping and side-lines to your artefacts. The museum stores its collection at least six (6) inches off the floor and inside cabinets in anticipation of a leak or flood. Storing artefacts off the floor and not placing drinks near your most treasured artefacts will drastically cut down on the danger of water damage at home.
- Pests - Such as microorganisms, insects, and rodents, can make a feast out of artefacts. They are attracted to artefacts made from plants and animals, such as paper and fabrics. They especially enjoy cardboard boxes, so best not to store any family treasures in them. Having a regular pest inspection to check for infestation is vital to preventing any damage. NPM only uses environmentally friendly pest control products and we never use aerosols due to chemical hazards (see next agent).
- Pollutants - These can be natural or man-made gases, aerosols, liquids, dust, or dirt that are known to accelerate the decay of artefacts. Aerosols and liquids that are commonly seen around artefacts are household cleaners, bug sprays, and detergents. The chemicals within these sprays can attach to the artefact and will slowly cause it to decay. When cleaning near an artefact, spray directly onto the cloth, a way for the object, and then wipe down the surface.
- Light - Damage is caused by overexposure to natural or artificial light. A loss of historical and monetary value can occur when artefacts fade from exposure to excessive light. The best method to prevent light damage is to store artefacts away from direct light. NPM tries to minimize the amount of times artefacts are exposed to light by rotating out objects on exhibition and when they are in storage, they are kept in dark cabinets.
- Incorrect Temperatures - Those that are too low or too high can damage artefacts adversely based on the material of the artefact, often accelerating deterioration. Attempt to keep temperatures between 65°F and

72°F. It is important to keep artefacts out of basements and attics where the biggest shifts in temperature can occur.

- **Incorrect Humidity** - This can cause more damage than temperature. Large fluctuations in humidity can cause the artefacts to warp or grow mold. Attempt to keep humidity between 35% and 55%. It is important to keep artefacts out of basements and attics where the biggest shifts in humidity can occur.

How pandemic impact or challenge full for the preventive conservation of museums; every object is mostly damaged by dust, because of the pandemic museums were closed for uncertain periods due to the dust causing damage to museum objects in museum storage as well as in the galleries. Along with the cause of dust, there are several other damage to museum objects. Certain objects or collections get effects by patina; patina is an unwanted layer that occurs due to moisture and dust on objects proper care and regular dusting of the museum collections that comes under the preventive conservation. So pandemic was challenging for regional museums and cultural institutions for those who do have proper risk management in the museum and facing funding issues for an uncertain period. The Pandemic impacted the cultural institution along with social and economic impacts because of the pandemic.

### **Social and economic challenges**

A drastic decrease in cultural tourism, due to the closing of borders, closing borders impacts social and economic issues faced by the cultural institution because the cultural institution has a funding source from their visitors because of the pandemic footfall of visitors decreased the challenge to withstand regional museum is economic and social.

The situation facing museums remains compromised by the global health crisis, which has hit the museum sector particularly hard. According to UNESCO estimates presented in this study, 90% of the world's museums, or more than 85,000 institutions, have closed their doors and a number may never reopen. These temporary closures have had serious economic and social consequences that may affect museums in the long term. (UNESCO Report, 2020.)

On the other hand, Regional cultural institutions and regional museums, for instance, tribal cultural museums survived the museum with minimum economic support from the state government, due to that many museum personnel had to take half their salary along with the museum has gone through social impact of a pandemic the awareness of culture history education has to stop for an uncertain period, the scholar has to stop research work because the museum is the cultural institution so many people abide by regulation of Covid 19 scholar can't approach to the museum for the ethnographic or ethno archaeological research work. There would be many other impacts of the pandemic on cultural institutions, particularly the regional museum. Digital museum impact so on and so far.

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