

Museums of Varanasi Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Abstract: *Heritage embraces not only the collection of objects but also includes intangible manifestations of the living expression. At the 32nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, from 29th September to 17th October 2003, “The Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” was adopted. Museums as guardians of tangible heritage were looked upon, to participate in this initiative. ICOM immediately responded to the call and declared “Museum and Intangible Heritage” as the theme of its 20th General Conference that occurred in Seoul in 2004. Museums were re-defined, from the traditional role of collection of objects to the dynamic role of documenting and exhibiting the intangible aspect of the object as well. This paper seeks to explain what intangible heritage is and how digital implication in museum exhibition can be an aid in preserving the intangible aspect of the object by citing the example of two unique museums of Varanasi i.e., Virtual Experiential Museum and Kashi Dham, which is established to showcase the culture of Varanasi. This paper will further discuss the changing role of museums and the importance of digital heritage preservation.*

Keywords: Intangible Heritage, New museology, Digital implication, Digital heritage preservation

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