

The Role Of The Museum In Activating The Cultural Sense Of Civil Society

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Abstract:

The museum is an institution with fundamental functions, including the collection, preservation, and maintenance of material documents, whether they are historical documents or related to arts and sciences. One of its primary tasks is to preserve the national and human heritage and transmit it to future generations. Based on this, museums have evolved from their old form as treasure troves and storage and protection facilities to encompass broader and more comprehensive functions. Museums now serve as cultural centers to benefit the local community's activities and educate young individuals to build their character in alignment with national and human concepts.

Keywords: Museum, heritage, preservation, education, society.

1- Introduction:

In our current era, the museum stands as a prominent facet of civilization in cities worldwide. It serves as an institute of knowledge, a hub of culture, a school for the arts, a playground for entertainment and delight. It provides the ideal platform for understanding our cultural heritage and our cultural assets, fostering scientific awareness, and cultivating a sense of civilization. Museums are a mirror reflecting the history and civilizations of nations, not just at the level of individual societies but also across diverse countries globally. Museums, found everywhere, preserve the finest achievements of a people and the greatest creations from various epochs.

The museum is a permanent institution established not for commercial purposes but to serve the community. It works towards its development, is open to the public, and conducts research related to material evidence of humanity. It engages in the search, collection, preservation, and dissemination of such evidence for academic purposes. It is not merely a building housing artistic treasures but also stands among cultural institutions that contribute to the advancement of human thought, serving as a significant source for the transmission and exchange of cultures among individuals or communities. It plays a crucial role in fostering and enhancing understanding among people due to the rich heritage, art, and science it contains within its halls and corridors.

The museum can achieve this goal if the officials ensure the proper presentation of artifacts, provide detailed explanations of the material objects, organize temporary and traveling exhibitions to capture the visitors' attention and stimulate the interest of both the general public and experts alike.

The museum does not limit its focus to a specific group; it strives to capture the interest of all segments of society. Its visitors come from various intellectual backgrounds and age groups, including children and adults, laypersons and experts, university students and schoolchildren, researchers, teachers, and even individuals with special needs. In doing so, the museum serves as a center for community activities, contributing to the development of citizens' character and informing them about national concepts, regardless of its other roles. We have chosen the National Museum of the Martyr in the capital of Algeria for study to examine the mechanisms it employs to attract a substantial number of visitors. This serves as evidence of the absence of a negative perception of museums and the level of development in museum culture within our Algerian communities across various demographics.

2- Museum Definition:

2-1 Linguistic Definition:

In the Arabic language, the term "motehaf " refers to the place where art pieces, artifacts, and collections are housed. It is a space dedicated to gathering valuable gifts, artistic relics, cultural assets, treasures, and rare items that captivate the human spirit, inviting contemplation and admiration (Bashir Al-Zahdi, 1988, 15-16).

2-2 Terminological Definition:

In its simple sense, a museum is a place that houses historical, artistic, scientific, or ethnographic documents that are physically present and obtained through purchase or gifts (Ali Hamlawi, 1991, 10). The term (museum) is originally linked to the meaning that prevailed in ancient Greece. The ancient Greeks referred to the word (mouseion), which was used for a temple built on Mount Helicon near the Acropolis of Athens. This hill was dedicated to the nine muses who were born to the patron goddesses of the arts, Mnemosyne. Each of these muses presided over a specific art form, and perhaps in their temple - like other ancient temples - there were significant artistic treasures and precious gifts offered as a token of gratitude and acknowledgment to the goddesses (Bashir Al-Zahdi, 1988, 15).

2-3 Definition According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM):

Definitions of museums may vary among scholars, but the common ground defining a museum is reflected in the concept established by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), according to Article 2 of the first point. The ICOM defines a museum as a permanent, non-profit institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public. It carries out research related to the material evidence of humans and their environment, acquires and preserves it, and presents it for educational, social, and study purposes. This definition was issued in the General Assembly held on June 19, 1974, and was revised on September 5, 1985. It includes not only museums but also other institutions such as archaeological sites, places, natural specimens, historical exhibitions, and any institution preserving collections and displaying samples of plants or animals, like zoological and botanical gardens, aquatic reserves. It also encompasses various scientific centers like research centers, libraries, and archive halls containing manuscripts from ancient periods (Philip Adams, 1993, 38).

3 - Origin and Evolution of the Museum:

Originally, the museum was known among the Greeks as "MOUSCION," denoting a temple situated on Mount Helicon near the Acropolis of Athens, dedicated to the worship of the muses (MUSES) who represented the patrons of the arts. This temple, like others of its kind, likely contained statues and valuable offerings made by people to express their faith or gratitude to the deities. Over time, kings, princes, the wealthy, and collectors began to acquire ancient and rare artifacts, archaeological, artistic, historical, and scientific collections that

were either owned by these public institutions or kept in the palaces and homes of individuals. These humble beginnings laid the foundation for museums and their components, even though the collections were not initially open to the public (Bashir Al-Zahdi, 1988, 15).

The Western scholars credit King Ptolemy I, the founder of the Ptolemaic Kingdom in Egypt, with establishing one of the oldest museums. He founded the city of Alexandria, which housed a comprehensive library containing a vast collection of books covering various fields of science, literature, arts, and religion. In 209 BCE, this king also constructed a separate building for the display of diverse artifacts that allowed people to view them. Ptolemy named this structure "museum," a term with its Greek origins.

However, modern historical research indicates that the collection and exhibition of artifacts did not begin with the ancient Greeks or during the Ptolemaic era. The practice started in Mesopotamia over three centuries before the time of Ptolemy I. It is known that the Chaldean King Nebuchadnezzar I, who ruled between 562 BCE and 504 BCE, dedicated a hall within his palace, known as the "North Palace" in the city of Babylon, to exhibit archaeological materials. In the early part of this century, the German explorer Kold discovered, while excavating in the city of Babylon, in this hall, the famous Lion of Babylon statue and a stele dating back to the rule of the governor of Mari, known as "Mesh-reshe-ushur." He also found stone statues made of diorite.

The presence of these artifacts dating back to a period earlier than King Nebuchadnezzar I in that hall in the city of Babylon led the researcher to believe that the mentioned hall served as a private museum for the exhibition of artifacts. It is believed that the materials acquired by King Nebuchadnezzar I were displayed for visitors to his palace rather than the general public. It becomes evident from the above discussion that the idea of establishing a museum is a Babylonian concept that long preceded the era of Ptolemy I by approximately three centuries (Taqi Al-Dabbagh, 1997, 10-11). Some examples of this concept include:

3-1 The Museum in the Pharaonic Era:

In ancient Egypt, art was primarily used for religious purposes, and artistic pieces were displayed organically in designated areas. The ancient Egyptians had a strong appreciation for the legacy and achievements of their ancestors throughout the

centuries. For example, Ramses II (Prince Khaemweset) was deeply passionate about antiquities from the ancient world. He engaged in various restoration and excavation works, meticulously documenting his efforts on the base of the obelisk in the Temple of the Sun. These inscriptions shed light on the significance behind all the archaeological activities undertaken by this prince. He expressed, "He very much desired to immortalize the monuments of the Upper and Lower Egypt for the sake of their accomplishments, those achievements that had begun to crumble." The tombs of ancient Egyptian dynasties have provided us with extensive collections of artifacts and antiquities, greatly contributing to the knowledge and historical record of the Nile Valley civilization throughout its ancient history, spanning nearly four thousand years (Zakaria Ragab Abdel-Mageed, 2001, 18-17).

3-2 Museums in the Middle Ages:

In Europe during the Middle Ages, people showed interest in places of worship, represented by churches and monasteries, and transformed them into small museums adorned with pictures and drawings.

These locations preserved natural treasures like jewelry, inscriptions, and textiles that filled their treasuries. An important aspect of this period was the collection of relics and possessions of saints, safeguarded within palaces, giving them a precious character. An example of this is the Church of San Marco in Venice, adorned with mosaics depicting the life of the saint (Zakaria Rajab Abdul Majid, 2001, 18).

3-3 The Museum in the Islamic Era:

The Umayyad rulers were keen on acquiring and collecting artifacts in their palaces in the deserts of the Levant. Similarly, the Abbasids were dedicated to collecting and possessing artifacts in their treasuries and palaces in Baghdad. This practice continued until the fall of Baghdad in 1285 CE. It is worth noting that the Andalusian caliphs collected many treasures and artifacts in their palaces, whether in the city of Toledo, Granada, or Seville (Azat Zaki Hamed Qadus, 2008, 164). When the Fatimid state was established in 909 AH (296 CE), it overthrew the rulers of the Aglabids. Al-Maqrizi* described the treasures of the Fatimids as they were during the reign of Caliph Abu Tamim al-Mustansir (427 AH/1036 CE) when he put them up for sale. He mentioned in his collection known as the "Mustansiriya Ingot" that it was studded with jewels and contained extraordinary items in the palace. During the

Ottoman Empire, the palaces of the caliphs were filled with artifacts, such as the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, which houses some of the most significant Islamic treasures collected by these rulers since the days of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror.

3-4 The Museum in the Renaissance:

Museums were established and became state-owned entities around the mid-18th century. The Ashmolean Museum in the University of Oxford is considered the first significant museum institution specifically designed for exhibition purposes, open to the public, and organized on an educational basis. Private collections had a significant impact on the formation of museums during the 17th and 18th centuries. A prime example is the collection of John Tradescant the Younger, an English collector, who presented it to Elias Ashmole in 1659. Elias Ashmole, in turn, presented it to the University of Oxford, adding some of his own acquisitions in 1756. This collection later became part of the British Museum and was named the Ashmolean Museum. The first guide for it was published in 1808. Subsequently, the Louvre Museum in Paris, initially named after Napoleon, was opened to the public, displaying the art pieces that Napoleon acquired during his wars. The Prado Museum in Madrid and the Altes Museum in Berlin were opened as well. In the United States, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., was established as a museum of science and art. In addition to these developments, Russia was one of the most progressive countries in this field, with approximately two hundred museums established in the 20th century (Al-Amma Abdul Rahim, 2006, 9).

4- The types of museums:

4-1 Enclosed and Built Museums:

These museums have the role of preserving and maintaining artifacts inside a building. The building can be a historical monument that has been renovated to serve as a museum, as in the case of the Museum of Ancient Art, the Bardo Museum, and the Museum of Arts and Folk Traditions in Algeria. Alternatively, it can be a newly designed building dedicated to being a museum, such as the Chlef Museum and the Martyrs Museum.

4-2 Open-Air or Open Museums:

In these museums, the artifacts are preserved in their original locations, such as the National Tassili Gallery, the Timgad Museum, the Djemila Museum, and the Tipaza Museum (Azat

Zaki Hamed Qadus, 2008, 161). As for their specialization, museums can be categorized into:

* Art museums specialize in showcasing human creations and can be further divided into the following categories:

- Fine Arts Museums: These museums include painted works, regardless of the techniques used, with their primary purpose being enjoyment and study, often referred to as art for art's sake.

- Applied Arts Museums: These museums encompass artistic works that can be utilized, in addition to being appreciated visually. This category includes various forms of furniture, carpets, decorative arts, as well as jewelry, clothing, and types of housing.

Art museums serve as repositories for human artistic production, covering a wide range of visual arts such as painting, sculpture, embroidery, and more (Azat Zaki Hamed Qadus, 2008, 163)

* History Museums: These museums specialize in showcasing human history and its achievements in various fields, including politics, industry, agriculture, and more. They focus on displaying artifacts, coins, and clothing that date back to specific historical periods that the museums specialize in.

*Natural History Museums: These museums are concerned with the natural and biological evolution of humans, animals, plants, and inanimate objects. They play a role in preserving natural resources to understand the growth, development, and conservation of these life forms, preventing them from disappearing or becoming extinct.

*Heritage Museums: This is the fourth type of museum that focuses on showcasing the heritage of a particular region, including its unique characteristics, clothing, tools, and traditions that were used in that specific area, distinguishing it from others (Azat Zaki Hamed Qadus, 2008, 163).

In light of the role that museums play in the preservation of artifacts and human heritage, and given the increasing number of exhibits and the diversity of methods and styles of presentation, there has emerged a need for specialization within museums. This requirement has become urgent in order to establish this variety, allowing museums to effectively fulfill their cultural, artistic, and historical missions towards the surrounding community, both culturally and artistically, and to

become a beacon for creativity that elevates the senses and emotions.

5- Museological Presentation:

Historically, museums used to acquire artifacts through various means and ensured their maintenance and preservation. However, today, the role of museums has expanded beyond that. Museums have shifted their focus towards presenting materials in an engaging and captivating manner, particularly in terms of organizing exhibition spaces and display techniques.

5-1 The concept of display

Display is one of the fundamental functions that museums cannot do without. It is the means through which visitors view the cultural artifacts contained within the museum. In the context of museum science, display is the act of presenting an item with a specific purpose, whether it be for educational, recreational, cultural, or economic reasons (Yani Herman, 2004, p. 91).

It is imperative to consider the following factors in addition to planning to ensure that the display fulfills its designated role:

- Increasing number of visitors
- Visitor demographics, including those with special needs
- Providing a central space with defined visitor flows
- A dedicated area for receiving delegations
- Special arrangements for security, storage, and handling of artifacts.

5-2 Types of Display:

Permanent Display: The museum includes artifacts that are permanently displayed because of their significant importance. This contributes to making the museum stand out from its counterparts. To achieve this, displaying such artifacts requires a good presentation based on three principles:

- **Harmony:** There should be harmony among the exhibited items and the environment of the hall in which the artifacts are displayed.
- **Balance:** Organizing and arranging the artifacts according to their significance, size, shape, era, and weight. For example, large-sized and heavy artifacts should be placed in contrast to smaller ones.

- Unity: The evaluation of unity can be based on the vital value of the artifacts, their beauty, artistic style, and the unity within collections, materials used for crafting the artifacts, as well as the historical periods (Ahmed El Refai, 1996, 36).

Temporary Display: Temporary exhibitions are allocated a hall in the museum building, which may be established for a specific period, typically lasting for three or four months. This type of exhibition is considered a means to attract people's attention to the permanent collections of the museum. Suitable locations are provided for visitors to make a single visit. For this type of display, it is advisable to consider the following points:

- The scientific content of the exhibits.
- Visitors' opinions and behavior.
- The display techniques used.
- The aesthetics of the presentation (Rafat Mousa Mohammad, 2002, 35).

The Traveling Display: Museums may contain stored collections, whether they consist of common or rare items. Traveling exhibitions hold significance in moving these artifacts from one place to another using cabinets and shelves that facilitate their separation in this type of display.

Currently, museum officials are preoccupied with how to attract the largest number of visitors, whether those who have previously visited the museum or those who have never set foot in a museum. It's worth noting that the audience has become more aware and is increasingly interested in exhibitions supported by advanced technology and interactive displays utilizing modern means of communication. Therefore, the search for novelty in museums has become a priority in leisure time (Rafat Mousa Mohammad, 2002, 36).

5-3 The Importance of Museums:

Museums are public sources for the transmission and exchange of culture, serving to enrich it. They also contribute to the development of understanding, cooperation, and peace among people. A museum, in and of itself, is a source of culture, containing within its walls history, heritage, art, and science. Given the significance of museums, countries have focused on constructing museums and preserving their heritage inside them, making them witnesses to past civilizations and records of significant events

Today, museums are no longer merely institutions for preserving artifacts to prevent their loss, but they have become educational institutions where we learn about our long history across different eras. Moreover, they serve as centers for shaping citizens' personalities and preparing them for various aspects of life (Hasan Al-Tarmoushi, 2003, 1).

One of the primary tasks of museums is to preserve national and human heritage and enhance the concept of cultural identity. In a world where societies' relationships are contracting and evolving, people need to clarify their affiliation to a land and culture through the historical monuments and various artistic achievements. This is nothing but a reflection of their belonging to a culture. The search for our identity means returning to our origins, understanding them, retrieving our heritage, and delving into it while looking forward to the future simultaneously. If the past holds the secret of our identity, it is not the key to it because our existence today depends on our relationship with this past. In summary, we can only know ourselves better by examining what our thoughts were in the past to understand what we will become in the future (Sabah Fardi, 1987, 15).

Museums have evolved from their old form as treasure vaults and large storage and protection warehouses to encompass broader and more comprehensive functions. In addition to their essential function of protection, museums today have taken on the role of displaying collections of artifacts and museum items. Presenting these collections to the public is the primary mission of most museums, and it is considered a driving force for museums with a broader impact.

Museums, as scientific and cultural institutions, assist citizens and researchers in understanding their nation's history to preserve the cultural heritage for future generations. On the one hand, they serve as institutions that provide scholars with what they seek in their studies and research. Therefore, it is noted that museums have various functions, which can be summarized in three aspects:

- Preserving heritage and transmitting it refers to everything that descendants inherit from their ancestors.

- Providing research material and comparisons for experts to understand the current reality and establish a more prosperous and peaceful future.

-Offering aspects of enjoyment and entertainment that lead to knowledge and culture. Museums should be the ideal place for education and enjoyment. Museums play a significant role in educating children who are the visitors of the future. Children also have a significant role in attracting adults to museums. However, museums do not replace schools. Therefore, schools are places for work and study, while museums are places for relaxation, leisure, and, in addition, a place for knowledge.

The museum stands out as a cultural and educational institution with a unique type (Hasan Al-Tarmushi, 2003, 3). It is designed based on several factors, including:

- The availability of experts in the teaching processes and the use of communication tools that support the museum's educational message.
- Designing educational programs according to the needs of visitors, including students seeking knowledge.
- Following the appropriate presentation style to elicit the visitor's response through their interaction with the educational resources available in the museum.
- The necessity of studying the psychological and social characteristics of the audience.

Museums are considered cultural and educational institutions with a general character, open to everyone. They are distinguished by their commitment to continuous education throughout the year. They bear the responsibility for safeguarding human creative heritage and connecting the future of humanity with the past. Thus, museums are seen as mirrors of culture and even its creators.

Today, museums employ various methods and mechanisms to fulfill their role, helping to bridge the gap between the present and the past. They serve as a link between ancient civilizations and contemporary societies that rely on modern technology. Effective methods that make these tools contribute to the enhancement and guidance of society, as well as a means to revitalize culture, include:

5-3-1 The media:

in its various forms, including print (newspapers, magazines, publications) and audiovisual media, is an important element that museums can utilize to promote and define their various activities. Media offers invaluable promotional support for the museum's activities on a broader scale, given its extensive

reach and substantial penetration among different segments of society and its direct impact on the audience. Leveraging its influence on society serves the museum's scientific and educational activities. This can be achieved by establishing a strong and enduring relationship with media outlets, especially with those interested in monitoring the cultural scene in society, publishing its news in newspapers and regularly informing them about the various educational and cultural activities the museum undertakes.

Engaging the museum in the creation and publication of articles, particularly in media interviews related to the museum's role in raising public awareness about the significance of this institution in serving culture and society, is of paramount importance (Abdulhak Maazouz, 1997: 32).

5-3-2 Exhibitions:

in their various forms (specialized, permanent, and temporary), are one of the most important means of attracting and engaging a wide audience, belonging to various segments of society. Particularly during the period when an exhibition is held, the number of visitors to the museum increases as people come to see the new exhibits, get acquainted with the other museum halls, and view the museum artifacts. Temporary exhibitions are thus an opportunity for a close encounter with all that is on display in the museum, creating a direct connection between the museum and the public. Visitors often experience the pleasure of acquiring more knowledge, which stimulates their curiosity and love for learning.

5-3-3 Training of Staff:

The employee is considered an essential element in the museum's interaction with the public, serving as a means of communication that connects the museum to its surroundings and as a key factor in building a relationship between the museum and the public. Therefore, it is important for the museum to work on improving the performance of its employees who are entrusted with tasks related to welcoming and guiding visitors. It is advisable to select employees who meet certain conditions. (Ahmed Refai, 1997, 41-42)

- They should have a high level of general culture to facilitate communication with various visitor groups, consisting of diverse cultural backgrounds and languages.

- They should undergo precise training that teaches them the art of reception, modern communication methods, dealing with

visitors, and how to carry out museum security and protection. It is important to choose a suitable location that allows them to oversee the hall and the exhibit and provide good monitoring. They should offer visitors explanations and information related to the museum's collections.

-Guides should receive training in modern educational and pedagogical methods to effectively convey information to different visitor groups, especially students and pupils, with whom guides are expected to interact differently than with the general public.

-They should provide students with systematic teaching that matches their cognitive capacity while considering their intellectual abilities, age, and cultural level. The guides should avoid using complex language and ensure that they do not overwhelm the students with more information than they can understand.

5-3-4 Digital Media:

In recent years, a new media phenomenon has emerged and asserted itself in the field of communication and information. It has clearly dominated traditional media forms such as written and audiovisual media. This phenomenon, known as "digital media," has become the leading element in our present time due to its effectiveness in communication. It also excels in its ability to store and preserve information, process data rapidly, and retrieve it in a timely manner, all while providing a wide-reaching platform for disseminating this information through a global information network like the internet. It facilitates the flow of information, making it easier to access scientific innovations and stay informed about global events. Additionally, it has contributed to the advancement of scientific research and societal development.

5-4 Museum Education:

Some of us may still hold a fixed idea about museums, seeing them as nothing more than spacious halls displaying dusty artifacts or preserved creatures, overseen by individuals who move without enthusiasm, as if they have been infected by the stillness.

The image of the museum has changed, and the modern museum has become a comprehensive institution that plays a significant role in preserving and disseminating cultural and civilizational heritage. In recent years, museum exhibitions have garnered greater interest, to the extent that they have

moved beyond their traditional role as a repository for displaying archaeological pieces to become a complementary cultural center to schools.

As a modern role, museums have also become centers for teaching handicrafts and showcasing local craftsmanship, including artistic works in environments where this was not easily accessible before. In some African museums, craftsmen, artists, and their students work on creating artwork in front of the public, such as wood carving or sculpture. This increases the public's interest in visiting the museum and appreciating local artistic works. An example of this can also be seen in the Crafts Market in Damascus (Yusri Daabes, 1995, 25).

The museum can capture the attention of individuals in the community, regardless of their age, by presenting new discoveries and hosting various events, art exhibitions, and national heritage exhibitions that relate to the cultural heritage. This helps people naturally engage with the museum, fostering a form of connection between the community, history, and heritage. Moreover, it can be used for marketing, advertising, and indicating its presence within the museum as a brand for certain products related to fine arts and local artistic creations (Abdulahak Maazouz, 1997, 35).

Conclusion:

Museums, regardless of their extensive or limited efforts, are fundamentally social institutions responsible for preserving cultural heritage and the history of nations. They serve as the unique places where the storage, study, and presentation of historical facts with tangible material evidence is carried out, following specific methodologies. This is all done with the aim of facilitating the process of communication between past and contemporary generations, in order to strengthen the sense of belonging and connection among individuals within contemporary societies.

The mission of museums extends beyond mere preservation, storage, and display; it aims to provide more than just enjoyment and observation. We now understand that the ultimate goal, not widely known among the general public regarding the various activities offered by museums, is not solely for enjoyment and observation. It surpasses the idea of education to involve a real immersion in the historical reality of the past. Museums have become essential social institutions entrusted by society to safeguard cultural heritage from any threat, ensuring the continuity of history in contemporary life.

It can be said that museums have many aspects that can be summarized in three important elements. The first element is the preservation of heritage. The second aspect is scientific, represented by providing research material and comparisons for specialists to understand the lived reality of previous generations. As for the third aspect, it is summarized in what the museum offers in terms of enjoyment, entertainment, and leading to knowledge and culture. Therefore, it is a duty to involve citizens in the life of the museum so that the museum can fulfill its role. However, it is noted that national museums suffer from a weakness in their interaction with the public and their knowledge of local history, and this can be attributed to several reasons, including:

-The museum participates in the weakness of its relationship with the media and its lack of openness, failing to introduce its monthly and annual plans and updates, and it does not excel in advertising its collections through various media. _Using advertising as a means would simplify and reinforce the information.

-Visiting national museums may be by chance, as Algerian families do not consider the museum as a priority for educating the youth, despite what the museum offers in non-formal education, such as museum education. The museum conveys the greatest number of visual and sensory facts in the shortest time and in a simple way, which helps develop the sense of observation and logical thinking.

-In the end, as visitors to museums, we must support them in order to prove to the world that our history is our identity and our heritage is a symbol of our pride.

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