

Madhya Pradesh Positions Itself as a Global Voice in Museum Innovation and Living Heritage at Wakankar National Seminar

BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA, February 24, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Madhya Pradesh is emerging as a significant contributor to global conversations on museum transformation and heritage governance following the Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar National Seminar, organized by the Directorate of Archaeology, Archives and Museums (DAAM), Madhya Pradesh.

Focused on 'Latest Developments in the Collection, Curation, Accessibility and Conservation of Tangible and Intangible Heritage and Trends in Digital Curation,' the session brought together leading scholars, museum professionals, conservation scientists and policy thinkers to examine how museums and heritage institutions are evolving in the 21st century. The deliberations reflected not only national priorities but also themes including digital transformation, decolonization, community participation, and sustainable conservation.

The session was chaired by Dr. D. Dayalan, former Director of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), and moderated by Dr. Manoj Kurmi, Superintending Archaeologist, ASI Bhopal Circle. Two keynote addresses set the intellectual tone for the discussions.



Dr. Nandini Bhattacharya Sahu, Joint Director General (Archaeology), ASI, presented groundbreaking research on the rock shelters of the Gavilgarh Hills, documenting approximately 247 decorated shelters with rare petroglyphs and layered artistic traditions spanning from the Upper Paleolithic to historic periods. She described rock art landscapes as “open-air museums” that preserve deep socio-cultural memory, calling for interdisciplinary protection strategies that combine scientific analysis with community engagement.



Dr. Arun Raj T., Regional Director (Central Zone), ASI, traced the evolution of museums from classical repositories to dynamic public institutions. Emphasizing Madhya Pradesh’s exceptional concentration of museums and protected monuments, he underscored the need to enhance visitor experience through thoughtful technological integration while maintaining a careful balance between tangible collections and living traditions.



A central theme emerging from the session was the global dilemma between digital innovation and physical authenticity. A paper on the ‘Dilemma of Digital vs. Real’ by Dr. Jawa Madhur & Dr. D. B. Singh examined how Indian museums are navigating immersive technologies while safeguarding material engagement with artefacts. Drawing parallels with international museum practices, participants stressed that digitalization must serve interpretation and access, not replace the experiential value of physical heritage.

Case studies by Mr. Kush Saxena & Dr. Amit Soni showcased cutting-edge exhibition technologies, immersive installations, and extended reality (XR) tools now being integrated into museum environments. However, speakers consistently emphasized ethical safeguards, visitor data protection, and the importance of community narratives. The Case study by Ms. Suvechha Ganguli highlighted that crafts, ritual traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems cannot be fully understood when removed from their social and ecological contexts. It advocated for models of the ‘living museum’, where heritage remains embedded within communities. This

approach positions Madhya Pradesh as a thought leader in redefining museums not merely as buildings, but as networks connecting sites, people, and cultural memory.

Scientific conservation also featured prominently. The Paper by Dr. Rini Hazel Templeton detailed evidence-based conservation of historic interiors and textiles, combining traditional craftsmanship with advanced analytical methods. Preventive conservation, risk management, and material-specific restoration were identified as essential priorities for long-term sustainability, reflecting best practices recognized internationally.

The session further addressed heritage infrastructure at a systems level. Participants recommended the development of museum circuits within historic cities, strategic use of digital interpretation to increase footfall, and the creation of comprehensive documentation frameworks for lesser-known sites. There was a strong emphasis on capacity building, interdisciplinary training, and establishing scientific databases of historic building materials.

Through this high-level thought leadership platform, DAAM demonstrated its commitment to positioning Madhya Pradesh at the forefront of global heritage discourse. By convening experts across archaeology, archives, and museology, the Directorate fostered a rare interdisciplinary dialogue that aligns regional heritage management with international standards and emerging global trends. On this occasion, Dr. Manisha Sharma, Joint Director and Officer-in-Charge, Museum (DAAM), remarked:

“A museum is not merely a collection of objects; it is a living repository that preserves the aesthetic sensibilities of different eras and reflects the diverse ways in which human life continually shapes history. Our ability to conserve, restore, and safeguard these cultural memories in their most authentic form depends on sustained knowledge exchange and the adoption of evolving methodologies. This seminar represents a meaningful step in that direction. In the years ahead, we aim to broaden its scope and further strengthen this academic dialogue.”

As museums worldwide confront questions of digital transition, representation, and sustainability, the outcomes of this technical session signal that Madhya Pradesh is not merely adapting to change; it is helping to shape the future of cultural stewardship. The deliberations are expected to inform policy frameworks, collaborative research initiatives, and international partnerships in the years ahead, reinforcing Madhya Pradesh's role as a global hub for heritage innovation and responsible cultural governance.

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