





**CHAPTER – V**  
**Functioning of Museums**



## CHAPTER: V

### Functioning of Museums

*Museums contain artifacts and antiquities that possess immeasurable historical value. This chapter highlights the issues in Management of Museums by the Department. Audit noticed that the Department did not have a rotational policy for display of artifacts. Further, there were no proper storage facilities in museums and antiquities were lying scattered, exposed to vagaries of nature. There was no collection care plan and list of antiquities along with photographs were not digitised fully. During physical inspection, Audit noticed that museums were not well maintained and did not have adequate public amenities.*

**5.1** Museums preserve, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity and have collective benefit for society. The Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage had 16 museums and one art gallery<sup>45</sup>, functioning in 15 Districts that were established between 1877 and 2014.

In February 2012, GoK upgraded the post of the Additional Director at Mysuru as Director (Museums) in Bengaluru. As per the restructuring order, the Director's office was assigned the following functions:

- Establishment, maintenance, and development of museums in all Districts of the State;
- Inventorisation of antiquities/artifacts; and
- Periodical inspection of museums and their activities including arrangement of exhibitions/educational programs at museums.



**Picture No 5.1: Government Museum, Bengaluru housed in a Heritage building and established during 1877.**

<sup>45</sup> Venkatappa Art Gallery at Bengaluru.

As per the sample, Audit scrutinised records pertaining to eight museums<sup>46</sup> (out of 16) in six districts<sup>47</sup> and the art gallery and related observations are discussed below:

### ***Delay in establishment of museums in all Districts***

**5.2** The Director (Museum) was entrusted (February 2012) with the responsibility of establishing museums at all Districts. However, the department had established (2014) only one museum at Chamarajanagar District, in addition to the already existing 15 Museums in 14 Districts. The Department stated (June 2022) that work had been taken up for establishing museums at an old District Commissioner's Office building at Kolar District and a heritage palace pertaining to Savanur Nawab's at Haveri District and correspondence have been made with Deputy Commissioners of remaining districts for allotment of land or building for establishing Museums and that action would be taken in due course.

Audit observed that the building allocated to the Department for establishing a Museum at Kolar was in litigation and the matter was pending with Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka. Further, the conservation work of heritage palace pertaining to Savanur Nawab's at Haveri District was taken up by the Department without notification wherein the ownership of the palace rests with the private owners (discussed in **Paragraph 3.6**). Further, correspondence seeking two to five acres of land to establish a museum were made between July 2009 and January 2016, with District Commissioners of various districts<sup>48</sup> evoked no response. Only after four years, Additional DC, Davanagere informed (December 2013) the Director (Museums) about non-availability of land.

The Government replied (August 2023) that Department had requested concerned District Commissioners to provide land or vacant sites or heritage buildings in around district headquarters. As and when provided, funds for construction would be made available. However, reply is silent on the efforts that would be taken to hasten the process as previous correspondences have not yielded results.

### ***Absence of a Rotation Policy for Display of Artifacts***

**5.3** The Guidelines for ASI Museums is a standard that lays down instructions on display and storage of artifacts in all museums. Collection Care Plan must also include preventive conservation and constant monitoring to assess the impact of climatic conditions, light, microbiological growth, *etc.*, on objects (particularly if they are fragile and vulnerable) both on display and in the reserve collections.

Rotation of artifacts in a Museum or gallery is about replacing one object on display with another object, so that all the objects in possession of the Museum are showcased from time to time. This is also necessary to avoid the

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<sup>46</sup> Government Museums at Athani, Bengaluru, Hassan, Kalaburagi, Kittur, Mysuru and Raichur.

<sup>47</sup> Bengaluru, Belagavi, Hassan, Kalaburagi, Raichur and Mysuru Districts.

<sup>48</sup> Chikkaballapura, Davanagere, Ramanagara. Tumakur, Mandya, Udupi, Dharwad, Uttarakannada and Vijayapura.

risk of theft and vandalism, exposure of items to vibrations, dust, fluctuations in temperature and humidity in the long run. The Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture recommended (July 2021) that the Museums should ensure that their entire collection of artifacts is displayed to the audience by implementation of a well thought-out, pre-planned rotation schedule, physically as well as on the Museum websites.

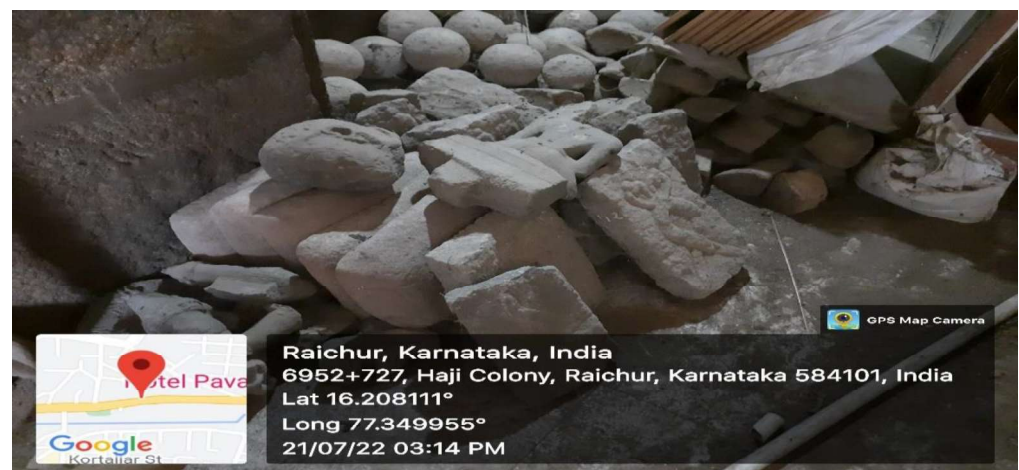
Audit noticed that the Department did not have a periodic Rotation Policy for displaying the artifacts. The details of artifacts displayed and kept in reserve in various Museums are detailed below:

**Table 5.1: Details of the objects displayed and in reserve**

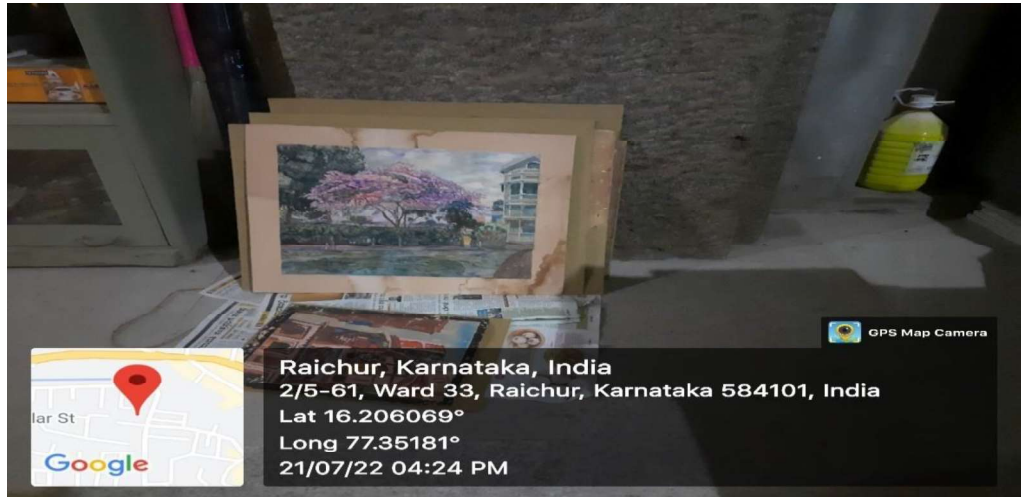
Sl. No.	Name of the Museums	Number of objects held	Number of objects displayed	Number of objects in reserve	Percentage of objects kept in reserve
1	Government Museum, Athani	75	60	15	20
2	Kittur Rani Chennamma Memorial Government Museum	649	232	417	64
3	Government Museum, Bengaluru	6,798	1,450	5,348	79
4	Venkatappa Art Gallery, Bengaluru	735	250	485	66
5	Government Museum, Chitradurga	729	265	464	64
6	Government Museum, Shivmoga	1,486	0	1,486	100
7	Divan Poorniah Government Museum, Yelanduru	138	107	31	22
8	Shreemanthi Bai Memorial Government Museum, Mangaluru	4,935	1,144	3,791	77
9	Government Museum, Hassan	481	376	105	22
10	Government Museum, Madikeri	714	621	93	13
11	Sri Chamarajendra Memorial Government Museum, Srirangapatna	282	206	76	27
12	Government Museum, Wellington House Mysuru.	525	42	483	92

From the above table, these 12 Museums have collections whose size is more than the items displayed. Hence, it is necessary that the Department has a robust policy of rotation of artifacts so that they could be displayed within a reasonable span of time.

The condition of some of the artifacts noticed during joint inspection in Government Museum, Raichur are as below:



**Picture No 5.2: Artefacts lying at Government Museum Raichur without being displayed.**



**Picture No 5.3: Paintings kept in curators office without display at Government Museum, Raichur.**

The Government accepted the observation and replied (August 2023) that action would be taken by the Department to display the artefacts with periodic rotation.

#### *Absence of proper storage facilities*

**5.4** Museums should have a proper place separate from the exhibit areas for storing artifacts, which cannot be displayed. The storage area should have enough space for safe keeping of the artifacts and ensure that they remain well-protected. The Guidelines for ASI Museums, prescribes employing best practices to conserve the museum collection and those in store to ensure long-term preservation and protection. The State had not formulated storage policy for storage of museum collections on display and those in storage. In the absence of State Policy, the ASI guidelines have to be followed.

None of the Museums jointly inspected had a proper storage facility for safe keeping of artifacts kept as reserve. Out of eight museums, six museums had reserves ranging from 20 *percent* to 92 *percent* of artifacts. The artifacts were found lying haphazardly on the floor or outside the Museum building. The lack of storage facilities at the Museums resulted in accumulation of dust, moisture and growth of algae on the artifacts.



**Picture No 5.4: Artefacts kept outside haphazardly without proper protection at Government Museum, Hassan.**



The Government replied (August 2023) that a Detailed Project Report has been prepared to construct proper and scientific storage space for the antiquities of the Bangalore Museum at a site belonging to the Department at Nagarabhavi and a common storage space for the antiquities in the State if sufficient space is not available at the respective museums.

#### ***Lack of mechanism for Periodical Verification***

5.5 ASI Guidelines for Museums stipulates the creation of a collection care plan for bi-monthly monitoring of objects on display and storage. Periodical Physical verification of artifacts is essential to ensure the availability and existence of the artifacts and also to assess the conditions of the antiquities. In the absence of it, the risks of artifacts getting stolen or their condition getting deteriorated will not be mitigated.

Audit observed that the Director's office had not conducted periodical inspection of museums and antiquities/artifacts during last ten years. Further, the Director (Museum) did not maintain any Register for noting physical inspection of Government Museums and antiquities/artifacts since inception. The Commissioner, Department of Archaeology, Museums and Heritage had also not fixed targets for periodical inspection of museums.





**Picture No 5.7: Lack of periodical inspection resulting in display of worn out un-conserved paintings at Government Museum, Bengaluru.**

The Department while replying (June 2022) to the Audit observation, stated that the Director had been visiting the Government Museums during Museum Tours and necessary instructions were given orally. However, the Department agreed to conduct periodical inspection of Government Museums and maintain Inspection Register/Notes in future. The Government has not replied to this observation.

### ***Delay in digitisation of antiquities***

**5.6** The Department had in its possession a large collection of ancient/valuable antiquities that were either displayed or held at the museums and the art gallery. Based on the suggestions from Central Advisory Board of Archaeology (CABA), to ensure their safety and security of antiquities, ASI had requested (October/December 2016) to digitize all the antiquities in uniform National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA) format that required documentation of 21<sup>49</sup> aspects of each antiquity.

To comply with the request from ASI for digitised information, Director (Museums) had instructed all the 16 museums and the art gallery to furnish the documentation sheets containing requisite information.

In this regard, Audit observed that:

- Even after a lapse of over five years, the digital documentation of antiquities was still in progress at museum and the art gallery in Bengaluru. Only digitisation of bronze, metalware, stone sculptures, and sandalwood items were completed till date (June 2022).
- As against the budget allocation of ₹ 13.30 lakh towards e-documentation of all antiquities during three financial years 2017-2020, the Department incurred an expenditure of only ₹ 1.19 lakh

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<sup>49</sup> Details regarding title and type of object, dynasty style, material, identification mark, photograph, condition, accession number, measurement and weight *etc.*

during 2018-19 and balance amount of ₹ 12.11 lakh lapsed without utilisation.

The Government replied (August 2023) that the antiquities would be digitally documented in the year 2023-24 and a proposal had been approved by the Government to sign an MoU with Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology, Bengaluru at an estimated cost of ₹ 2.25 crore. The reply is not acceptable as the digitization of antiquities is yet to be taken up even after a lapse of five years.

### ***Delay in conservation of paintings***

5.7 The Department at its Museum and the Venkatappa Art Gallery in Bengaluru had many paintings and artworks in its possession. This included temporary possession (January 2020) of 239 paintings of Dr. Swetoslav Roerich (Roerich collection of artworks) handed over by the City Crime Branch of Police for safe custody till establishment of Roerich Museum. The Department, citing deterioration of paintings and artworks due to lack of maintenance and poor lighting facilities, signed (March 2019/ November 2020) two Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), New Delhi for conservation of 118 artworks at Venkatappa Art Gallery and 239 art works of Roerich collection by INTACH conservation institute, Chitrakala Parishat, Bengaluru.

- The work involved conservation of 86 objects at Government Museum and 32 artworks at the Art Gallery at a cost of ₹ 32.64 lakh to be completed through four milestones by November 2020.
- The conservation of 239 artworks (paintings) by Dr. Swetoslav Roerich at a cost of ₹ 83.89 lakh was scheduled to be completed by August 2022.

Conservation of all 118 art works was completed with delays ranging from 45 to 181 days. Conservation of 239 paintings of Roerich collection had not been completed as the expert committee responsible for clearance of payments had not been re-constituted by the Government (June 2022).



**Picture No 5.8: Restored Mysuru Painting at Government Museum, Bengaluru.**

The Government replied (August 2023) that the delay was mainly due to Covid-19 pandemic and out of 239 paintings of Roerich, conservation work of 120 were completed and payment was released for 90 paintings after reconstitution of expert committee in February 2023.

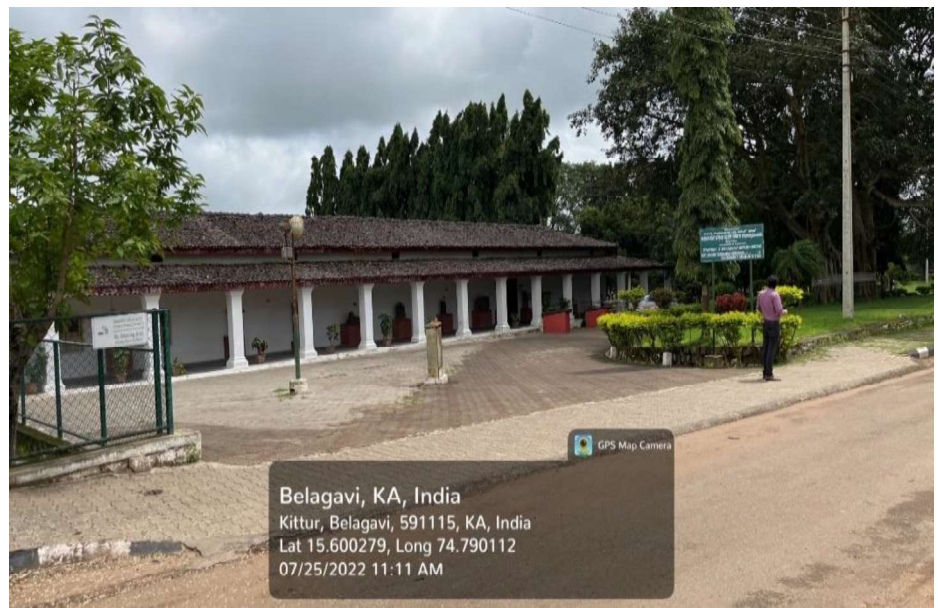
### **Maintenance of museums**

**5.8** Para 6.6 of Guideline for ASI Museum, 2013, entails preparation of a maintenance plan to ensure the upkeep of the museum and its facilities. The Museums hold historical antiquities, coins, books, manuscripts and records and are supposed to preserve them through scientific methods, it is important to have a maintenance plan. The Department had not devised a maintenance plan for the museums coming under its control. However, the Tourism Department, the parent Department with a view to attract more tourists to museums had formulated (June 2015) guidelines under the GoK approved Tourism Policy. The guidelines mainly comprised the need for permanent buildings, security measures, ease of access and availability of basic amenities to visitors, provision for good ambience and information about artifacts displayed, *etc.* for strict implementation by museums/art galleries under the control of the Department.

#### ***Inadequate compliance with Government guidelines***

**5.8.1** The Joint inspection of seven museums and one art gallery located in six districts<sup>50</sup> revealed the following significant instances of inadequate/non-compliance to the guidelines:

- All seven museums and the art gallery have permanent buildings for preservation and display of artifacts. Five museums at Bengaluru, Kittur, Raichur, Kalaburagi and Mysuru are functioning in State Protected Monuments.



**Picture No 5.9: Government Museum, Kittur functioning in a State Protected Monument (inside Rani Chennamma Palace, Fort).**

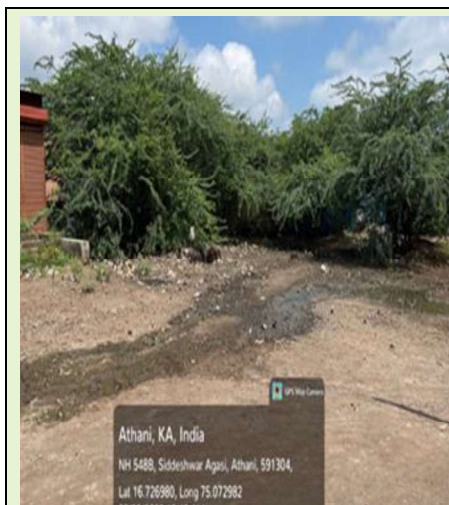
<sup>50</sup> Mysuru, Bengaluru Urban, Belagavi, Hassan, Raichur and Kalaburagi.



**Picture No 5.10: Government Museum, Mysuru functioning in a Heritage Building (Wellington Lodge a 200 years old building where Colonel Arthur Wellesly lived during 1799 to 1801 AD).**

The Government replied (August 2023) that as there was no separate office for the curator who is in-charge of respective museums and curator has to be physically present during opening hours to explain about the displayed antiquities. Audit observed that in the absence of full time curators (holding dual charge), presence of curator physically at the time of opening hours of different museums would be practically impossible.

- There are multiple settlements near the Government Museum at Athani and it lacked direct and clean, hygienic access for visitors. The Department claimed (Sept 2022) that the external boundaries of the museum belongs to town municipality and requests made to provide road connectivity, clean atmosphere *etc.* have yielded no results. The museum building was also in dilapidated condition as plastering of ceilings was found falling off on artifacts displayed.



**Picture No 5.11: No clean and proper road access to museum at Athani.**



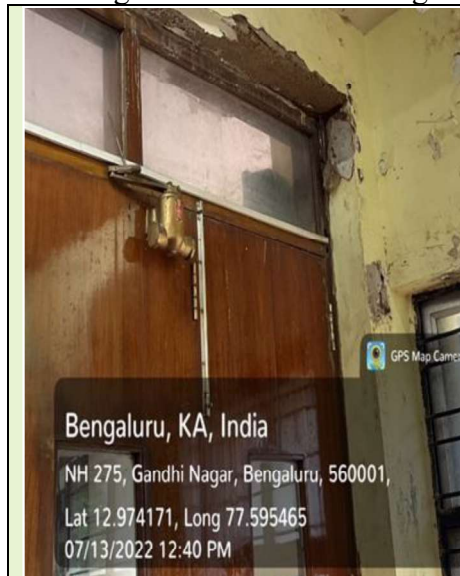
**Picture No 5.12: Plastering falling off from roof at museum at Athani.**

- Buildings housing the museum and the art gallery at Bengaluru have multiple floors. However, the lift provided at art gallery was not functional at the time of joint inspection.
- No provision had been made for parking of visitors vehicles at Hassan, Athani, Raichur, Kalaburagi and Mysuru museums.

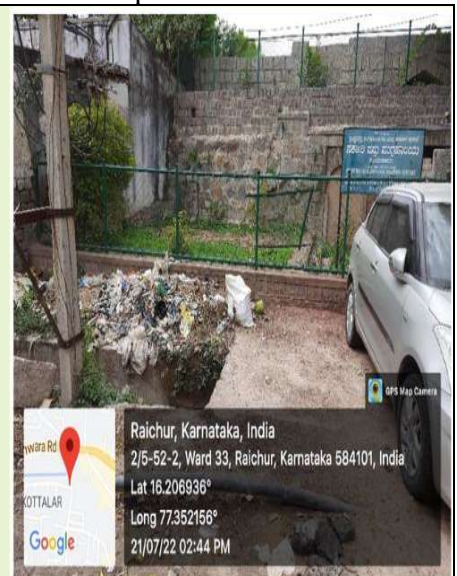


**Picture No 5.13: Vehicles parked adjacent to displayed artifacts at Government Museum, Kalaburagi.**

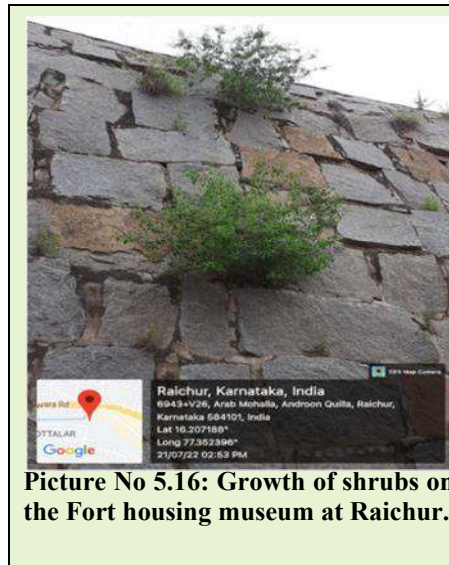
- Information regarding rate of entry fee, timings, holidays *etc.* was not updated or properly displayed at the entrance of all museums except Government Museum, Bengaluru.
- In the Government Museum, Raichur housed at Navrang Darwaza Fort, Audit noticed that garbage was dumped at the entrance of the museum and fort walls had growth of shrubs. The museum at Kalaburagi did not maintain the garden and the premises was not clean.



**Picture No 5.14: Dilapidated condition of building housing Venkatappa Art Gallery, Bengaluru.**



**Picture No 5.15: Garbage dumped at the entrance to the Government Museum, Raichur.**



**Picture No 5.16: Growth of shrubs on the Fort housing museum at Raichur.**

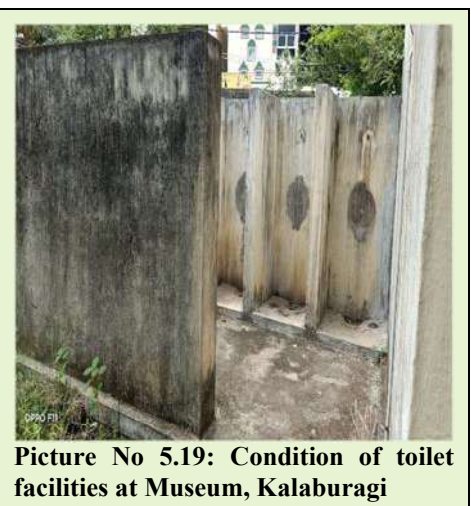


**Picture No 5.17: Poorly maintained garden in front of Government Museum, Kalaburagi.**

- At the new building in Hassan, one portion of toilet lacked access as there was no provision made for steps/passage to the washroom. Provision for washrooms/toilet did not exist at Government Museum, Kalaburagi for both staff as well as for visitors.

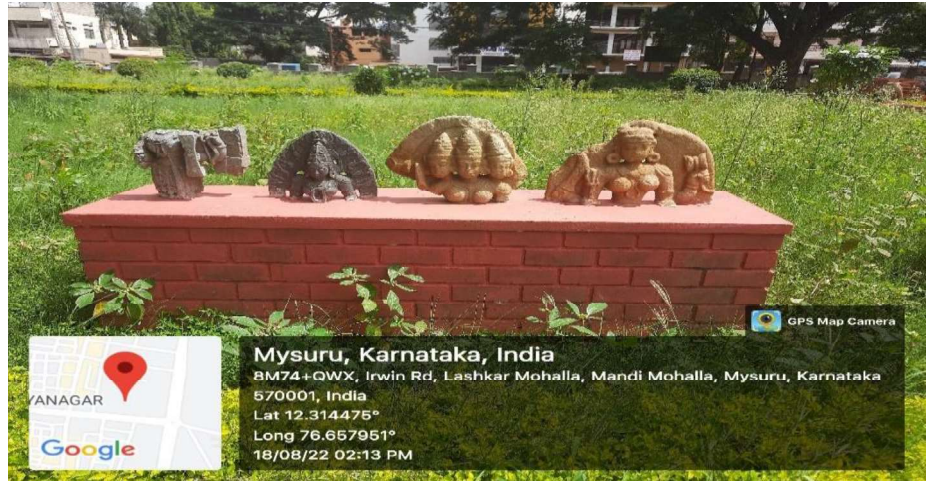


**Picture No 5.18: Dilapidated common toilet at Bengaluru Museum.**



**Picture No 5.19: Condition of toilet facilities at Museum, Kalaburagi**

- Except for availability of pamphlets at Government Museums at Bengaluru and Kalaburagi, adequate provisions for manual/audio/video guides and literature, pamphlets, catalogue, color photos, photo index cards, gallery sheets *etc.* to visitors were not made available at five Museums to comply with the guidelines.
- The individual captions for each object on display and gallery texts for groups of objects should be in bi-lingual format. The Identification label provides the most basic information about the artifacts, usually the name, age, place of origin, *etc.* The visitors usually read the description to help their understanding of the artworks. During Joint Inspection, Audit noticed that a large number of the artifacts displayed in Museums were not given identification captions/ labels. Absence of such elementary requirements indicates lack of emphasis on improving the visitors' experience.



**Picture No 5.20: Absence of bi-lingual display boards on artifacts displayed outside Government Museum, Mysuru.**



**Picture No 5.21: Absence of bi-lingual display boards on artifacts displayed at Government Museum, Kalaburagi.**

- Lighting plays a significant role in developing a visually enriching and interactive experience for the visitors. Lighting arrangements were found not effective in all museums (except at Kittur Museum). The building and equipment both meant for the auditorium at art gallery (at Bengaluru) were in dilapidated condition and the Diesel Generator Set was not functional at the time of inspection.



**Picture No 5.22: Poor lighting to showcase artifacts at Government Museum, Kalaburagi**

- At the museum building at Government Museum, Kalaburagi (Gallery-3), rainwater was found seeping through the roof and falling on the artifacts.



Picture No 5.23: Seepage water affecting the artifacts at Government Museum, Kalaburagi.

- The artifacts are to be displayed on proper panel/podium and galleries designed to suit the modern trends. No such provisions were made in museums at Raichur, Kalaburagi and Mysuru. There was no proper shelter facility at the new building housing Hassan Museum and many of the antiquities were kept in open (including the old wooden chariot) which were exposed to rain, heat and dust.



Picture No 5.24: Antiquities kept in open at new museum building, Hassan.

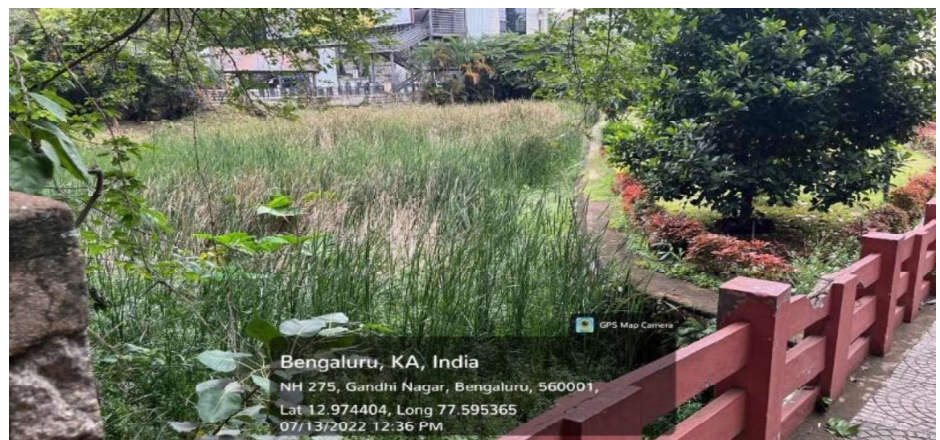




**Picture No 5.25: Old wooden Chariot kept outside without any shelter at Government Museum, Hassan.**

The Government replied (August 2023) that the display of stone antiquities in an open gallery on the Museum premises would attract visitors and provision would be made in action plan to suitably rectify the display of artefacts in a suitable design. Further, it was intimated that proper shelter would be provided for old wooden chariot at Hassan Museum.

- Garden and pond existing at the museum and art gallery at Bengaluru were poorly maintained as weed growth and filth accumulation were found in the pond adjacent to the art gallery.



**Picture No 5.26: Weeds and filth found in the pond adjacent to Venkatappa Art Gallery, Bengaluru.**

- The information regarding annual footfall of visitors/tourists needs to be submitted to Tourism Department, GoK. There was no mechanism of preparation and submission of annual report to Tourism Department existed, except for sending monthly reports to Commissionerate at Mysuru.
- Except for provision for CCTV, no other modern security arrangements like alarm system, metal detector, magnetic stiches, glass break detectors, hand baggage X-ray machines *etc.* were found at the museums and art gallery.
- Though fire extinguishers were present, Joint inspection of selected Museums revealed that no periodical trials/maintenance of firefighting equipment was carried out by the Department.
- Provision for first aid facilities existed only in Government Museums at Athani and Mysuru.

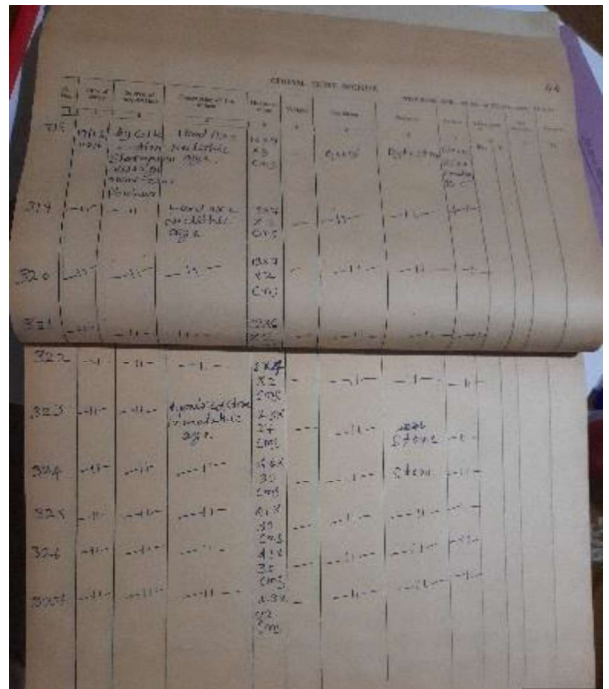
The Government replied (August 2023) that it would formulate the guidelines for maintenance of museums on par with ASI guidelines to enhance visitor experience.

#### Recommendation 19:

**The Government should formulate guidelines for maintenance of museums on par with ASI Manual and ensure that basic amenities are provided to enhance visitors' experience.**

#### *Improper maintenance of accession registers*

**5.8.2** Each antiquity/ artifact had a separate unique accession number which also indicates the year of accession. Proper and regular maintenance of the accession register is essential for the safety and security of the Museum objects. On verification of records during the joint inspection of museums, Audit observed discrepancies such as maintenance of only general accession register instead of category wise register, non-preparation of physical verification statement, changes not being carried out in case of identified wrong entries (detailed in *Appendix 14*).



**Picture No 5.27: The Accession Register maintained at Raichur Museum.**

The Government replied (August 2023) that instructions have been issued to officers in-charge of Museums to maintain category wise accession register.

However, the reply was silent about conducting of periodical inspections for artefacts and antiquities.

Thus, improper maintenance of the accession register and non-conduct of periodical inspections of museums may compromise the safety and security of the existing artefacts.

**Recommendation 20:**

**Action should be initiated to formulate a uniform format for accession register and devise a mechanism to conduct periodical inspection for artefacts and antiquities.**

***Failure to carryout valuation and physical verification of Treasure Trove***

**5.8.3** The provisions of the Karnataka Treasure Trove Act, 1962 empowers the Deputy Commissioners to acquire the treasures (where the amount or value of such treasure is found to exceed rupees one lakh) on behalf of the Government. The Department had in its possession a huge collection of ancient valuable treasures with 369 entries in the daybook, each entry recording the details of items received. There are different articles of gold, silver, copper, bronze, brass *etc.* which are preserved in the strong room of the Mysuru Palace or in a chest at the Commissioner's Office.

In this regard, Audit observed that:

- No action had been taken to digitise the daybooks where receipt of 369 entries since 1952-53 were recorded. The first volume was torn and in an ill-preserved condition.
- Only the details regarding date of receipt, source of receipt and quantitative details of treasure trove articles received have been recorded. The articles were not classified (like idols, coins, articles of gold, silver *etc.*) and the total number of different classes of articles was not ascertained. The Department had failed to obtain the report containing the declaration of approximate value, as required under Section 4 of the Act, at the time of receipt of articles and to undertake the valuation of treasure trove articles to assess the approximate value.
- Based on an assurance (December 2011) from the Government, a physical verification had been conducted during July 2014 and it was reported that all items as per the 362 entries till then were found to be available in good condition. Subsequently, no specific guidelines had been framed/issued to fix the periodicity for regular physical verifications of treasure trove. Also, no physical verification had been carried out since then.
- Treasure trove articles received and recorded under Sl. No. 363 to 369 have been kept in Departmental chest without transferring the same to strong room of the Mysore Palace.

- There was a delay in transfer of silver coins (Sl. No.366 of day book) by 10 months, as coins received from police authorities in December 2016 in compliance of court orders was transferred to the Departmental Chest at Mysore only in October 2017.

Thus, the Department does not have a proper procedure to value the treasure trove items held with them and there is no mechanism to periodically verify the items in custody.

The Government in its reply (August 2023) stated that the Audit recommendation had been noted for compliance.

**Recommendation 21:**

**The Government should decide on the periodicity of physical verification of treasure trove and undertake the same at regular intervals.**

**Bengaluru  
The**

  
**(Vimalendra Anand Patwardhan)  
Principal Accountant General (Audit-II)  
Karnataka**

**Countersigned**

**New Delhi  
The**

  
**(Girish Chandra Murmu)  
Comptroller and Auditor General of India**