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HERITAGE AND COMMUNITIES

IMPACT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES ON THE HERITAGE SECTOR IN UK

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements Of the Degree of Master of Science in Museum Studies, Information Studies, University of Glasgow.

August 30th, 2019

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CH – COLORFUL HERITAGE

WW1 – WORLD WAR I

SSSM – SCOTLAND STREET SCHOOL MUSEUM

BMHC – BRITISH MUSLIM HERITAGE CENTRE

NHLF – NATIONAL HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

OSCH – OUR SHARED CULTURAL HERITAGE

ABSTRACT

In the current times, community engagement is a central theme in most museum policies aimed at producing more community-oriented projects, open to all of its stakeholders. Despite this, the ongoing financial deficit in the cultural sector has adversely affected the degree by which local heritage institutions have actively invested towards community engagement. The objective of this paper is to bring into forefront the impact of projects and initiatives that have been used to build successful relationships between museums and galleries, and some of their previously excluded audiences. It attempts to focus on why there is a need in the current cultural scenario for museums and other heritage institutions to focus on community engagement and establish sustainable relationships with the diverse group of people living around them, by studying the impact of such activities. This paper analyses the various collaborations conducted by museums with South-Asian communities in particular and attempts to understand how they have impacted the museum for the better.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to thank the Museum Studies faculty as well as Dr. Rosie Spooner, my thesis supervisor, who helped me throughout the project, offering me guidance through every step of my project by offering me valuable suggestions.

I would also like to thank all those who I interviewed for my case studies including Saqib Razzaq, Isobel McDonald, Dr. Islam Issa and Shasti Lowton who took out time from their busy schedules to talk to me and answer my questions about the projects they were engaged in. A special thanks to Neena Sohal for making time for me to talk about her role within the heritage sector as a consultant and the various projects that she has been a part of. I am also grateful to the Science Museum Group and Glasgow Life for connecting me with the relevant professionals who worked on their projects.

I would also like to thank my parents and my friends for their constant support.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Since 2009-10, the percentage of investment by local governments into the cultural and leisure services has decreased up to 40%, according to a recent report by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) with priority being given to statutory services and pressing concerns such as children's services, social care and work on homelessness[1]. The findings of the "Museums in the UK 2018 Report" commissioned by the Museums Association showed that the overall funds of 39% of museums by local authorities had decreased in the past few years including those derived from public revenue funding[2]. Furthermore, a decade of austerity in Britain has resulted in shrinking incomes, with many institutions reporting a decrease in their overall funds especially among those dependent on public funds. Museum workers have been also affected in terms of job insecurity and low morale among individuals with specialized posts. Job losses also meant that museum teams lost their contracts as partner organizations redirected their resources away from cultural and creative programmes[3]. And even though the rate of the budget cuts have somewhat slowed, for now, there is still a need for reorganization of resources within a few smaller museums to reduce internal costs and increase earnings through public income[4]. The current period of austerity, therefore, on one hand, is pressurizing public service providers to build new strategic partnerships in order to limit the effect of the cuts and at the same time is also hindering these projects due to deficits in funding.

However, some new developments within the heritage sector such as digital engagement, co-curation, and decolonization have helped encourage museums and those working within, to become more engaged with issues that really matter to people's everyday lives such as poverty, racism, and climate change thereby reinstating its relevance. For most of the local museums to

[1] Alex Stevens, 'Arts Hit Disproportionately Hard by Government's Cuts', *Museums Journal*, 119.7/8 (2019), 11.
[2] Museums Association, *Museums In The UK 2018 Report* (Museums Association, February 2018), pp. 5–16 <https://www.museumsassociation.org/download?id=1244881>.
[3] Nuala Morse and Ealasaid Munro, 'Museums' Community Engagement Schemes, Austerity and Practices of Care in Two Local Museum Services', *Social & Cultural Geography*, 19.3 (2018), 357–78 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2015.1089583>.
[4] Geraldine Kendall Adams, 'Museums Are Surviving, but They Could Be Thriving', *Museums Journal*, 119.6 (2019), 12–15.

survive, public support is crucial and consequently public engagement officials play a very important role. Now, more than ever, public engagement professionals will play a vital role within the heritage sector. It is believed that without public support, these centres of history and culture will turn into "zombie museums" as it would only be able to maintain the collections but with no funds for activity and/or improvement[5]. So one of the ways the cultural sector is attempting to protect themselves from the budgetary changes is by making community engagement as the focus of their work and recognizing the need to target and work with non-traditional visitor groups such as ethnic minority groups and local communities. This is where the ideas of co-curation, and along with it, the concept of community engagement comes into play.

Before the cut, many local museums conducted regular community engagement programs and activities but due to lack of funding and in an attempt to keep costs down the number of projects have reduced [6]. However, in the current financial scenario, heritage professionals have begun to try and work in more sustainable ways. Co-curation, in particular, is a rapidly developing area for this purpose within the heritage sector. It aims to challenge the long-held idea of the curator being the custodian of knowledge and interpretation and sees diverse perspectives on collections as necessary and valuable. At the same time, it attempts to address the perceived gap between the creation of knowledge and public engagement. Simultaneously public as well as community engagement has now become a recurring theme within the cultural sector.

RESEARCH FOCUS

In the current day, heritage organizations are not valued on the basis of its internal possessions such as their collections, rather they are assessed on the basis of the benefits it provides to the individuals and communities it serves[7]. This is mainly why it is important to understand and develop ways to make these collections available to the public to benefit them as well as the heritage institutions. Keeping in mind the above arguments, this paper focuses on

[5] BBC News, '"Resilient" Museums Surviving Cuts', *BBC NEWS*, 7 February 2017, section Wales <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-38570627> [accessed 17 July 2019].
[6] Laura Crossley, 'How to Be an Inclusive Museum in Times of Financial Crisis' (presented at the MuseumNext, Indianapolis, 2015) <https://www.museumnext.com/article/how-to-be-an-inclusive-museum-in-times-of-financial-crisis/> [accessed 16 July 2019].
[7] Sheila Watson, 'Museums and Their Communities', in *Museums and Their Communities*, ed. by Sheila Watson (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 1–19.

understanding why community engagement is necessary and in some ways could also be beneficial within heritage institutions.

The following section attempts to unravel the development of "community engagement" over the years from the late 19th century to the present times. This it does by studying the views of various scholars on concepts closely associated to it such as participatory learning, cultural diversity, museums as an interactive, intercultural space, the idea and importance of ethnicity and authenticity in relation to public engagement as well as the various approaches to engaging communities.

The first chapter then briefly deals with dissecting the term "community engagement" in itself and understanding the two words in isolation. It then shift the focus to understanding the barriers to good and sustainable community engagement in the museums of UK based on the "Our Museum" report commissioned by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which also outlines the various indicators of community engagement and studies these factors in detail. The following chapter includes a series of case studies, portraying a more or less top-bottom approach, that demonstrate the attempts of numerous local museums or heritage institutions to engage ethnic minority communities, especially the South-Asian community, in their immediate locality within the UK. These include the digital projects of Colorful Heritage as well as its collaboration with the Scotland Street School Museum, the Illuminating India exhibition in the Science Museum, the Stories of Sacrifice Exhibition conducted in the British Muslim Heritage Centre and the Ramgarhia Sikh Tapestry Project that explored the contribution of Sikh Soldiers in World War I. The final chapter focuses on two case studies that centre around the organizational changes that can improve the quality of community engagement and the means through which this is made possible. Both these chapters attempt to understand how engaging and embedding community engagement practices in the core of their work benefited the institution as well as the community members that were engaged.

The thesis concludes by summarizing the various benefits seen as common in almost all institutions, both intangible and tangible. It endeavours to understand the benefits and demerits of following a top-bottom approach counter to a bottom-up approach and whether one way is better than the other. It also suggests further strategies that can be looked into or implemented to further these benefits as well as potential avenues that need to be studied in order to understand and develop better engagement and participatory practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As discussed in the previous section, the main aim of this paper is to understand the role that community engagement practices, with support from ethnic groups, could play within the heritage sector in a way that would benefit them as well as uphold its duty towards the local communities in particular and the public in general. Community engagement as a concept has been explored up to a considerable extent since the ideas of collaboration and inclusion began to gain popularity and recognition within heritage organizations during the late 1990s and early 2000s. But in order to examine the effect of such collaborative practices, a few associated concepts also need to be studied contemporary to exploring the development of community engagement as a concept over the years.

In the words of Gere, "the modern museum, is a place where objects and works of art are displayed for the benefit of the public" only began to develop between the mid to late 18th century, whereas the "great era" of museums began in the 19th century[8]. During the late 20th century, many new ideas began to emerge within the heritage sector which allowed to bring groups of people closer to each other as well as museums within different contexts. This included the introduction of a major reorientation within the museum sector termed as "new museology". According to Susan L.T. Ashley (2014), the term engagement became a part of public policy in western democracies due to growing multiculturalism within post-colonial societies and increasing demands for recognition, self-determination, and representation by various cultural groups which further fuelled the government's desire to engage with these communities[9]. Engagement as a process of interactive dialogue has been widely discussed in museological literature, emphasizing on museum visiting being a social experience, as participation being the core value of museum public spaces, the value provided by random conversations with strangers regarding issues.

One of the first to introduce the need for such practices within heritage organizations included Lave and Wenger who put forward the notion of '*Communities of Practice'* in 1991, in an

[8] Charlie Gere, 'Museums, Contact Zones and the Internet' (presented at the Museum Interactive Multimedia 1997: cultural heritage systems design and interfaces, Paris: Archives & Museum Informatics, 1997), p. 60.
[9] Susan L.T. Ashley, '"Engage the World": Examining Conflicts of Engagement in Public Museums', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 20.3 (2014), 261–80 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2013.808630>.

attempt to link human learning and co-participation. In their opinion, learning was "a process that took place in a participation framework, not in an individual mind"[10]. This presumption was based on the social context for learning, on the idea of social engagement motivating learning among audiences. This required involvement of the visitor in a practice as an observer and as a participant, who also have a responsibility for the outcome. The concept of communities of practice has been studied and interpreted in different ways by numerous scholars, this being due to the ambiguity of the terms community and practice allowing its reappropriation and reusability for different purposes. Among those numerous scholars, Hansman (2001) defined "communities of practice" as "self-organized and selected groups of people who share a common sense of purpose and a desire to learn and know what each other knows"[11]. However at this stage, the idea of community engagement focused on addressing visitors in a group and articulating the way they interacted with the objects and each other within the museum space.

The same period saw a growing push towards cultural diversity within the heritage sector on both economical and ethical grounds. A survey conducted by Trevelyan examining the attitudes of non-visitor groups towards museums (based on ethnicity, religious and linguistic differences) revealed an image of museums as intimidating, almost totally devoted to educated white culture and therefore did not hold much relevance to this particular section of the public[12]. Museums, especially ethnographic museums displayed a diversity of objects from all around the globe as a way to create a prescribed normative view describing some objects, habits, and people as primitive in an attempt to define modernity[13]. This was in defiance to the fact that museums being a public institution, and receiving public funding in order to preserve and exhibit material culture for the public benefit, tended to neglect the highly diverse nature of the audience in their programmes. Therefore, a systematic study of contemporary minority cultures began as a grassroots movement in the 1970s and 1980s in Britain, marked by the appointment of staff into newly introduced permanent posts within numerous museums, that combined

[10] Lynda Kelly, Carolyn Cook, and Phil Gordon, 'Building Relationships through Communities of Practice: Museums and Indigenous People', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 49.2 (2006), 218–19 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2006.tb00214.x>.
[11] Kelly, Cook, and Gordon.
[12] Nick Merriman and Nima Poovaya-Smith, 'Making Culturally Diverse Histories', in *Making Histories in Museums (Gen)*, ed. by Gaynor Kavanagh (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2006) <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gla/detail.action?docID=436627> [accessed 5 July 2019].
[13] Vikki McCall and Clive Gray, 'Museums and the "New Museology": Theory, Practice and Organisational Change', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 29.1 (2014), 19–35 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09647775.2013.869852>.

curatorial responsibilities with outreach work, and was aimed at the non-visiting museum public. This move was seen as a shift from an authoritarian view of the past to a more multifaceted one that was more receptive to the audience allowing the previously hidden histories of neglected communities to come to the forefront. However, focusing solely on specific communities can also run the risk of marginalizing or institutionalizing them as "the other". Therefore, it would have been necessary to recognize the history and contribution of ethnic minority cultures as part of mainstream British history, thereby bringing their role in shaping Britain's history to the fore[14].

In 1996 James Clifford proposed the idea of museums being the "contact zones", in terms of colonial encounters, to describe its role in relation to other cultures, taking a cue from Mary Lousie Pratt's idea of contact zones as spaces of colonial encounters. The latter described contact zones as

"... spaces in which people, geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict"[15]

His essay on museums as contact zones is now the basis of many inclusionist, collaborative programs all over the world. Clifford, while describing museums as contact zones saw them as a site of power charged set of exchanges of push and pull. He, like Pratt, assumes a center and periphery for the museum, the former a point of gathering and the latter a point of discovery. Charlie Gere saw these contact zones as a place of interactive communication and a way of rethinking the museum's role in relation to other cultures rather than viewing them as sites of colonial plunder characterised by unequal relations (Gere, 1997). At a recent conference dedicated to discussing this concept of the museum as a contact zone, museums were placed as beneficiaries of "the troublesome legacy of western hegemony" and giving greater importance to dialogue and exchange[16]. According to Robin Boast the neo-colonial conditions of modern museums resulted in these "contact zones" of engagement existing as colonial

[14] Merriman and Poovaya-Smith.
[15] James Clifford, 'Museums as Contact Zones', in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 192 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5e9CHdQktReR0FoMmYySGd3TVU/view>.
[16] Ed Rodley, 'On Museums and Contact Zones', *Thinking about Museums*, 2016 <https://thinkingaboutmuseums.com/2016/05/06/on-museums-and-contact-zones/> [accessed 6 July 2019].

spaces where cultures met in highly unequal relations in power, and even more so in the absence of collaboration & dialogue between the two groups[17].

The concept of community engagement with reference to ethnic communities began to further develop in the late 20th and early 21st century, and saw an increasing emphasis on the idea of "*authenticity",* as described by Nicola Ashmore, and a similar interest in the idea of ethnicity while describing and categorizing people, using terms such as "ethnic minorities" and "culturally diverse" within cultural policies that were not British or white. Here the term communities came to denote ethnic groups that existed within the local populations. This attitude within museums resonated in the collecting practices of the period wherein achieving "authenticity" seemed to be a major focus, manifested in the output and process of the involvement of source communities. This fascination with authenticity still continues to this date, gained by working with indigenous individuals or groups as stated by Felicity Heywood[18]. The visible involvement of members of the source community to add to the interpretation as well as the creation of the collections or even their physical presence within the exhibition space was believed to transmit authenticity. However, this practice of categorizing people based on their minority status was looked down upon as it would result in the containment of cultural diversity indicating the importance of integration along with engagement. As suggested by Homi Bhabha, it would present an image wherein the dominant culture was acknowledging the existence of other cultures but as long as they can be located within their own grid[19]. On the plus side, the urge to be as "authentic" as possible, did result in a limited degree of engagement with community members in the interpretation of the object.

The late 1990s saw the arrival of the New Labour government, marked by a revival and re-emergence of the cultural sector within which cultural policies were located as duties aimed at benefiting Britain. Under this new administration visibility of community engagement consistent with cultural diversity policies and practices became an important concern for museums[20]. The social inclusion policies redefined the public role of the museum into broader

[17] Robin Boast, 'NEOCOLONIAL COLLABORATION: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited: NEOCOLONIAL COLLABORATION', *Museum Anthropology*, 34.1 (2011), 56–70 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1379.2010.01107.x>.
[18] Nicola Ashmore, 'Commissioning Artists: Community Engagement, Ethnographic Collections, and Changes in Curatorial Practices from the 1990s to 2000s in the UK', *Museum History Journal*, 8.1 (2015), 59–72 <https://doi.org/10.1179/1936981614Z.00000000040>.
[19] Ashmore.
[20] Ashmore.

social policy objectives beyond its traditional curatorial and educational functions. Moreover, museums and galleries were expected to function as the means to overcome social disadvantage through their function to be agents of social change and positive outcomes[21].

During this period, social inclusion became an important concept in driving community engagement practice, curated exhibitions, collaborative collecting projects and community advisory boards. One of the initiatives, namely the "Renaissance in the Regions" manifesto which allowed the focus to be shifted from national to regional museums and galleries in order to ensure their survival in the future with the help of a modest investment. The new leadership also seemed to be more perceptible to the needs of museums and the cultural sector by justifying their need for sustained funding, given their influence in other sectors as well, such as education, art and tourism. But these changes have come with their share of criticism directed at what is believed to be the micromanagement or interference in the administration of national museums as well as a lack of strategic planning[22].

Late 20th century, saw a shift from the earlier focus on functions of the museum to a representational critique that began to reflect and understand the institution's bias within its exhibitionary practice. Museum professionals, therefore, attempted to identify the parties and voices represented within the museum including those excluded. Moreover, the terms co-curation and co-production were introduced and differentiated, based on the degree of community engagement within the respective curatorial strategies. The former was aimed at active institutional commitment and engagement with visitors in an ongoing give and take the process of participatory conversation, dialogue and idea sharing. While successfully engaging the public, it still was unable to erase the divide between those who maintained and interpreted the collections and those who responded to these interpretations. These type of practices would still result in an unequal relationship between the two sides involved as it would be the museum that would set the rules of engagement and identify other parameters such as the duration of the engagement. Co-production, on the other hand, as defined by Brandsen and Honingh (2016) included "services not only delivered by professional and managerial staff in public agencies but also co-produced by citizens and communities". As a result, visitors would produce their own "emotional, physiological or conceptual responses to the encounter" and would develop a

[21] Morse and Munro.
[22] Shannon Heal, 'The End of an Era: What Have Tony Blair and New Labour Done for Museums', *Museums Journal*, 107/7, 2007, 13.

sense of connection to the site as well as the project. Museums would be urged to provide dynamic spaces to serve the needs of the public and demonstrate their value and relevance within present-day life. In order to achieve this goal, most heritage institutions produced exhibitions, programs or workshops that were more representative of the local communities. In addition, these type of program developments helped sustain relationships with these communities over a longer period[23].

Contemporary to this, Watson in his edited volume of *Heritage and Community Engagement: collaboration or contestation* suggested two approaches to community engagement: top-down and bottom-up. The latter within the museum sector included community-based and community-driven projects wherein the impetus for the project came from the community itself. This community model is opposed to the top-down approach in which projects and engagements are initiated by heritage organizations or professionals. There are numerous top-down, professional led community heritage initiatives in place in the UK, which are described as outreach rather than community initiatives. But at the same time, there are a number of initiatives that are managed in a more democratic manner, or which are initiated, led and almost completely owned by communities[24].

Mulcahy suggests the idea of distinguishing between cultural democracy and democratization of culture. According to this, the former involves releasing agency so people could be culturally active on their own terms whereas the latter involves the process of cultural institutions enabling broader access to their programs[25]. All three concepts involve focusing the creative authority on one group, that is either the museum professionals or community members rather than a system of equal give and take.

A report created by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2006 specified a list of priorities, most of which focus on bringing the museum closer to the public sector which included the following statements[26]

" *1.Museums will embrace their role in fostering, exploring, celebrating and questioning the identities of diverse communities.*

2. Museums workforce will be highly skilled and representative.

[23] Pamela Barnes and Gayle McPherson, 'Co-Creating, Co-producing and Connecting: Museum Practice Today', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 62.2 (2019), 257–67 <https://doi.org/10.1111/cura.12309>.
[24] Suzie Thomas, 'Heritage and Community Engagement: Collaboration or Contestation?', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 54.3 (2011), 371–74 <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2151-6952.2011.00099.x>.
[25] Ashley.
[26] Heal.

3. Museums will work more closely with each other and partner outside the sector. ”

These statements indicate the increasing preoccupation with civic engagement in general and communities in particular which became even more evident in the 2000s, that saw public engagement as becoming a central theme in the mission statements of numerous cultural institutions and formed a major part of scholarly research into museums and heritage. As stated by Newnan (2007), the term engagement has transformed into the idea responsible for generating, improving or repairing relations between museums and society at large. It had transformed into a means to open up the public sphere to excluded voices as well as legitimize non-dominant subjectivities[27].

While the idea of museums having a considerable impact on communities and the manner in which these strategies developed, is well-documented, there is very little literature that addresses the repercussions of the latter on the former nor do they discuss the nature of their relationship with South-Asian communities in particular. By means of this paper, I attempt to address this gap by focusing on a select few case studies mostly adopted by heritage institutions while working with South-Asian communities and analyse their returns to the heritage community.

[27] Ashley.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the relationship between communities and the heritage sector. And in order to do this, data collection was undertaken by means of both qualitative research, in the form of individual case studies selected on the basis of a set criteria as well as study and analysis of existing academic literature.

This paper takes into account projects and initiatives introduced within Britain and specifically those that deal with the South-Asian communities (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka) of the UK. It also includes new and developing practices in the community engagement schema of things. And these initiatives/practices need not be necessarily produced within the confines of a traditional museum space. As discussed in the introduction, museums are more than just institutions to collect, conserve and exhibit objects, therefore this paper includes projects implemented within any heritage institution that interact or attempt to engage and work with such communities.

Following were the criteria for the selection of case studies for the second chapter:

- *The projects must be based within local museums or cultural centres that work with and for the local communities - This is because smaller museums are more closely connected to the communities they serve than a larger museum which would cater to a more heterogeneous group of people*[28].
- *The project must show some form of community engagement in the form of collaboration or co-curation.*
- *The project must be associated with the South-Asian community specifically.*

The third chapter focuses on new and emerging forms of community engagement that involve bringing the community into the museum space and making them a functionary member of the museum staff. These new practices are mostly seen in larger museums which have access to greater funding and the examples presented in this paper are chosen based on the degree of their community orientation.

Given that this paper focuses on the impact that community engagement has on the heritage sector, the chosen target population included numerous museum and heritage professionals. The qualitative research consisted of data obtained through conducting semi-structured interviews over email and phone calls with the help of a questionnaire (Appendix 1) prepared

[28] Lynda Kelly, 'Measuring the Impact of Museums on Their Communities: The Role of the 21st Century Museum', in *A New Social Relevance - Human vs. Economic Values* (presented at the INTERCOM 2006: New Roles and Missions for Museums, Taipei, Taiwan, 2006), pp. 1–5.

by me, that functioned as a guide or a starting point to understand the purpose of the selected projects and the specific roles these individuals play within the heritage sectors. The second chapter is divided into three subsections, within which the various case studies are discussed. The classification of these subsections are made on the basis of the overall aim of the project as it would allow these case studies to be more consistent with other projects as well, that are not necessarily associated with South-Asian communities. However, this does not mean that the projects discussed under each subsection are strictly confined to the defined objectives, as overlap in the aims of the project is possible. But keeping aside this overlap, I have chosen to focus on specific aspects of the project that resonate with the themes of these subsections The interviews for the case studies studied under Chapter II were aimed at understanding the collaborative aspect of community engagement. The interviews taken for the third Chapter, leaned more towards gaining an understanding of the role of these community advocates and defining the difference between both modes of community engagement. This data would then be studied and analysed to understand the social, cultural and economic impact these initiatives have had on the function of these heritage sites as a "community space".

Apart from this, thorough study of the associated fields of scholarship was conducted which included exploring concepts of co-curation, curatorial practice, digital heritage, museums as safe/neutral spaces, new museology and museum ethics, to name a few. All sources of academic literature including subject journals, conference papers, books, newspaper articles, visitor survey reports, museum policy documents, as well as cultural sector reports were referred to. This information formed the bulk of the secondary sources, and were used to understand and provide a base from which I created my own arguments in conjunction with the interviews I conducted.

The data collected by means of the interviews, and academic research, does not attempt to answer the question regarding the ways in which community engagement can be further improved upon or how one could establish a more transparent and inclusive relationships between the two. Instead, it aims to answer why such a relationship is needed in the first place by means of studying a select few projects that focus on community relations at their core and understanding their impact on the heritage sectors.

CHAPTER I

DEFINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With today's museums constantly reinventing and revisiting their objectives with the changing trends and government policies, community engagement has become a very common and debated topic within the field of heritage studies. Museums are no longer judged on the basis of their internal possessions such as collections, endowments, staff and facilities but by external consideration of the benefits it provides to individuals and communities it seeks to serve[29]. They have ceased to serve the singular purpose of "collect, preserve and make available " and are more than just simple interpreters or gatekeepers of heritage. Government policies have revealed heritage institutions to be the sites for building social cohesion and reducing social exclusion as well as creating opportunities of life-long learning[30]. Museums have become dynamic environments aimed at demonstrating their value and relevance in today's world, and reconnect the public to their heritage as well as to each other. The current state of matters calls for such educational institutions to function more as facilitators rather than guardians and help create a space for open interpretation and debate among its audiences as well as a site for collaborations with local communities through their collections[31].

The idea of "new museology" emerged with the aim of introducing a new philosophy based on redefining how museums function and the changed relationship with their people and communities. The ideas of transparency, inclusiveness and relevance and changes in the "value, meaning, control, interpretation, authority and authenticity", including the redistribution of power and curatorial responsibility within museums make up this new form of museum practice. It has also attempted to establish that sharing of the museum's authority would be rewarding for all parties involved[32]. However, new museology has had much less practical effect in reality as was expected. So, in order for such institutions to successfully put in place policies and programmes that would allow such collaborations, it is necessary to

[29] Watson.
[30] Corinne Perkin, 'Beyond the Rhetoric: Negotiating the Politics and Realising the Potential of Community-driven Heritage Engagement', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16.1–2 (2010), 107–22 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250903441812>.
[31] Daniel H Mutibwa, Alison Hess, and Tom Jackson, 'Strokes of Serendipity: Community Co-Curation and Engagement with Digital Heritage', *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, 2018, 135485651877203 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856518772030>.
[32] McCall and Gray.

clearly identify and understand what does and does not constitute the term "community engagement".

For starters, the term "community" itself is a complex concept with no specific meaning and consists of both tangible and intangible factors[33]. They are social creations and experiences that are uncertain and constantly in motion. Often equated with goodness and morality, this term constitutes those people who live in geographical proximity to the museum, thereby constituting both the museum's current audience as well as potential audiences[34]. However, one factor that distinguishes a community from the target audience is the sense of belonging among those who are a part of it and the influence of this belonging on the individual and community identity. Moreover, the process of community formation itself results in the creation of a shared heritage which also plays an important role in giving them their unique identity[35].

In order to attempt to understand the various interpretations of the term "community", Mason's list is a good starting point, which extends the concept of "interpretive communities" in six ways, based on shared historical/cultural experiences, specialist knowledge, demographic or socio-economic factors, identities as well as visiting practices and exclusion from other communities[36]. These groups are sometimes unstable and very fluid as people can belong to multiple groups at the same time thereby adapting itself based on the context. . They are not self-created but emerge out of the idea of "otherness" and are often created by museums themselves in an attempt to approach the same set of people within a new context.

This thesis is particular, focuses on the relationship between museums and ethnic communities, especially the South-Asian communities. Going by Mason's list, heritage institutions such as museums, play an important role towards these communities in preserving as well as reordering memories and making sense of them, for later generations, thereby articulating their collective identity. The issue of identity is influenced by factors such as social class, ethnicity and religion, with national identity being the most preferred and privileged forms of identity in the modern world[37]. As nations gain a multicultural quality

[33] Watson.
[34] Ciara Canning and Kirsten Holmes, 'Community Consultation in Developing Museum Projects: A Case Study Using the Repertory Grid Technique', *Cultural Trends*, 15.4 (2006), 275–97 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09548960600922590>.
[35] Watson.
[36] Watson.
[37] Watson.

within their populations, museums play a crucial role in integrating the community identity into the national identity in order to attain a balance between the need for national unity and a toleration for different cultures, communities and values.

Even the term engagement can come to mean a number of things, depending on the context of its use. The literal meaning could range from attracting attention to moving into position or bringing into conflict or binding by contract; whereas within the heritage sector, it refers to the creation of "meaningful contact" by means of heritage[38]. Engagement within the heritage sector, is closely related to the idea of a greater involvement and aims to work towards creation and sharing of knowledge in a participatory manner, within a shared space between professionals and the local.

As described by Veysel Apaydin (2018), the term "community engagement" in its entirety, can be understood as the "importance of sharing knowledge and power, as well as learning through the material culture and life experiences of the communities who attach and ascribe values and meanings of cultural heritage"[39]. Apaydin, in his article "Critical Community Engagement in Heritage Studies" states that community engagement should always focus on stories of the people as well as personal experiences in the past and the present, and more importantly should engage dialogue and democratisation of culture with communities[40]. Inclusive of this, community engagement should aim to engage people on various topics, with a long term goal in their minds, by finding a point of relevance to the community you want to engage with[41].

Dr. Bernadette Lynch's research project, titled "Whose Cake is it anyway?" , studies 12 museums and their community partners across the UK in terms of what constitutes good engagement and its impact in terms of public benefit. The resultant report, made a huge impact within the heritage sector of UK, concluding that the funding invested in recent times towards furthering community engagement and participation in UK's museums and galleries had not succeeded in embedding this work within the core of many organizations as most

[38] Ashley.
[39] Veysel Apaydin, 'Critical Community Engagement in Heritage Studies', in *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), pp. 1–7 <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-51726-1_3348-1>.
[40] Apaydin.
[41] Neena Sohal, Community Engagement and Heritage: Community Consultants, 2019.

community engagement projects and staffing were short-term, vulnerable and focused on funding projects rather than organizational changes that could really bring about a change. A common reason given by the participants of the project was a condition of "national initiative override" resulting in competition among and pressure on museums to produce positive reports in order to acquire further funding, instead of taking the time to reflect and improve their work, thereby inhibiting any long-term local impact[42].

The "Our Museum Report" published by the PHF, was based on the findings of Lynch's research projects, and was aimed to have an impact on the wider museum sector apart from the individual museums that were part of the study. The main conclusion of this report was that even small changes are significant and that participation is a collective task. It also defined the 6 main barriers to achieving sustainable and good community engagement. Firstly, it brings to focus the lack of commitment and encouragement towards such endeavours, from members placed at senior and influential posts within the organization. The middle management could also be uninterested or have a poor understanding of the skills required for community engagement or have issues of time and capacity[43]. Often members of the public, or local communities are overlooked as sources of authorities and subordinated due to the lack of the title of "heritage expert", the necessary resources deemed essential to participate in heritage projects as well as the vision or understanding of heritage. And even when they are engaged, the manner in which it is accomplished is somewhat problematic, as a single person is designated to work with these groups instead of the work being shared and deeply embedded at each level of the organization[44]. Moreover, being able to listen and work with non-professionals, and share the control over manipulating the nature and scope of the project is an essential factor to community engagement. Such a form of participation can also instil a sense of threat to the professional expertise and status of museum professionals, which may inhibit good engagement with community groups. Another barrier to true participation is confining the scope of potential and current community partners to those who are known and seen as "safe". Often such an attitude is seen among the community members themselves who prefer to emphasize on the positive contributions and avoid exploring

[42] Bernadette Lynch, *Whose Cake Is It Anyway?* (Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 2009).
[43] Piotr Bienkowski, *How to Change into a Participatory Museum and Gallery: Learning from the Our Museum Programme* (Paul Hamlyn Foundation, April 2016).
[44] Emma Waterton and Laurajane Smith, 'The Recognition and Misrecognition of Community Heritage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16.1–2 (2010), 4–15 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250903441671>.

negative or contentious themes[45]. Also, as already discussed before in the current age of financial austerity, museums have become more revenue-centric thereby compromising with a deeper community engagement and participation and given lower priority[46].

The report has also set out 4 indicators of good community engagement emphasising on placing community at the core of all the strategies and work of museums and galleries, ability to reflect on one's work, capability building among community members and being considerate of local needs and expectations. It identified peer learning and exchange to be the key elements to achieving the vision of sustainable community engagement as these made sure that uncomfortable issues were discussed and not avoided, objective feedback delivered regarding the progress of a particular institution and workshops and regular meetings conducted for a session of structured sharing among staff and community partners thereby resulting in the blurring of the line between museums and communities[47].

Having understood the idea of community engagement in terms of its general meaning and its aims, as well as the various barriers faced by it within the heritage sector, it is also important to understand how engaging with communities in a participatory fashion is important for heritage institutions.

[45] Watson.
[46] Bienkowski.
[47] Bienkowski.

CHAPTER II

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND MUSEUMS THROUGH COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

Naseem Khan's publication titled "The Art Britain Ignores" in 1976 discussed for the first time the significance of "ethnic minority arts" which she noticed as existing in the form of a sub-culture and confined to the interests of the communities alone. According to her, the main argument against fostering or encouraging community heritage seemed to have been the notion that it would result in the perpetuation of differences. It is clear that at the time the importance of South-Asian arts and communities were not as developed as they are now[48]. But with the introduction of the New Labour government, museums in Britain, in conjunction with the ideas of the ideas of new museology, the transition from objects to ideas, increased access and representation, has begun however these goals are still far from being achieved universally.

AIM: Sharing migration stories, memories or origin stories

Colorful Heritage (CH): Saqib Razzaq

Colorful Heritage is one of the first and largest community heritage focused charitable initiative that aims to preserve and celebrate the contributions of the early South Asian and Muslim communities and migrants in Scotland[49]. It has been part of numerous projects including creating the largest online repository of oral stories, established a dedicated archive towards tracing the community's journey from seamen and soldiers to successful entrepreneurs and well-integrated citizens within the UK in general and Scotland in particular. The organization have begun working on various projects with other museums as well as on their own by creating archives and online exhibitions regarding the role played by South-Asian and Muslim soldiers (Force K6) in World War I and II. Along with this, in collaboration with Glasgow Life, CH has also dedicated a physical archive (the "*Bashir Maan Archive*") based at the Mitchell Library in Glasgow containing photographs and documents dating back to the 1930s[50].

[48] Jasjit Singh, 'What "value" South Asian Arts in Britain', *South Asian Popular Culture*, 14.3 (2016), 155–65 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2017.1294808>.
[49] Saqib Razzaq, Community Engagement and Heritage: Colorful Heritage, 2019.
[50] 'Bashir Maan Archive – Colourful Heritage' <https://www.colourfulheritage.com/bashirmaanarchive/> [accessed 20 August 2019].

The oral history archive project "*Feeling Scottish and Being Muslim*" proposed to engage both South-Asian and Scottish Non-Asian community that may not be aware of the history and journey of the early South-Asian migrants who came to Scotland to make their fortunes[51]. It was aimed at capturing as many stories as possible from first generation South Asian and Muslim migrants not only to educate the future generations but to also have a record of the legacy left behind by these early migrants[52]. This aim was to be achieved by the creation of a high quality video and photo archive with easy accessibility and attempts to touch upon the themes of migration, identity, entrepreneurship, religion, family and culture as well as analyze the degree of integration of South-Asian Muslims into Scotland. This was again done by studying historic archive pictures, in order to gain clues from clothes and other objects, as well as historic archive documents, to study titles and terminologies, to reflect on expressions of identity. Through the interviews conducted for this project, they were able to extract stories and experiences surrounding the ideas of nationality, religion or both, while the manner of sequencing the order of their identity was an important indicator into their mindset, experience and life perception in Scotland. This project has also helped explain the difference and relative ease with which Muslims have been integrated into Scotland as compared to those living in the UK most of which is attributed to factors such as social acceptance, most importantly job opportunities and a sense of inclusion within the indigenous communities[53].

The CH interviews recorded the personal stories of first and second generation migrants, to understand how they created their lives in an unknown land, and also interviewed those belonging to the third and fourth generation to reveal their hybrid identities. In order to do this, they had to build a rapport and relationship with the South-Asian community starting with people they knew. These participants then became the point of contact to other members of the community, encouraging and recommending others to get in touch and give interviews. This initiative received a largely positive feedback from the South-Asian community and received

[51] Razzaq.
[52] Peter Hopkins, *Scotland's Muslims: Society, Politics and Identity*, Book, Whole (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) <http://glasgow.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwfV1NTwIxEJ0gXryJYkTQ9IQnhO70gz0SXGJMuHHyQvZjlhMcRA78e2fK1kSNHps2bdo0nTedeW8AMHmajH68CWx4fJ0mRWUtSWjJpSa3UuWBCKukDFTiZ5fN3eubzVoQs29jMoe49YwmG3rVL73E73F_ROfG8vKHOMU4iDp5w4slKErZWiQL2V86Y2jC938104HvxSOQnR0fZaBim3Gx4NhNVIwMdmdxCeckZIQOtGh3Bd2TpsdRDZUIxuahKO_xGjpSlV4yFB_3anlg4Ljdd0EtstX8ZdTMum6-adYFItta6z3eQJtdf7oFVWgJJArrm7SpC53rsjaVLynNq7TWpge9P6e5-6evDxds-Kenr4QBtD_eD3T_tdGHcCqfcGR6Iw>.
[53] Hopkins.

endorsements from influential figures like Anas Sarwar and Humza Yousaf[54].

Some of the key findings of this project included the fact that South-Asians defined their identities in multi-layered terms including their ethnic, national and religious affiliations. In addition, those belonging to the Pakistani ethnic group indicated feeling more Scottish, often linking them with another identity to create a hybrid Scottish identity (for eg. Pakistani Scottish Muslim or Pakistani Scottish). Thus, it helped bring to the forefront how the experiences and origins of these early groups of people influenced ideas of their identity as well as continue to influence the attitude of current generations as well. It also brought to light the issues surrounding the current generations regarding their identity. As discussed by Hopkins in his book "Scotland's Muslims", on the one hand they are more comfortable expressing their religious identities than the older generations, many of them are still confused regarding their identity, with a noticeable downward trend being observed in the importance of their ethnic identity[55]. In such situations, museums play an important role in raising contemporary issues and providing a space for discussion and debate, thereby showing their relevance in the present by learning from the past.

These digital collections or video archives are an important way of linking the past and the future generations. It is symbolic of their evolution as citizens of Scotland and a digital record of their legacy. Digital collections such as these are equally beneficial to heritage institutions as well, as it allows them to share their passion for objects, stories and histories with members of the public. These collections could also have considerable economic value that could be immediately relevant given the state of our technology and content-centred world, thereby fulfilling the need of the museums to generate income. In addition, these digital records could be reproduced infinitely with accuracy, making the sharing of these collections across various digital platforms easier. Such collections would also be able to overcome the constraints of a physical exhibition in the number of people that can gain access to shared heritage through remote digital connectivity, thereby allowing them to expand further than the building of the museum itself[56]. In addition to this, it also allows more participants to contribute to the project

[54] Razzaq.
[55] Hopkins.
[56] Suzanne Keene, *Digital Collections: Museums and the Information Age*, Book, Whole (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1998)
<http://glasgow.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwfV3JCsIwEB1cLt5ccac_oLQZ07RHqS3iUTx5KW3Tihcv_j84E1MFRY8hJGRj5r1h3gQAxdpdfdiEIiBXr5ComNBeVqJWYoMi0EGotJYmUpDs_DjyD2cZv5MsbS1HZvUEJq266vr9bVqaHnOPrKyLqgltQtnIPOy09V7hFvKkHvFrQ9wluWXGDbb-Tt1mHQ9D1ktdHNK4mKQLLZYd9KBR3gbQ310v_JuHw9dkkqVu9yE4SXyK9is7OrWRl7RekxQjaBGbL8fgqNzN0deFKyqfwFKVyRCJYgUqDEWGRTGByc9ppn_6ZtB5yuU4OjCHdkWvt1y8drQ0x_EA51dquA>.

and therefore represents the views and ideas of a wider scope of participants, in opposition to the issues associated with working with larger groups in physical exhibitions. It would allow museums to become custodians of the legacies of local community groups in terms of their ceremonies, important community leaders, significant cultural spaces and events, translations of languages and stories as well as audio, photographic and video material, thereby increasing their relevance to the particular community itself. Finally, such a project also has the potential to encourage productive and high quality engagement with the past in an open and transparent manner thereby addressing the broader issues of veracity and truthfulness often associated with such digital projects[57]. Digital collections could also fulfil the demand for museums to do more and to create space for conversation and reflection

AIM: Contributions and achievements of the ethnic community

According to Merriman and Poovaya-Smith (2006) the process of highlighting the achievements and contributions of minority cultures to mainstream history is more than just setting the record straight and give a more accurate view of history as it also involves including multiple-perspectives and counter narratives to the existing narrative[58]. By doing this, the ethnic minorities are not separated but their previously neglected role is brought into the forefront.

Glasweg Asians: Saquib Razzaq and Isobel McDonald

The "Glasweg Asians" exhibition was produced by the Scotland Street Museum (SSM) in partnership with Colorful Heritage. The aim of this project was two-fold. On one hand it aimed to explore the history of South-Asian and Muslim community in Glasgow with an emphasis on their achievements and contributions across Scotland and throughout Glasgow. On the other hand, it also marks the relationship between Glasgow Museums and Colorful Heritage that

[57] Mutibwa, Hess, and Jackson.
[58] Merriman and Poovaya-Smith.

developed an online archive of material recording the migration stories of people from South Asia to Scotland[59].

Figure 1. The Glasweg Asian Exhibition at Scotland Street School Museums[60]

This project was aimed at the South-Asian community in Glasgow, especially the people of Pollockshields, and general visitors. The exhibition was put together by members of Colorful Heritage, Glasgow Museums and local community members, who assisted in selecting the themes that were to be addressed as well as loaned the objects that were used in the exhibition. The focus was on the themes of entrepreneurship, working life, politics, family, social life and schools. These themes were then used to create a narrative, consolidated into a large timeline, which was later picked out as being the favourite element of the exhibition by majority of the visitors due to its easily graspable content[61]. The engagement with the community members occurred via CH with the exception of one Sikh member who worked through the museum team. His details were later passed on to CH after efforts were made to get more people involved by contacting his Gurudwara. The contributor was generous in terms of loaning items, sharing family photos and encouraging others to contribute. CH mostly worked with the communities through consultations, organizing an insight cafe with both adult members and

[59] '#GlaswegAsians – Colourful Heritage' <https://www.colourfulheritage.com/glaswegasians/> [accessed 10 August 2019]; People Make Glasgow, 'GlaswegAsians', *People Make Glasgow* </index.php?option=com_listings&view=listing&id=39014&Itemid=241> [accessed 29 August 2019].
[60] '#GlaswegAsians – Colourful Heritage'.
[61] Jump Research, *Colorful Heritage Visitor Survey* (Glasgow Museums/Glasgow life, June 2018).

youth of the community aimed at choosing the themes that could be explored within the project and another meeting 8 months later that focused on object selection[62].

The majority of visitors identified as White, with 1 in 10 visitors belonging to South Asian origin. This number was a significant increase in the proportion of South Asian visitors in comparison to 2015/16 Visitor Survey. Moreover, only a small proportion of this population, mainly from Asian background, were visiting the museum to see the exhibition specifically or participate in the associated events, and these mostly included those residing in Glasgow or rest of Scotland. While the majority found out about the exhibition upon arrival, the next largest proportion heard about it by word of mouth[63].

Figure 2. (left) The participants of the GlaswegAsian exhibition (right) The timeline recording the history of South Asian Communities in Glasgow[64]

An interview with the project curator revealed the disagreements that emerged in the expectations of the community members and the institutions, during and after the course of this project. The former wanted only older items to be displayed, whereas CH wanted the exhibition to reflect today's community and therefore include contemporary items as well. The design process adopted by SSM was constrained by the limited amount of space and time, resulting in the end product being more "traditional" and messy than expected by the CH. The museum also conducted public programmes in the form of self-led workshops, alongside the exhibition to further engage the visitors[65].

[62] Isobel McDonald, Community Engagement and Heritage: Glasweg Asians, 2019 <http://artsasia.org/Hrozina.aspx>.
[63] Jump Research.
[64] '#GlaswegAsians – Colourful Heritage'.
[65] Glasgowlife, 'Self Led Workshop - Share Some South Asian Games' <https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/event/1/self-led-workshop-share-some-south-asian-games> [accessed 8 October 2019].

Most of the visitors, identifying as Asian, Asian British or Asian Scottish, were happy with the overall project, indicated by ratings of a high level of satisfaction as well as their inclination to recommend it to others[66]. The objective was to equally reflect as many views and experiences of and within the community as possible. However, this was not completely possible, owing to the heterogeneity of each community and the many sub-groups constituting it, as many felt that the "man on the street" had been excluded in the attempt to focus on the achievements and successes or that a particular community had been under-represented. However, it is not possible to be completely representative of the community as working with too many people would make the project unmanageable[67].

Figure 3. The Glasweg Asian exhibition[68]

The project opened up the museum space to South-Asian communities as well as other groups who visited the museum, indicating its viability as being used as a place for similar community engagement projects. There was a significant increase in the number of South-Asian visitors to the museum. Given that word-of-mouth was the second major source by which people came to know about the exhibition, working with community members also benefited the museum in promoting the exhibition as well as reaching out to audiences that were otherwise inaccessible

[66] Jump Research.
[67] McDonald.
[68] '#GlaswegAsians – Colourful Heritage'.

to them. Many of them have since supported upcoming projects of the museum in an open and generous way.

The exhibition also elicited enquiries from other visitors (eg.Irish and Arab) as to when similar projects would be done with respect to their own ethnic groups. In terms of the audience feedback, the heterogeneity within communities, evoked mixed responses regarding the effectiveness of the exhibition. However this quality of community groups can be utilised by museums in their efforts to target new audiences or parts of the community with each project. An example of the means to achieve this, is the visitor survey conducted as part of the exhibition, which revealed what other expectations members of the community had, from the current or any future exhibitions as well as other themes that could be discussed. Although the project did not bring in as many donations as hoped for by members of the staff, according to the project curator, developing further engagement practices could play a significant role in encouraging more such donations.

Illuminating India: Shasti Lowton

The Illuminating India exhibition is a two-part exhibition organized by the Science Museum commemorating India's 70th year of independence and celebrating the long-standing relationship between the UK and India, with the aim of modifying India's "tourist style view" of the country[69]. One exhibition, *Illuminating India: 5000 Years of Science and Innovation* focuses on India's central role in the history of science and technology with respect to diverse subjects such as medicine, mathematics, space exploration, communication and engineering. The second exhibition, *Illuminating India*: *Photography 1857-2017* focuses on the role of photography in influencing the recent history of the country and strived to present a balanced narrative of India's history using works of both Indian and other contemporary photographers.

[69] Aimée McLaughlin, 'Illuminating India: The Exhibition Looking at 5,000 Years of Indian Innovation', *Design Week*, 2017 <https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/2-8-october-2017/illuminating-india-exhibition-exploring-5000-years-indian-innovation/> [accessed 19 August 2019].

Figure 4. (Left)The Illuminating India: 5000 years of Science and Innovation exhibition (Right) The Illuminating India: Photography 1857-2017 exhibition [70]

The exhibition saw a number of collaborations with other heritage institutions, libraries and organizations, both national and international[71] and was constituted of different programmes, each catering to a different audience demographic. While the science exhibition and specific events of the public programmes focused on family audiences whereas the photography exhibition targeted a more adult exhibition resulting in an intergenerational audience that the exhibition catered to. The exhibition also involved commissioning works of artist Chila Kumari Burman in in relation to the theme of the exhibition as well as the objects and stories shared through the exhibition. The accompanying public programmes included workshops, film screenings, panel discussions and live performances presented in partnership with the Bagri Foundation[72]. These involved screening of *Slumdog Millionnaire* followed by a discussion into its making, a conversation with a yogic and mystic Sadhguru as well as cultural performances in dance and classical Indian music among many others[73].

The exhibition itself did not include members of community working towards its execution, however the various public programmes organized by the Bagri Foundation did cater to the interests and culture of the numerous South-Asian visitors. Many of them returned positive feedback about the exhibition, expressing pride at seeing their history and culture celebrated. Due to the Illuminating India Season a whole new section of South Asian audiences view the Science Museum as a more inclusive space. This exhibition was also awarded the inaugural "Community Engagement Award" from the Eastern Eye Arts Culture and Theatre Awards[74].

[70] McLaughlin.
[71] Avantika Bhuyan, 'Celebrate India's Contribution to "STEM" with the "Illuminating India" Exhibition at London's Science Museum', *Architectural Digest India*, 2017 <https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/illuminating-india-science-museum/> [accessed 19 August 2019].
[72] Shasti Lowton, Community Engagement and Heritage: Illuminating India, 2019.
[73] Bagri Foundation, 'Illuminating India at the Science Museum', *Bagri Foundation - Celebrating Arts and Ideas from across Asia* <https://bagrifoundation.org/search/illuminating+india/> [accessed 18 August 2019].
[74] Lowton.

However, it is puzzling how a project that was mostly 'produced for' instead of 'by' the community can be considered a worthy example of community engagement. The objective behind reviewing this project is to reiterate the importance of understanding and defining what is meant by community engagement.

AIM: Commemorating shared heritage and sensitive histories - The politics of memory

Stories of Sacrifice Exhibition: Dr Islam Issa

The "Stories of Sacrifice Exhibition", run by the BMHC was curated by Dr Islam Issa, a senior lecturer at the Birmingham City University focusing on the importance of the 400,000 Muslim-Indian soldiers, who fought on the British side in the World War 1 (WW1). Believed to be somewhat obscure in the minds of the general public, this exhibition helped accentuate the role of such ethnic minorities in war, a topic often avoided in the mainstream history lessons[75].

Figure 5. The Stories of Sacrifice Exhibition[76]

[75] Ashraf Ali, 'Stories of Sacrifice Exhibition – Closed', *BMHC*, 2017 <http://www.bmhc.org.uk/storiesofsacrificeexhibition/> [accessed 30 July 2019]; ahrcww1, 'Lest We Forget: Muslim Service in the Great War', *BEYOND THE TRENCHES*, 2018 <http://beyondthetrenches.co.uk/lest-we-forget-muslim-service-in-the-great-war/> [accessed 22 July 2019]; Stuart Bainbridge, 'About the Exhibition', *Stories Of Sacrifice*, 2016 <http://www.storiesofsacrifice.org.uk/about-the-exhibition/> [accessed 30 July 2019].
[76] Ali.

In my interview with the curator, Dr Islam Issa, stated that his aim was to "provide a balanced narrative about the Muslim contribution to the war to everyone regardless their age or background." The target audience included multiple overlapping communities, differing from each other based on ethnicity, religion and age, meaning that the exhibition received an assortment of responses, with most of them being positive. However, there did include a section of the local community that saw this commemorative exhibition as a "celebration of war". Given that, many of these Muslim soldiers were fighting for their colonisers as well as against the Ottomans, some of the audience members were apprehensive of whether or not the war effort should be praised[77].

The project involved taking regular input from multiple stakeholders especially the steering committee at the BMHC, some of whom included the influential members of the local Manchester Muslim community and contributed to the exhibition by way of offering their opinion at regular intervals. The exhibition was made further inclusive by putting out a call to the general public to share their own personal stories or the memories of their grandparents who participated in the war[78]. Considering that so many parties were involved, Dr Issa had a difficult time redressing all concerned parties to create a balanced narrative. He had to deal with the conservatism of the Armed Forces as well as negotiate to the "politics of the Muslim communities" which demanded a greater focus on the forced recruitment of a number of Muslim soldiers. However, he responded by focusing on the individual narratives of the soldiers rather than emphasizing on the socio-political context that they acted in, thereby accommodating multiple viewpoints and at the same time, handing over the agency of interpretation completely to the wider public[79].

Dr. Issa stated that one of the strategies used to ensure that the exhibition reached an even more diversified audience, was by aiming to engage schoolchildren as the project manager used to be a teacher and the initiative was also supported by a volunteer who worked as a schoolteacher. However, this was a successful strategy as the exhibition saw a number of school visits, over 1000 schoolchildren in fact. The research was even developed into course packs for Key Stage 3 and Stage 4 teachers in an attempt to "diversify and liberate the curricula"[80]. For many museums and heritage centres, kids pose to be a particularly challenging audience, as most heritage projects are structured in a very formal manner, discussing ideas that are

[77] Islam Issa, Community engagement and Heritage: Stories of Sacrifice, 2019.
[78] Issa.
[79] ahrcww1.
[80] Issa.

mostly unfamiliar to them. Moreover, they do not have the patience to stand still, read, understand and reflect the importance of ideas like community or explore the "then and now". However, while adults interpret history in a reflective manner, kids have a malleable mind which allows them to explore and participate with history in a unique way[81]. This can be used to the advantage of the museum professionals and creating exhibitions that allow them to learn in motion and through interaction. The Stories of Sacrifice exhibition took advantage of a teacher working as a volunteer for the project which allowed it to create an exhibition more relevant to students.

Figure 6. School students and military officials visiting the Stories of Sacrifice exhibition[82]

Apart from schoolchildren, the exhibition also impressed not just the general public, but

[81] D. Lynn McRainey, John Russick, and Askews & Holts Library Services, *Connecting Kids to History with Museum Exhibitions*, Book, Whole (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2016) <http://glasgow.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwfV1Nb8IwDLUYu-w2tE18DJTTbkz5gLQcJ2g37cxpF9QmKUIbIDEY2r_HTlqEkOBYpbKUHGy_52cbQMlX3j_zCSNr-QD9sYgwxsqsKDjPbBzrLC-sNI7oj3Sik7H-_BomNai2p5LI8u_Hlw2D28aPPYmlwzRUv2Fq4yW_VE99x3xzvt5jsvZSASShBDV7I8y7QVzGSfM1fRPU4FUdyHLu0_FHTITnwdBJoEnv4dZR90EDam71ANLLUAwpk9n3wv6y7ZqFAcH_jAhURgTKbskcbbkO2qtHYGkyHX_0S-uzkp-Z5YqKeZR4PUEdMb9rAjNWSYXPNVLaDFycxyYyGrHGMEfEIbKoBa2LZtpXzjpwhxG_5BCeob7d7Fz3eOGef50DiI99_Q>.

[82] Stuart Bainbridge, 'School Visits to the Stories of Sacrifice Exhibition', *BMHC* <http://www.bmhc.org.uk/school-visits-to-the-stories-of-sacrifice-exhibition/> [accessed 28 August 2019].

attracted many VIP figures such as Prince of Wales being the most recent and also caught the attention of national and international media. The exhibition also spoke to different sections of law enforcement, as among the visitors were multiple military brigades as well as the Great Manchester Police who requested for the mobile version to be installed in the main lobby of their HQ after the Manchester Arena attack[83].

This exhibition was introduced at a crucial time when the Muslim community has been under the media spotlight, often for the wrong reasons, with the aim for creating the conditions towards achieving common ground[84]. In addition, the decision to conceive a permanent exhibition defeats the general trend of short-term projects that limit the potential for real, meaningful and sustainable engagement. This permanent exhibition would be a reminder of the joint undertaking between the local Muslim community of Manchester and the British Muslim Heritage Centre. At the same time, it opened itself to a new, previously unexplored segment of the public that were in a way linked to the ethnic group they engaged with. It even transformed the way the local communities as well as the general public perceived the BMHC, redefining its role as a "heritage hub" and showed its potential to put "museum activities" into the heritage side of its label as well as provide a neutral space to reflect and debate on sensitive issues[85]. This also shows that community engagement with heritage doesn't necessarily require to happen within what is defined as a museum specifically, therefore emphasizing the need for museums to move beyond their four walls and merge into the public space in order to expand the extent of their influence.

Ramgarhia Sikh Tapestry Project: Common Cause Impact Case Study

This project was funded by the Centre for Hidden Histories (CHH), and was conducted in collaboration with the women from the local Sikh community with a Community Education Manager from the Leicester City Council assisting with the initial contact between the two groups. The aim of the project was to represent the Sikh community's global history in relation to the first world war and reflects the Sikh culture, faith and art, informed by the women's own family histories linked to the WW1. It culminated with the creation of a narrative based on

[83] ahrcww1.
[84] Ali.
[85] Issa.

diaries, photographs and heirlooms collected by the women themselves and portrayed on a multi-panel embroidered tapestry. The project was significant as it was one of the first collaborations with a community group by CHH that also paved for future collaborations with other groups[86].

Figure 7. The ladies involved in making the Tapestry[87]

The process of creation of the Tapestry can be divided into three phases: the crafts workshop, the research phase and the actual execution of the tapestry. The first phase involved numerous crafts workshops organized by the Leicester City Council, that these women attended, wherein their knowledge and skills gained by working in the textile industry came to light. Further discussions brought to light, shared past experiences among the women in terms of stories of family and community members fighting in WW1, which later became the basis for this project. When asked later on, why they never came forward to share their experiences before, the women expressed their prior hesitation, believing that none outside their community would be interested in hearing their stories.

The second phase involved them working with academics from the University of Nottingham, who instead of conducting the required research themselves, guided the women through the process of researching and recording history for their tapestry. This form of collaboration gave the former the autonomy to explore the theme in their own way and at the same time helped the latter keep the project relevant and placed it in a context. The final phase involved the creation of the design of the tapestry, that was influenced by the knowledge and expertise of

[86] Common Cause, 'Hidden Histories of World One: Ramgarhia Sikh Taperstry Project' (University of Bristol and AHRC Connected Communities Programme, 2018) <https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.bristol.ac.uk/dist/a/358/files/2018/09/Sikh-Tapestry-2c3u6o8.pdf>.
[87] 'Phulkari | Desi Radio' <https://desiradio.org.uk/phulkari/> [accessed 28 August 2019].

both these groups as well as the religious and cultural guidelines obtained by consultation with the Ramgarhia gurdwara and the wider sikh community[88].

Figure 8. Part of the finished tapestry[89]

This project is a very good example of community engagement with ethnic minorities in practice as it was able to achieve a balanced relationship between all the elements that played a role in its making. One can see that both parties are engaged in what is referred to by Mike Heffernan, the assigned academic, as a co-production wherein emphasis was on breaking down the distinction between the researcher and the researched[90]. They accepted that the latter had as much to contribute to the project intellectually as the academics themselves as both groups relied on the professional and personal experiences of each other. This balance emphasises the need for sharing of power between professionals and community members during such projects, that could begin with the creation of a more inclusive space. Moreover, such an attempt also benefited the museum staff to expand the scope of their knowledge regarding community and ethnic histories. In terms of funds, this project received resources sufficient to just get things started, but this in turn ended up paving the way for future projects with other groups, thereby opening up the institution to continue further collaborations beyond the available funding. The advantage of working with small start-up grants, as seen in this case, is that they are easier to grant and work with in terms of similar attempts at engagement while larger sums of money complicate things due to the additional elements introduced into the

[88] Common Cause.
[89] Common Cause Research, *Common Cause: Hidden Histories of World War One*, 2018 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=415&v=FZNcc6aV7oQ> [accessed 17 August 2019].
[90] Common Cause Research.

process[91]. It also displays a recognition of the fact that the history and contemporary reality of minority communities are worthy of representation in museums and other memory institutions.

Figure 9. The designs and imageries used in the tapestry[92]

[91] Common Cause.
[92] Common Cause Research.

CHAPTER III

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES AND MUSEUMS THROUGH COMMUNITY ADVOCATES

While specific programmatic input can be easily provided by individual community members, it still does not deal with the fact that most of these projects and initiatives are short-term and cannot always result in sustained partnerships. There is a need to involve communities in ways that would allow widening the scope of people that could be brought into the museum space. The heritage sector should therefore be aiming to build cultural democracy by engaging with the public in terms that they understand.

In one research conducted by Kalliopi Fouseki at the Science Museum, four consultation models were employed across seven museums, that participated in the 1807 Commemorated Project focusing on the Abolition of slavery, to study different ways museums consulted with communities. The first one included small consultative focus groups invited through personal invitations from museums to selected individuals. The second model, involved a larger discussion group of 30-40 people formed by open invitations advertised in local newspapers. The third model made use of a combination of interviews with key members of the community and focus-group discussions. The last model made use of sub-projects that ran alongside the main exhibition with the help of an academic advisory committee or cultural advisory group[93]. This would consist of an alternative management team comprising of community partners, volunteers and staff, offering varying perspectives on the strategies to be adopted for the supporting workshops, as was the case in this project[94]. The central issues pointed out by the majority of interviewees was the need to get a sense of holistic involvement in the exhibition, wanting a sense of ownership by being involved from the conception of the project till its completion[95]. All four models are focused on consultative practices with a group of community members in order to acquire community inputs and the entire community were represented by a select few individuals creating a feeling of exclusion among the wider community. In addition, the term consultation in itself is problematic as it presents a picture wherein

[93] Kalliopi Fouseki, '"Community Voices, Curatorial Choices": Community Consultation for the 1807 Exhibitions', *Museums and Society*, 8.3 (2010), 180–92.
[94] Bienkowski.
[95] Fouseki.

museum professionals simply consult rather than fully engage with communities. This means it would involve simply informing community partners regarding the exhibition process and aims even before the consultation process begins, thereby. However, the term community consultation has come to signify a different form of co-production which can involve individuals or representatives of the community assisting in shaping service development and implementation within museums[96].

In projects based on community engagement, there are a few other means through which the ideas and perspectives of the community can enter the museum space through formal channels. This could include making community representatives a part of the museum staff or creating spots for them on the board of trustees. However, the problem with such positions is that it could make people feel like lower-class members instead of equal leaders within the institution[97].

In such cases, one of the solutions could be to collaborate with heritage institutions through intermediaries that work from within the heritage institutions, are skilled in community engagement in terms of bringing together community groups that have a project in mind with institutions that can help them develop them. A good example of such an arrangement is seen in the Ramgarhia Sikh Tapestry Project discussed in Chapter 2, where the community education manager played an important role in mediating between the two groups as well as provide support and encouragement to community members during their research phase[98]. Another way is to put in place an official advisory board consisting of various creative leaders from different parts of the community who would help advance the objectives of the institution. However, the problem with recruiting people across cross-sections of the community is that no particular theme can be explored deeply. A solution to this problem could be recruiting members of the advisory board based on the theme chosen for the project[99]. But this would probably result in this official body being dismantled and rebuilt for every project. The creation of community archives is another form of community engagement, and has already emerged in the United States and Australia. Studied as part of the "Community Archives and Identities"

[96] Canning and Holmes.
[97] Nina Simon, 'Rethinking Community Advisory Boards: The Story of C3', *Museum 2.0*, 2014 <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2014/11/rethinking-community-advisory-boards.html> [accessed 10 July 2019].
[98] Common Cause.
[99] Simon, 'Rethinking Community Advisory Boards'.

research project, such an approach would involve a collection of material gathered primarily by members of the given community and over which they would exercise a considerable amount of control[100]. Colorful Heritage is also one such initiative consisting of archival records of interviews with a multi-generational South-Asian audience. It has now become a heritage centre in itself, as it is working with various institutions to produce projects related to preserving as well as celebrating South-Asian heritage. They are a heritage organization in itself, and their members function as intermediaries that communicate and collaborate with other museums and heritage institutions, helping them by contacting community members within their known networks. Similar to this idea is that of a "community museum" where community members can exercise their autonomy while producing projects of a regional or international scope. The focus would shift from bringing objects to life to the social subjects and communities being able to present their lives as interpreters and authors of their heritage thereby allowing them to build collective self-knowledge[101]. Such an institution though, would consist of organizational forms made up of community members negating the need for museum professionals. While engaging community is important, museum professionals are the ones who are better aware of the different processes and formalities involved in developing projects as well as conducting the required research. It is important here to remember the difference between control and expertise and pushing for content expertise rather than content-control (museum2.0future). So an alternative could be for museum staff to hand over temporary exhibition spaces to community groups for them to create their own representations of themselves in a "Community Access Gallery". But this would also make it difficult to ensure that the community spokesperson would be representing the view of the majority[102].

The rest of this chapter, therefore, tries to study two of these approaches, focusing on similar intermediary roles, in terms of how they have played and could play an important role within the heritage sector while engaging communities.

[100] Mary Stevens, Andrew Flinn, and Elizabeth Shepherd, 'New Frameworks for Community Engagement in the Archive Sector: From Handing over to Handing On', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16.1–2 (2010), 59–76 <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250903441770>.
[101] Nina Simon, 'Sharing Power, Holding Expertise: The Future of Authority Revisited', *Museum 2.0*, 2019 <http://museumtwo.blogspot.com/2019/03/sharing-power-holding-expertise-future.html> [accessed 26 August 2019].
[102] Watson.

Community consultants: Neena Sohal - Freelance Consultant

Neena Sohal works as a freelance consultant for the heritage sector and is a trustee of the South Asian Diaspora Arts Archive which is being held at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery with the aim of collecting and showcasing British Asian Art. She is part of many organizations and initiatives aimed at making academic research on modern South-Asia accessible to the wider community.

In my interview with her, she described her work as a consultant as consisting of a number of responsibilities including helping organizations to fundraise the projects, developing projects, in terms of how to transform their ideas into a reality, as well as establishing and strengthening partnerships in the heritage sector. She frequently works with the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) as a consultant wherein she had to work with community organizations in order to promote what the NHLF can provide funds for, how to access these funds and advise them on developing projects that would be eligible for these funds. Moreover, for the above purpose, she produced some guidelines that the NHLF would hand out to the groups that would contain information on what different museums offer in terms of collections that would be relevant to different South-Asian communities. She has also worked on a number of activity plans aimed at acquiring public funds and has also developed and managed a few projects directly in areas where she has identified a need in response to community engagement[103].

Ms. Sohal considers herself more of a freelance consultant, working on a variety of projects, than a South-Asian community consultant specifically. She makes a very good point in stating the importance of fitting one's work into the mainstream narrative, as by becoming confined to working for a single community, one runs the danger of being knocked off from the periphery. So even though she cannot be considered a community consultant per se, her role involves the same skills but with more diversified groups. Her academic specialization and personal background in South-Asian culture, however, makes her an ideal instrument in collaborating with South-Asian communities more effectively. It makes her more aware and understanding of the issues prevalent within the group or aspects of the culture that need attention within the community as well as outside of it that could be targeted or discussed within heritage spaces[104].

[103] Sohal.
[104] Sohal.

Figure 10. (Top)Women bring out their own pieces of phulkari textile (Bottom)The phulkari conservation workshop[105]

In terms of community engagement, she has worked with many South-Asian communities multiple times assuming different roles. One such project that she talked of, in the interview, was a small-scale project with The Panjabi Centre, a registered charity and mostly made up of women running a community radio station, working to promote Punjabi language, culture and integration of Punjabi community in the UK through poetry, music and writings. The group was interested in promoting and sharing a particular textile tradition known and made locally within the Panjabi culture, known as Phulkari. Some of the women in the community continued this tradition at home as well, therefore having the skills to produce them by hand and sharing these skills with others. As part of this project, Ms. Sohal helped with acquiring the required funding from the NHLF and functioned as an intermediary between the community and the organizations relevant to develop a project around this theme. In this case, it was the V&A which had a very large collection of Phulkari embroideries, some dated around 200 years old, that the women had the opportunity to go and take a look at them. The grant received from the NHLF was used to visit museums, train volunteers to understand their heritage as well as

[105] 'Phulkari | Desi Radio'.

conduct workshops on how to make Phulkaris[106]. As part of their visit to V&A, apart from enhancing their ideas on the project by looking at some of the old, traditional examples of these textiles in their public collections as well as their storage, they were also educated on their conservation and maintenance through discussions with the conservator and a textile expert. Based on these conversations and their own experiences and sentiments towards this textile tradition, a project was developed titled "Phulkari, the Art of Embroidery". The end result, therefore, attempted to highlight the hidden histories behind the textiles, which the community wanted to preserve and hand down to the next generation[107].

Similarly, the community engagement project linked to the Kensington Palace's exhibition "Victoria: Woman and Crown", which attempted to present a multi-faceted account of Queen Victoria, her reign and her title as the "Empress of India", integrated participatory practice, throughout its planning and development. For this purpose, Ms. Sohal, as one of the project consultants, brought together an inter-generational group of local South-Asian community members, including students at various London universities to develop text labels in the form of ghazals. The participants then had the opportunity to visit the object stores and learn about them in order to create contemporary responses to the exhibition objects. Their input was continued even after their initial collaboration by means of short talks organized as part of the public programme accompanying the exhibition[108]. This project thus provided the opportunity for meaningful contact between the two groups and helped both groups build on various new skills and expertise on this topic.

Figure 11. (Left) Empress of India exhibition (Right))Students studying the objects related to the exhibition[109]

[106] Camilla Horrox, 'Southall's Panjabi Centre Secures Heritage Lottery Grant', *MyLondon*, 2 November 2015 <https://www.mylondon.news/news/local-news/southalls-panjabi-centre-secures-heritage-8624127>.
[107] Sohal.
[108] Historic Royal Palaces and Jatinder Kailey, 'The Empress of India: A Community Engagement Project', *Historic Royal Palaces*, 2019 <https://blog.hrp.org.uk/victoria-empress-india-community-engagement-project/?_ga=2.253539776.831979348.1566445875-1006808256.1561073947> [accessed 22 August 2019].
[109] Historic Royal Palaces and Kailey.

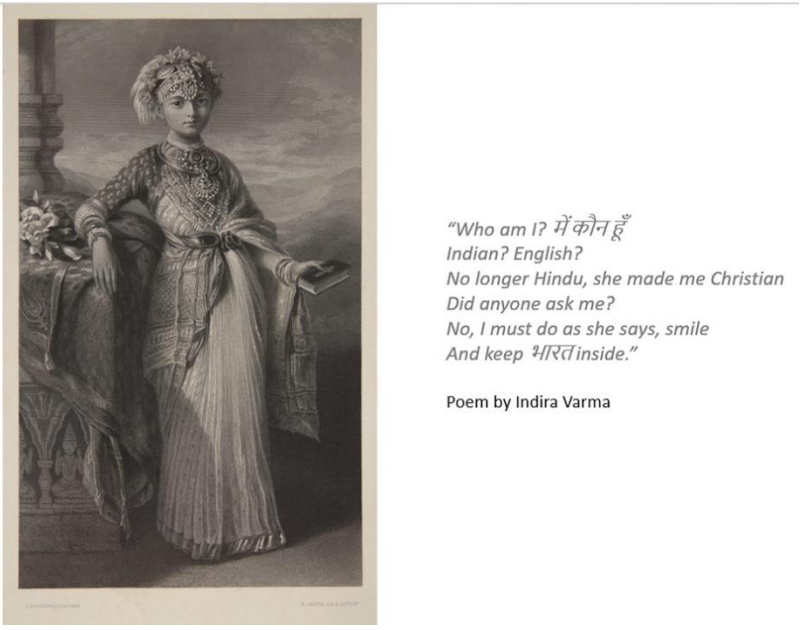

Figure 12. Responses of one of the community engagement participant to the image of Princess Victoria Gouramma of Coorg[110]

Consultants, such as Ms. Sohal, as seen in the above case, function as a means to bring the public into the private space of large organizations such as national museums, in a collaborative context and access those objects that are not openly available or visible to the public. Opening up the museums to the wider public, on the other hand, and sharing their collections, would allow them to tap into the latter's interests, irrespective of whether or not the themes may be South-Asian or immediately relevant to the concerned public[111]. They act as a link or intermediary between the ideas, needs and expectations of communities or groups, with organizations that can fulfil their demands. As the term "relevance" plays an important role in such collaborations, consultants also play an important role in shaping the projects in a manner that could allow the museums to a engage a wider audience and cater to localities where people of different ethnicities live together. Thus they constitute an important part of achieving "meaningful contact" and thereby, build and promote sustainable relationships between museums and the public in general.

Moreover, in cases where the museums do not have the required skills to engage with communities or are in the process of working with them for the first time, an essential part of such ventures is understanding them and creating links with the museum which would remain sustainable throughout the project. Community engagement professionals, such as consultants,

[110] Historic Royal Palaces and Kailey.
[111] Sohal.

help establish a proper relationship with communities based on understanding and trust, which would in the future benefit such heritage organizations in terms of volunteer groups for future projects, and would also play an important role in accessing public fundings[112].

Community Advisory Boards: Our Shared Cultural Heritage

"Our Shared Cultural Heritage" is a new initiative introduced on behalf of the British Council would help numerous young people, between the ages 11-21, the chance to develop new skills, explore their heritage and help influence museum programmes. It has been introduced through HLF's pilot scheme Kick the Dust grant programme. It aims to explore the shared cultural heritage of the UK and South Asia and develop new methods for museums to engage with young people - especially those of South-Asian descent, in order to be able to better connect with the upcoming generations. These young people alongside heritage staff, are then taught new skills through workshops, training, research and shadowing opportunities as well as developing apprenticeships and social action projects by working in world class museums in Glasgow and Manchester[113].

The OSCH would have at its core a group of young "Heritage Ambassadors" who played a major part in allocating grants. As part of this initiative, the young participants also presented a number of project ideas to engage the youth and for heritage organizations become better, inclusive spaces to explore identity and cultural heritage. Many of these suggestions are based on making use of social media platforms and the latest technologies, as well as integrating the youth into museum processes through training and working to make their opinions heard and at the same time implemented within museum policies and projects.

[112] Sohal.
[113] 'British Council Wins Funding for Youth-Led Heritage Project | British Council' <https://www.britishcouncil.org/contact/press/british-council-wins-funding-youth-led-heritage-project> [accessed 28 August 2019].

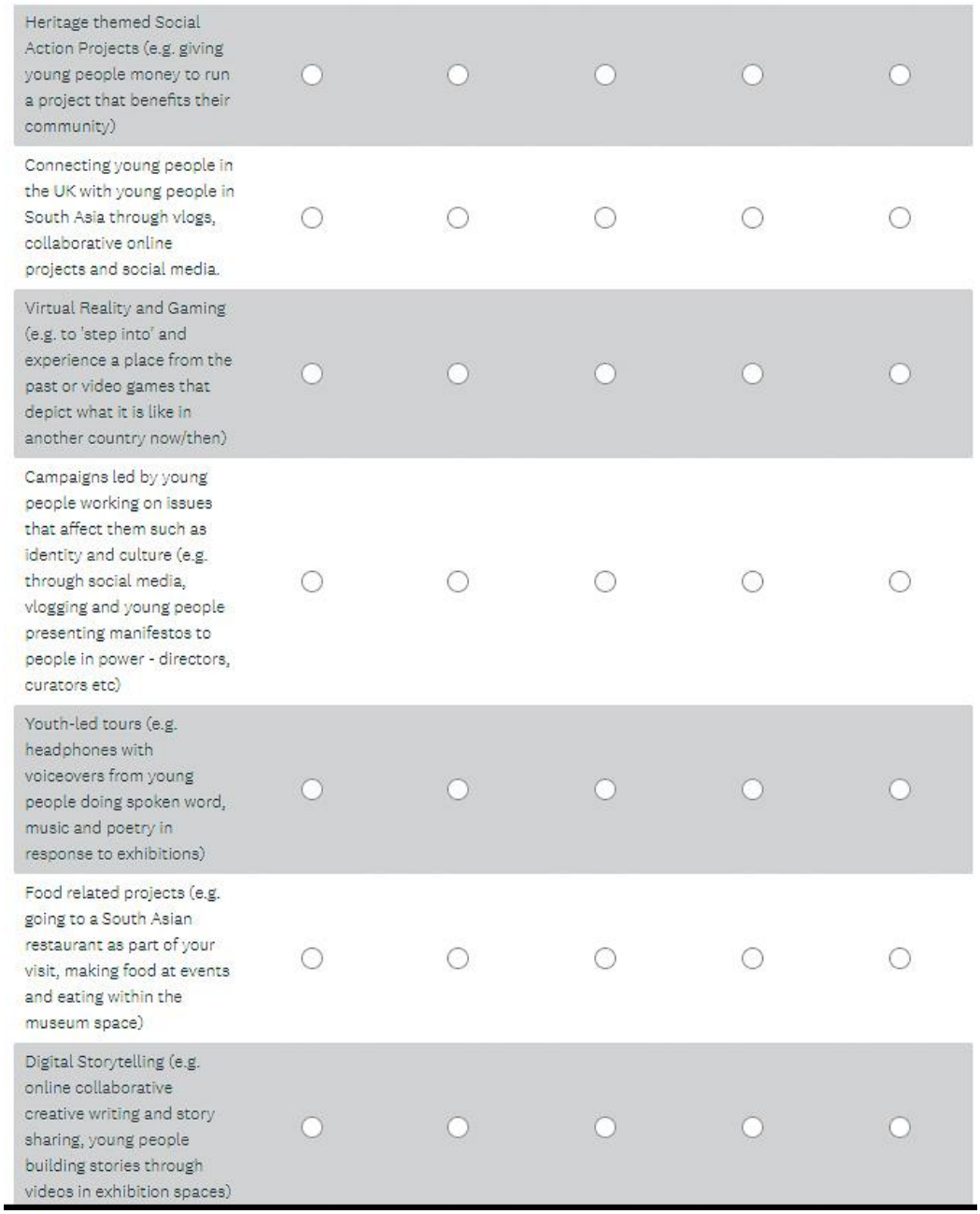

Figure 13. Some of the suggestions for greater community engagement as suggested in the survey[114]

Having a group of community advisors would make room from diverse members within the community to participate as leaders and each member can also be representative of a faction within the community (faction divisions are based on age, gender, ethnicity, religion etc in the case of South-Asian communities) thus transforming heritage institutions into sites of both inter-cultural and intra-cultural discussions and debates. These leaders would be the point of contact to other members within the community, aiding in the further diversification of the

[114] 'Our Shared Cultural Heritage Project Development Survey', *Surveymonkey* <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SharedHeritage> [accessed 28 August 2019].

museum's network and help focus on issues and activities significant to the community[115]. This would also help in building more sustainable relationships with communities as museums would have a means to stay in touch even after contact has been made with the community. Moreover, such an initiative would push heritage institutions to go a step further than simply focusing on tick-boxing and would allow museum staff members and trustees to learn and work with members of the general public thereby producing more relevant and timely collaborations[116].

[115] Simon, 'Rethinking Community Advisory Boards'.
[116] Simon, 'Sharing Power, Holding Expertise'.

CONCLUSION

Mulcahy suggests the idea of distinguishing between cultural democracy and democratization of culture. According to this, the former involves releasing agency so people could be culturally active on their own terms whereas the latter involves the process of cultural institutions enabling broader access to their programs[117]. This is similar to the idea of top-down approach being more visible in developing community engagement projects on minority subjects. Most of the projects discussed in Chapter II, follow a top-down approach where-in professional experts take the lead for the project and provide little scope for people's participation throughout its development as the rules of engagement such as the duration and degree of engagement are set by the professionals and the communities working with the heritage institutions have to function accordingly. The third chapter suggests a form of engagement closer to the bottom-up approach, as it consists of intermediaries bringing community members in and making them a major part of the knowledge-making process.

Canning and Holmes have identified four effects of consulting and engaging with communities institution as being financial, marketing, democratic and inclusive in nature. In the case of financial advantage, they suggest that by means of community engagement the museum can justify their funding by demonstrating that they have conferred with the local users. Secondly, in terms of a marketing advantage, a regular conversation with local groups and market research would allow museum professionals to understand the profile of their current audience and the market potential of their current programmes. The case of inclusion also focuses on audience development and reaching out to groups who may be excluded from museums for various reasons. The democratic case argues for shared power between museums and communities by involving them in all stages of the project[118].

These advantages while benefiting the public, in general, would also benefit museums. These benefits can be secured by following a more community-centred approach by handing over the reins of producing and developing the projects to community members, thereby providing a space for different groups to express themselves through their heritage. It would allow heritage institutions to redefine their purpose and become more than a repository of heritage, and

[117] Ashley.
[118] Canning and Holmes.

transform into a site of debate, discussion and creativity. Museums would benefit more by allowing community members to run the show with regular input from professionals rather than the opposite as it would allow a more "authentic" view of history and reality to come forward.

Given the heterogeneous nature of community groups, the same theme or objects could be interpreted in a number of ways and would result in more diverse exhibitions which would be able to incorporate diverse and multiple perspectives. This would be easier if museum collections were opened to the public and made more accessible. It would also help reduce the financial burden on the institution itself in the creation of such projects. Moreover, market research by consulting with similar non-professional groups does allow in identifying the needs and expectations of the current audience but at the same time, it also allows museums to target and engage other groups that under usual circumstances are unseen. Identifying potential audiences and reaching out to them is an important step towards community engagement.

Most of the immediate benefits of such practices would remain mostly intangible, however it does have economic benefits as well. If the community members feel involved in the creation of such projects, they will come back and spend money at the venue in shops or the cafe or even pay for exhibitions and want to join any membership schemes offered by the institution the role they play within society is still crucial[119]. Cultural diversity within these museums would have helped develop an international profile and local partnerships with source communities which would, in turn, enable museums to buy in exhibitions which they may not have been able to organize by themselves[120]. This could in turn further strengthen the tourism factor attracting international audience to a small extent. It would also increase public trust on heritage institutions to function as neutral spaces to harness and present the diversity of voices around a given object, exhibit or idea, address neglected histories, and serve as a focal point for communities where people from different backgrounds can come together[121]. Such exhibitions helped add depth to the manner in which communities were represented and are a source of knowledge to members of the community about the development in their countries of origin. Working with communities equips museums with a sense of direction towards

[119] Sohal.
[120] Merriman and Poovaya-Smith.
[121] Museums Galleries Scotland, *Going Further: National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*, March 2012, p. 22 <https://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/media/1094/going-further-the-national-strategy-for-museums-and-galleries-in-scotland.pdf>.

achieving its own objectives as well as fulfill their duty to the public in terms of what they need.

Communities do not feel that museums are relevant to them if they do not find within them a sense of their own history, identity and belonging as, most of the time, they are not invited to contribute and exhibiting process[122] which eventually result in an unequal relationship between the two. In "Interactivity and Social Inclusion" Jocelyn Dodd (2002) advocated for a more equitable approach to the audience through "pathways to inclusion" that aim to shift the interpretive practice from the authoritative voice of professionals to an interpretive approach that presents to visitors of all ages, points of connection, relevance and cultural ownership. He advocates the removal of all barriers by following a more holistic approach with regard to who can and cannot participate, the topics selected to address, the spaces used for the projects, and the experiences and emotions created as a result of it[123]. This would involve choosing a middle path independent from the top-bottom and bottom-up approaches wherein the emphasis is on the power sharing. However the present situation is such that any form of equality between the two groups is largely tipped in the favour of the institution. So while at the moment it is not possible to conclude if one method or strategy is better than the other, most of these cases clearly indicate that the greater the power sharing, the better the quality of community engagement.

It is important to bear in mind that the different curatorial strategies used to engage communities is not confined to the projects discussed within this dissertation. As the meaning and purpose of museums is being redefined, the study of human brain and its function has also influenced the field of modern museum sciences. Levent and Pascual-Leone's publication on the "The Multisensory Museum" has brought to light the importance of the complex interactions between visual, auditory, olfactory , spatial and other aspects of the visitor experience. The existence of these specialized detectors or receptors for different sensory modalities presents an opportunity to process different forms of energy and hence capture different forms of responses and viewpoints. This field of sensory studies and its emphasis on "experiencing the properties of things" can be used to further engagement with groups within communities that might have special needs in terms of access along with young children and

[122] Watson.
[123] McRainey, Russick, and Askews & Holts Library Services.

students, thus revolutionizing the ways in which material legacy of the past and contemporary cultures can be interpreted[124]. The benefits of multisensory learning would include a more hands on experience resulting in increased and improved engagement with students and young children and families, better information retention among audiences, greater accessibility to learners with disabilities, improved native and foreign language skills, better performance on reading tests, enhanced mathematical skills and improved ability to multitask[125].

In addition to these strategies, there are a number of yet unexplored avenues that could improve the nature of collaborations with South-Asian communities in particular and ethnic minority communities in general. Heritage institutions need to consider ways to reconcile historical legacies, current concerns and future aspirations in their project. This can be only done by allowing communities to play a more active role in all processes of content-creation. Organizations such as the Rethinking Asian History (RAH) Foundation[126], and initiatives like Academia and Activism that aim to bring museums, archives and libraries in India and the UK closer to each other as well as present related research to members of the community and heritage professionals, play an important role in fostering a relationship between university researchers and museum collections, and as a result helps heritage institutions increase their relevance to the South-Asian culture. Moreover, one must also consider the variations in the responses of different audiences to objects from South-Asia and not solely focus on engaging members of the particular community.

This paper discusses a number of "would's" and "could's" and in order to make sustainable community engagement a reality but the "how" of community engagement needs to be studied further. I have attempted to study the "why" behind community engagement in the context of the current debates between the importance of professionals against those whose views the former attempt to represent. And in a world where the audience is interested in being more involved in creating and interpreting content messages on their own, museums can appropriate a new role of authority by functioning as "platforms" for such collaborations and creations instead of attempting to control the entire visitor experience[127].

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[124] 'Introduction', in *The Multisensory Museum : Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on Touch, Sound, Smell, Memory and Space*, ed. by Nina Levent and Alvaro Pascual-Leone (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).
[125] Levent and Pascual-Leone.
[126] 'Rethinking Asian History', *RAH Foundation* <http://rahfoundation.org.uk/> [accessed 28 August 2019].
[127] Simon, 'Sharing Power, Holding Expertise'.

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APPENDIX 1

CHAPTER II Case studies questionnaire

Q1. What was the aim of the exhibition?
Q2. Who were the targeted audience?
Q3. Who all contributed in the making of the exhibition?
3.1. What role did the communities involved, play in the planning of the exhibition (if they did)?
3.2. What issues were raised by the members of the community during the making of the project?
Q4. What feedback did you receive for the exhibition?
Q5. What kind of strategies did you employ to help the public engage/connect with the exhibition?
Q6. Did the design process make a significant change in the voice and interpretation of the displayed subject?
Q7. Did the increased access to the collections increase participation in or recognition of the museum/exhibition space?
Q8. Based on visitor feedback, what would you do differently if you had the chance to redo this project?
Q9. To the best of your knowledge, do you think that the communities participating in the exhibition have a changed perspective on the role of the museum?

CHAPTER III Case study questionnaire

Q1. What does your role as a <role> entail?
Q2. What are some of the strategies that you employ to fulfil your function as a <role>?
Q3. How would you define community engagement?
Q4. Could you tell me about some of the projects you have been a part of or advised on?
Q5. How do you think, does the work of a <role> benefit museums? Why would you say they are needed within the heritage sector? How would you say, is working with a professional consultant different from working with the communities themselves?

APPENDIX 2

COLLABORATION PRACTICES: CHAPTER 2

- *Saqib Razzaq – Colorful Heritage Projects*
  https://www.dropbox.com/s/hdwgy1r4mbcj4ld/Questionnaire_Saquib.docx?dl=0

- *Isobel McDonald – Glasweg Asians*
  https://www.dropbox.com/s/dvaly2235hbbvi0/Questionnaire_McDonald.doc?dl=0

- *Shasti Lowton – Illuminating India*
  https://www.dropbox.com/s/at514vd7j11mv1l/Questionnaire_Shasti.docx?dl=0

- *Dr. Islam Issa - Stories Of Sacrifice Exhibition*
  https://www.dropbox.com/s/kqgvvkallo3q8q6/Questionnaire_Issa.docx?dl=0

COMMUNITY ADVOCACY INTERVIEW

- Neena Sohal
  https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mq7ys7pevon6p19/AAB010qUzfYpeiETjtCGPMGAa?dl=0