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Museums, at their best, are the keepers of evidence—and I'm not just referring to objects— but evidence of our human struggle to understand ourselves and others, evidence of our capabilities and our capacity for imagination and our inseparable relationship with this planet. In a world where creativity, equality, generosity, and even veracity are so maligned and disparaged—where evidence is so disregarded—we who work in museums have an urgent responsibility to hone our existing skills and develop brave new ones.

We need to bear witness, by documenting and reflecting upon current political and social disruptions and by speaking truth to power. We need to provide sanctuary in the broadest sense of the word—sanctuary for the mind, the body, and especially for the human spirit. We need to celebrate our commonalities and our diversities, build new collaborative relationships, and promote democratic ideals.

I believe museums are uniquely positioned to do this critical work.

Kathleen Mclean

Kathleen McLean is the recipient of the 2018 American Alliance of Museums' Distinguished Service to Museums Award, which recognizes an individual's excellence and contributions to the museum field for at least 20 years.

https://www.aam-us.org/2018/08/16/a-conversation-with-kathleen-mclean/

Foreword

'We lost history once, and we are killing each other off trying to find it …
When memory dies, a people die'
(A. Sivanandan. When Memory Dies. 2007)

A land known by many a name to the World System located to the east and west of this island, its history is essentially a story of trans-oceanic connectivity. It is a story of how this island came to evolve its unique personality due to the convergence of multiple streams of people, cultures, languages, religions, ethnicities and technologies. The historical saga of Sri Lanka, an island situated in a pivotal position in the Indian Ocean Rim, could not be inscribed otherwise in the annals of history and most certainly not without the story of the sea - a story of nurtured reciprocity as one of the most valued 'ports of call' in antiquity.

'Sri Lanka: The Island of Trans-Oceanic Heritage Convergence'
Banner displayed at the entrance to the Maritime Heritage Museum, Galle.
Sudharshan Seneviratne, 2012

Societies, since time immemorial, celebrated past events, individuals, cultures, including material remains endowed to us by our ancestors. The past is transmitted to us through memory narrated in literature, ancient material culture and colourful romantic ideas of antiquarianism. In this long journey, our fingerprints are found, both in good and painful experiences in the movement of human history. The museum in many ways is the point of convergence representing multiple narratives of this historical reality.

In her monograph, Hasini Haputhanthri, charters the configuration of this history through Memory and identity politics represented in designated museums. Her study unfolds multiple issues and empirical data, visuals, interviews and material culture viewed through many lenses and raises questions with special reference to memory and identity. A study of this nature was long overdue in Sri Lanka – a land representing conflict zones with all its ramifications and complexities. It is a country that has fissures running vertically and horizontally through the fabric of this historically evolved island society, especially in the post-colonial period. In another sense, Hasini attempts to encapsulate memory and identity within a historical context and essentially as a component of intangible and tangible heritage. As Aleida Assmann states, '…it is only then that the connection between time, identity, and memory in their three dimensions of the personal, the social, and the cultural has become more and more evident' (Assman, 2012).

History of modern museums in Sri Lanka was a product of the colonial era, with the establishment of the Colombo National Museum in 1877. Since then varying museums (cultural and other subject areas) were established by the public, private and religious sectors. Presentation material, themes and ideology varied from sponsors to immediate requirements. Especially as Romila Thapar states, 'there is yet an intellectual hesitation to depart from underlying colonial constructions and orientalist readings,' which is so evident in the profession of history, archaeology, heritage conservation and museums in South Asia. While situating museums in their historical backdrop and evolution, Hasini attempts to understand the very nature of museums and their ideological function and its practical

application as a public space providing entré to memory. In doing so, a thread running through the monograph is, who owns the past and politics of exhibition presentation, divided memory, invoking memory and rediscovering identities.

Hasini has effectively dissected the museums through case studies. The monograph itself is presented as a user-friendly handbook suggesting how one needs to visualize and evaluate the presentations and the institutional ideology behind the presentation. Museums essentially fall within the purview of heritage and its management. As such, there are short and long-term ground realities, concerns and implications on the qualitative sustenance and application of the science of archaeology and heritage management presented in museums.

One of the critical questions in this regard is about the modalities of projecting cultural history as a marginalized historical presentation both in Sri Lanka and globally. The central issue Hasini addresses is who has the power and authority to control the presentation, marginalizing histories and hegemony over the decision-making process. This also hinges on the practice and ethics of heritage management, where museums are an integral component. For example, the National Geographic psyche of depicting the exotic savage reflected in the museums where Euro-American archaeology had been used to depict Native Americans in a static state of primitive prehistory is a case in point. As Blakey notes 'since a major function of museums and reconstructions is to socialize the public, the ideological content of their archaeological messages has an especially pronounced impact.' This becomes more pronounced in a war and post-war situation, especially on the question of 'who owns the past?' Along with census and maps, museums form a key institutional concept in the grammar of colonial power that percolated to the post-colonial period as well (Meskell, ed., 2009).

We need to recognize that every society carries its own and varied perceptions of the past. The historian, archaeologist, and museologist must be conscious of this past and possess an asymmetric view of such distinct overlapping and parallel traditions. As a consequence, this process quite definitely does marginalize, hegemonise, and even expunge memory and histories of the 'Other'. In the long run, it imposes from above, an 'imagined' racial, ethnic, linguistic, and religious homogeneity over contested spaces. The treatment of the past now calls for a discourse on alternative systems of constructs and contexts especially depicting museum narratives. Conversely, it then needs to question parochial and internalized agendas, exclusive selection of specific presentations and convenient memories while expunging inconvenient memories thereby marginalizing and reducing the 'other' to the little narrative or even obliterated. The museum needs to be a democratic space of the Total Reality as a portal of bio-diversity, multiple and alternative histories, cultural and religious diversity and identities, gender realities among other issues which facilitates understanding the personality and anatomy of any given society.

This then essentially brings to play the role of the professional. This is because, today, heritage practitioners, archaeologists, conservators, and museologists are faced with critical challenges over their intellectual and professional space as reading the past itself is under siege in a global context. The contemporary heritage practitioner has therefore to resolve his or her professional status with 'competing interests'. The professional is challenged by individuals, groups and often even by regimes in power that have appropriated the task of retrieving, interpreting, reinventing and presenting the past. Such individuals and organizations increasingly realize the functional value of subverting the past, sustaining

ideologies of legitimation and domination negating diversity and plurality. Conversely, the reactive response to this is a surge of embedded reverse racism and ultra-nationalism represented by various shades of fundamentalist and social fascist ideologies of centrifugal forces that invent their own versions of 'reconstructed' pasts and 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991). Museums inevitably have become the eye of the storm, an arena of competition and confrontation! Add to this, there is an unabated displacement and looting of heritage and cultural property perpetrated by in-country socially affluent as well as other rapacious interest groups aided and abetted by global museums and collectors. These dynamics ultimately undermine, in an irreparable manner, the scientific and humane application of heritage initiatives investigating and presenting the past. This abysmal situation is now a shared tragedy by many developing countries.

In view of this, professionals reading and presenting the past are now required to redefine their intellectual and professional space. The contemporary discourse needs to hinge on the intervention and claims of defining, owning, protecting, managing, interpreting and presenting the past and heritage. Today, we need to resort to the dual strategy of humanizing, decolonizing and de-politicizing heritage (archaeology, heritage management and museums) on the one hand and advancing country and culture specific applications in historically evolved societies with diversity on the other.

Implementing such strategies must essentially be the purview of independent professional bodies of scientific archaeologists, conservators and museologists. There must be less or no involvement of amateurs and ideologues of fundamentalist 'tribal' organizations; the regimes in power that often subvert the past and sections of the private sector seeking purely an investment venture. Our pledge must be to excavate and present truth for a futuristic vision plan beyond the boundaries of parochialism and contours of inverted political and financial agendas. If properly applied, heritage sites and museums perhaps are the most sensitive and enlightened mediums to reach out and foster greater understanding and appreciation among diverse communities of their cultural pasts and shared heritage of human achievements and thereby rectifying misunderstood histories. It is critical that we cross this chasm of water-tight compartments for the profession to survive in a meaningful and productive manner. In fact, between 2007 and 2010, the Maritime Archaeology Museum in Galle, Multi-religious Museum in Kataragama, Non-sectarian museum in Sigiriya, Revitalized Archaeological Museum at Polonnaruwa and the Museum on Estate Workers of South Indian Origin in Gampola presented such a vison of inclusivity unfolding a shared history of Sri Lanka.

Hasini's study has brought the Sri Lankan into the global debate on museums. Her monograph, in fact, is a road map for the futuristic inclusive museum in Sri Lanka.

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Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

"I can't think of any other country in the world that has such boring museums like in India. When you walk in, especially with teenagers, it is very difficult to retain their attention. Because what are they looking at, what do these labels read, it makes no sense. And yet around the world, museology has become a discipline where museums have become among the most attractive places for people to go to. Even adults go to them."

Dr. Romila Thapar's remarks as the Chair of the discussion on
'Shared Culture and Heritage for Conflict Resolution: A South Asian Perspective[1]

Indeed, museums around the world have evolved over the last two centuries, from the private collections of the elite and the cabinets of curiosity of the masses, to become prodigious social institutions of public engagement. Though it is difficult to give an accurate figure, the International Council of Museums (ICOM)[2] recognises over 55,000 museums in over 202 countries in its 21st edition of Museums of the World, 2014.

By now, the role that museums play in shaping civic identities across generations is well acknowledged, as made explicit in the definition of a museum by the International Council of Museums (ICOM):

"A museum is a **non-profit, permanent** institution in the **service of society** and its development, open to the **public**, which **acquires, conserves, researches, communicates** and **exhibits** the **tangible and intangible heritage** of humanity and its environment for the purposes of **education, study** and **enjoyment.**"[3]

This modern definition owes much to the discourse on New Museology, which developed in the last three decades as a reaction to the 'old' / (colonial) museology and its limitations. By 1971 it was claimed that museums were 'isolated from the modern world, elitist, obsolete and a waste of public money.'[4] Traditional museum practice focused on the collection and curation of artefacts. They were deemed to articulate the 'authentic' narration of a society's historical trajectory and identity for its own people as well as for the outsiders. The public accepted museums as the 'cultural authority'. Naturally, such top-down exclusive understanding has led to power elites, or in the case of South Asia, fledgling nationalist states, controlling museums, often with the objective of 'civilizing' and 'disciplining' and perpetuating nationalist narratives, to influence the masses into a social order of their preference.

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1 *Sudarshan Seneviratne, 'Shared Cultures and Heritage for Conflict Resolution: A South Asian Perspective' ORF Discourse, Vol 5, Issue 17, June 2012, Observer Researcher Foundation, New Delhi.*

2 *The International Council of Museums (ICOM) is the only international organisation representing museums and museum professionals in over 136 countries, enjoying consultative status with UN, with its Secretariat situated at UNESCO House, Paris, France.*

3 *Statutes of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), 2007.*

4 *Kenneth Hudson, Museums for the 1980s: A Survey of World Trends, Paris and London: UNESCO/Macmillan, 1977.*

New museology emerged as a reaction to this understanding and critiqued and transformed the social and political role of a museum. While it encouraged new styles of communication and technology to suit the modern world, the central idea of new museology 'involves a redefinition of the relationship that museums have with people and their communities,'[5] leading to 'a drive for wider access and representation of diverse groups.'[6] Social accountability was foregrounded, with museums actively tackling issues of discrimination, inequality, and conflict within societies. Finally, the discourse on new museology led to redefining the purpose of the museum primarily as an institution of education and enlightenment, with a shift of focus from 'objects' to 'ideas'.

It is an extension of the thinking illustrated above that has made museums tackle difficult topics of the 20th century, such as genocides, the Holocaust, slavery etc., in specialized 'memorial museums'. The Apartheid Museum, South Africa; Museum of Memory and Human Rights, Chile; La Maison des Esclaves, Senegal; September 11 Memorial Museum, USA; Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum, China; Yad Vashem, Israel; Armenian Genocide Museum, Armenia; Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Cambodia; and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, Japan are but a handful of an explosion of memorial museums around the world. These museums introduced the purposes of mourning, memorialization, and reflection to that of education and other primary functions fulfilled by museums thus far, making communities of survivors active stakeholders of the museum beyond that of a mere visitor or guide. On the other hand, as Memorial Museums gain foreground, more traditional Military/War Museums which also articulate narratives of war, conquest, and defeat continue to exist at the other end of the spectrum and narrate similar events in varying degrees of complexity. Study of military/war museums such as the Allied Museum, Berlin; D-Day Museum, Normandy etc., are indispensable to an overall understanding of how museums have represented conflict, identity, and mass suffering in modern history.

However, as expressed in Romila Thapar's passionate complaint, the ideas of new museology have not been adopted all over the world. The continued need for the conservation of heritage and the promotion of selected identities within an exclusive nationalist framework and the dominance of post-colonial state structures in museum management have blocked more inclusive, community-oriented museums that shed light on alternative perspectives. Not only Sri Lanka, but also South Asia in general, tend to continue the old school understanding of museums. This baseline survey and study of 25 Sri Lankan museums explores how, similar to Thapar's concerns for India, we remain trapped in an archaic understanding of a museum, explicit in the Sinhala colloquial term for 'museum' - *'katu-ge'*, which literally translates into 'a house of bones'. A more literal Sinhalese term in *'kautukagare'* which translates to 'a place in which very old things are kept'. In his article Museums and Globalisation, Martin Prösler quotes the case of the Colombo National Museum arguing that museums are 'partially perceived through local categories drawn from a specific local experience.'[7]

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5 *Vikki McCall and Clive Gray. "Museums and the 'new museology': theory, practice and organisational change", Museum Management and Curatorship 29.1 (2014): 19-35.*

6 *Deirdre Stam, "The Informed Muse: The Implications of 'The New Museology' for Museum Practice," Museum Management and Curatorship 12: (1993) 267-283.*

7 *Martin Prösler, 'Museums and Globalization', in Theorizing Museums Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World', Gordon Fyfe and Sharon Macdonald, eds., 1996.*

As Sri Lanka emerges from decades of violence and war, there is a need to acknowledge the contribution museums can make to reconciliation, especially in redefining an inclusive identity for its multicultural populace as well as facilitating a dialogue on more difficult subject matters. More urgently, there is the need to transform our understanding of a museum as a necessary step in order to facilitate that meaningful contribution.

2. Scope and purpose of the study

The purpose of the study and the discussion paper is to arrive at an evidence-based understanding of how museums in Sri Lanka deal with memory and identity politics. The research was conducted as a preliminary study for the Memory Culture Unit of Strengthening Reconciliation Processes in Sri Lanka (SRP) project of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), with the objective of understanding the status quo and establishing a baseline of the museums in Sri Lanka. Thus, the research was undertaken from the very beginning with the intention of informing future programme activities of the aforementioned project and should be understood as such. This document thus addresses the two-fold requirements of establishing a baseline, while deepening the understanding of the contributions of museums in the country to the discourse on memory and identity in a post-war context.

An attempt is made to compile an overview of the museums in Sri Lanka and document and evaluate the status quo of selected museums. The study selected 25 museums out of the 100 plus existing museums, and compiled relevant information regarding these museums.

Thus, the focus of the research remains rather broad, and went beyond simply evaluating the identity politics of the narratives of the museums to examine the nature of their outreach, exhibition display quality, and educational and promotional activities, in order to establish a more comprehensive overview. The rationale being that critiquing memory and identity politics of museums in Sri Lanka without understanding the overall context within which they operate will be limited in providing practical suggestions that are contextually and culturally appropriate.

The main objectives of the study were,

 - ➢ To understand the status quo of museums in Sri Lanka and establish a baseline

 - ➢ To evaluate selected museums, especially in terms of how they contribute to memory work and reconciliation

 - ➢ To understand the existing educational programmes within museums

 - ➢ To understand stakeholders and the institutional landscape within which museums are designed and operated

 - ➢ To identify strengths, space for improvement and opportunities for engagement

 - ➢ To shed light upon the nature of identity politics involved in museum-making in the context of a post-war country

The obvious limitations of the study are that it does not cover all museums in Sri Lanka, and neither does it analyze the object domains of the selected museums in depth. Thus, apart from the 25 selected museums which are presented as major and minor cases, other museums remain physically unverified. Though one can well argue that this is not only beyond the time and resources available but also not necessary in terms of producing the results required, it remains that verification by itself is a valuable assignment in the light of the lack of primary data, which one often finds are either incomplete or outdated.

As the selected museums were analyzed for more criteria than that of just mnemonic and identity representation, the study could not establish a categorization or objective in-depth analysis of the object domain[8] of the museums.

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8 In museology object domain refers to the array or collection of material artifacts.

3. Methodology of the research survey

The research included a desk study, mapping of museums as well as field work to gather primary data. Due to the limitations of the field of museology in Sri Lanka, the amount and the quality of secondary data and study material available on the museums of Sri Lanka were limited. The main sources of the secondary data have been publications of the Department of National Museums such as 'Kauthukagaara' series, articles published in international journals by Sri Lankan archeologists etc. Thus, the study draws heavily from primary data such as interviews with museum professionals and visitors, written feedback by visitors in feedback books maintained by museums and observations of the researcher. For a complete list of persons interviewed for the study refer to annex 1.

Museum inventory

An initial desk study was conducted in order to locate and build an inventory of museums in Sri Lanka. The sources for the information gathering for the inventory were the following,

> ➢ Museum Directory published by the Department of National Museums 2005
> ➢ Websites such as the www.museum.gov.lk, Wikipedia, online newspaper articles, traveller blogs, TripAdvisor etc.
> ➢ Location visits and field observations by researcher
> ➢ Communication by officers of Memory Culture project GIZ
> ➢ Information gathered through interviews with experts

The purpose of the Museum Inventory is to compile an overview of museums spread across Sri Lanka. A typology for classifying the museums was also developed. At present, the inventory records over 100 museums in Sri Lanka, and offers basic information regarding these museums such as,

> ➢ Location and date of establishment
> ➢ Museum administration
> ➢ Subject area and focus
> ➢ Contact details
> ➢ Links to web presence, where available for further details

The inventory also gives the option of sorting these museums under location, date of establishment, museum administration, subject and focus.

All the museums listed in the inventory have not been verified by the researcher, as this was beyond the scope of the study. It is important to recognize the inventory as a work in progress. For instance, the small museums of the Forest Department haven't been included. Similarly, there are many small private museums of different nature, size and interest, recording all of which is beyond this study.

However, the Museum Inventory was an important step of the study and gave a comprehensive overview of the museums in Sri Lanka, the benefits of which will be explained in the sections later.

See annex 2 for the Museum inventory.

Selection of museums and sample for baseline

Based on the typology developed through the museum inventory, 25 museums were selected out of 100 museums[9] recorded to be included in the baseline study, making the sample of approximately 25% of the total number of museums in the country. Some of the criteria considered for the selection were,

- ➢ Location (representing different geographical areas of the country, North, South, East, West, Central and North Central)
- ➢ Subject and focus (representing thematic variety)
- ➢ Museum administration (representing the different sectors and institutions that have entered into designing and managing museums)
- ➢ Relevance to memory and reconciliation
- ➢ Size (from large to mini museums)

A research questionnaire was developed in consultation with the Memory Culture project to conduct field research in 25 museums, defining the areas for close investigation such as, key data, outreach, visitor engagement, process of exhibition design and relevance to reconciliation. An information sheet for each museum was developed and the data collection sheet / questionnaire for museum visits is attached as annex 3 of the report.

Quantitative evaluation: museum baseline

The museum baseline evaluates 25 Sri Lankan museums of all sizes, locations and management structures under a singular framework. While gathering qualitative information separately, the research evaluated each museum under six evaluation criteria:

1. Accessibility
2. Display/exhibition quality
3. Narrative strength
4. Interactivity and pedagogy
5. Public relations and promotion
6. Relevance to memory / reconciliation

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9 The number of total museums is subject to constant change as the researcher discovers new museums every other day.

The evaluation of the six criteria has been based on a marking score developed on a scale of 1 to 5. Ranking of museums were done on the base of an aggregated score. The overall ranking of museums can be found in annex 4 as well as section '09. Evaluation' of the study. The purpose of the marking score is to establish a baseline value that can be used later on to evaluate improvements, in the event that the project interventions directly worked on the issues and recommendations raised by the study.

Qualitative evaluation: case studies

Complementing the quantitative aspects of the study, the case studies elaborate on qualitative information regarding the selected museums in the country. For the purpose of understanding and easy comparison, four case studies are presented separately, especially where the insights were particularly relevant to memory and reconciliation. The study will also contextualize the museum practice within Sri Lanka and South Asia while remaining conscious of global trends. Some of the observations and recommendations are grounded in an attempt to understand the context within which museum practice has developed and is embedded, at this current moment.

Limitations and problematics

Though a quantitative dimension is established the research is primarily that of a qualitative and interpretive study. While the baseline values can be used to orient future policy directions, these figures are meant to be understood vis-à-vis the case studies recorded.

A limitation in the quantitative aspect is that some of the figures obtained from some museums could not be verified. Apart from the state museums which have well-documented numbers with regard to audience, private-run and other museums do not seem to keep consistent documentation, and the figures quoted in the interviews conducted remain the sole source of information.

In compiling the case studies, a more comprehensive or in-depth object domain analysis, which could have provided further quantified insights into politics of representation, is avoided due to the size of the sample (25 museums) as well as time and resource constraints. Instead, the study asks questions such as 'What are the key messages conveyed through the museum?', 'What is the central/dominant narrative?' etc. to substantiate the insights and recommendations through narrative analysis. While the 4 case studies addresses this concern to a certain degree, a more in-depth study object domain analysis of a smaller sample of museums is recommended as a future activity. The researcher discovered a similar study conducted by Dr. Choolani Rambukwella of Peradeniya University, which analyzed the exhibition objects presented in Colombo National Museum. As the study is still an unpublished PhD thesis, the researcher could not refer to the findings of this study, but instead included a limited understanding communicated through a face to face interview with the author.

The objectivity of the ranking of museums could have improved had there been the chance for a team to visit the museums. However, since this was not feasible, the ranking of museums is developed through the researcher's sole observation and perception, except in the case of Kattankudy Heritage Museum, Colombo National Museum and the Independence Memorial Museum, where GIZ officers and research assistants took part in the ranking discussion. To avoid the subjectivity of a single evaluator, an evaluation scale was developed and is explained in annex 6.

Throughout the study the researcher has tried to remain unbiased and non-judgmental towards Sri Lankan museums, especially in comparing or benchmarking them against the museums in the West. Instead, there is an attempt to understand resource and technological limitations as well as the overall ideological framework within which the local museums have developed over the last century. In offering recommendations, the study builds on suggestions brought forward by local museum professionals themselves, while also drawing from selective museum practices from the West.

4. Museums, memory, and identity politics: formulating a theoretical framework

A modest literature survey has been conducted to provide a theoretically sound basis for analysis, while keeping in mind that the study is not, strictly speaking, an academic thesis. However, it is valuable to briefly investigate how museums are theorized, as it illuminates how museums can be re-imagined in Sri Lanka within the present moment.

Though the three key terms involved are museums, memory, and identity politics, similar terms such as nation-state, nation-building, grand narrative, authenticity, heritage, permanence, and history are all worth pondering on, in order to delineate fully the scope of influence.

I propose to discuss these terms in tandem under two sub-headings:

Museums and national identity

'Museums as projections of identity'[10] is by now a subject matter well written about, especially in the context of 'national' identity. As Benedict Anderson has pointed out, thinking of oneself as a member of a national public – envisaged like a large 'team', 'family', or 'community' but made up of thousands or millions of people, most of whom one would never meet – entailed a particular feat of the imagination.[11] As individuals can no longer directly experience or relate to all other members of his/her given 'nation', the experience instead had to be cultural – a matter of shared knowledge and practice, of representation, ritual, and symbolism. Museums, along with other public institutions, were expressive sites with the capacity to influence this new way of identification and public culturing. It involved projecting sentiments of belonging and brotherhood way beyond those of direct experience, but only up to a specified 'edge' - the boundary of the national community. By now, the arguments of scholars such as Eric Hobsbawm (1983) and Benedict Anderson (1991) that cultural institutions such as museums have played a central role in the construction of a coherent historical national discourse that reinforces a sense of collective identity and social cohesion through common understandings of order, aesthetics, and symbols, are widely accepted. Anderson concludes that 'museums, and the museumizing imagination, are both profoundly political."[12]

As Macdonald points out, a museum is unusually capable among other institutions to materialize culture[13] through its classification, arrangement and display of objects. Thus, museums structure the way in which we see the world and see ourselves through the

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10 Gordon Fyfe and Sharon Macdonald, *Theorizing Museums Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, (1996), p 9.

11 Benedict Anderson quoted in Sharon J. Macdonald, "Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities', *Museum studies: An anthology of contexts* (2012): 273-86.

12 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New York: Verso. (1991), p. 178.

13 Gordon Fyfe and Sharon Macdonald, *Theorizing Museums Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, (1996), p 7.

narratives they construct through material culture about societies. So far, the dominant paradigm for this structuring has focused on the 'nation-state', and articulating the 'grand narrative' that provides people a sense of belonging, pride, and ownership.

In his article Museums and Globalization,[14] Prösler illustrates this point further: '*The museum takes on the form of a microcosmic representation of the sovereign nation state. The collected objects in the museum document a human community extending in time and space: the nation. The museum thus 'embodies' the nation state while providing it with a place in the general order of things. In this context, 'national' museums assume a quite particular symbolism and meaning, preserving 'national' heritage within the course of time, handing it down to succeeding generations, educating and forming the young.*'

National Museum of Brazil
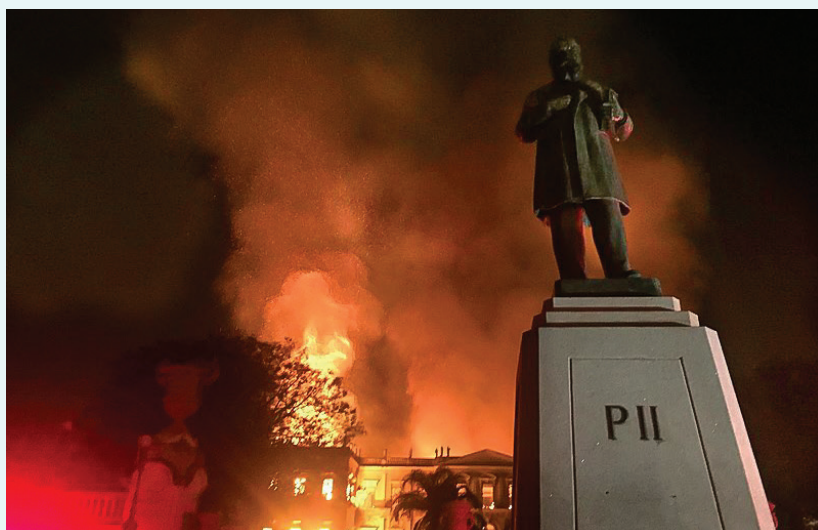
Image 1: National Museum of Brazil.

One can give many examples of these types of museums from around the world. For example, the British Museum, Colombo National Museum to name two. An incomplete list of national museums is available in wikipedia on https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_national_museums. However, due to the most recent tragedy, a museum worth highlighting is the National Museum of Brazil. Established in 1818, it once held the biggest collection of natural history, anthropology and archaeology of the Americas. On 2nd September 2018, 90% of its 20 million collection was destroyed in a fire. The incident was reported worldwide and drew an avalanche of emotions from around the world and a public outcry in Brazil. Brazil's president, Michel Temer, said that "the loss of the National Museum is incalculable for Brazil. Today is a tragic day for our country's museology. Two hundred years of work, research and knowledge were lost. The value of our history cannot be measured now, due to the

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14 Martin Prösler, 'Museums and globalization', The Sociological Review 43.S1 (1995): p. 21-44.

damage to the building that housed the Royal Family during the Empire. It is a sad day for all Brazilians.'[15] Brazilian environmentalist and politician Marina Silva called the fire "a lobotomy of the Brazilian memory."[16]

A group of museum studies students called for the public to send any photographs and videos of objects lost in the fire and within hours received over 14,000 replies - including videos, photos, written recollections and even drawings of favorite exhibits.[17] According to the student who led the initiative, the tragedy highlights the importance of museums as 'not just a place of research and history, but as part of people's lives' and the overwhelming response indicates 'the affection that people had for the museum'.

How the museum has taken on the role of 'embodying the nation' requires historical understanding. Sharon J. Macdonald points out that 'the proliferation of museums in the nineteenth century was undoubtedly closely bound up with the formation and solidification of nation-states in, and subsequently beyond, Western Europe'[18]. The opening up of the Louvre to the public in the aftermath of the French Revolution 1789 - regarded as the dawning of the nation-state era in Europe - is symbolic of how deeply museums have been implicated in the processes of social change and nation state formation. Going beyond Europe, one sees how the museums have also been part of the colonial project. To date, this remains the starting point for many South Asian museums. First started off as colonial museums, these institutions were transformed during the independence struggles and ensuing nationalism, to play a key role in re-articulating history and identity for most post-colonial societies. Simply due to their institutional nature they often still perpetuate an idiosyncratic mix of colonial legacies in numerous ways, which they have not, unfortunately, been able to shed completely yet.

On the other hand, museums espouse social change: In the context of independence struggles across the empire and the formation of nationalist governments, they have become foremost sites of articulation of national identity. Unlike national anthems, public rituals such as Independence Day celebrations which are temporal and intangible in their nature, museums are tangible and enduring, their mere physicality and power to embody grand narratives making them the formidable godfather of all cultural institutions.

Thus, museums have served the nation-building project well for over two centuries. However, increasingly the modern world is fraught with dilemmas that often challenge this model. Identities have come into conflict with each other and mapped boundaries and ideas of monolithic national identities are being questioned. Atrocities and large scale human tragedies can no longer be swept under the carpet of old-school patriotism. Can museums also accommodate these discontents as well as they have embodied the 'nation'?

15 Dom Phillips, '200 years of knowledge lost "incalculable' loss as 200-year-old Rio institution gutted,' The Guardian, archived from the original on 3 September 2018. Retrieved 3 September 2018.
16 Ibid.
17 https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/12/brazil-national-museum-students-appeal-cultural-heritage
18 Sharon J. MacDonald, 'Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities', Museum studies: An anthology of contexts (2012): p 273-86.

According to Macdonald, how and why museums are able to act as manifestations of identity or sites for the contestation of identities requires a 'denaturalizing' of the concept of 'identity'. That is, we need to be able to see our notions of particular identities, including 'national identity', not as universal but as historically and culturally specific. What is entailed in even 'thinking' and 'doing' 'the nation' or 'the public'? And what role have museums played in such 'thinking' and 'doing'? What is it about museums that makes them suitable - and sometimes not so suitable - for certain identity 'work'?

A crucial question for museums today concerns their role in a world in which nation statist identities are being challenged. Are they too inextricably entangled in 'old' forms of identity to be able to express 'new' ones? These are the questions that lead us to the next paradigm:

Museums and memory work

Memory work is a process of engaging with the past which has both ethical and historical dimensions.[19] In his evocative essay 'Between History and Memory: Les Liuex de Memoire' French historian Pierre Nora makes some poignant observations regarding the distinction between memory and history: *'real memory - social and unviolated, exemplified in but also retained as the secret of so-called primitive or archaic societies - and history, which is how our hopelessly forgetful modern societies, propelled by change, organize the past.'*[20] He points out the widening gap between the two, and how one is eradicated or suppressed by the other, especially by equating the two. Further on, he places the museums clearly on this spectrum when he states *'A generalized critical history would no doubt preserve some museums, some medallions and monuments – that is to say, the materials necessary for its work – but it would empty them of what, to us, would make them lieux de memoire'.*

However, it is important to point out that Nora was not dismissing museums entirely. He was only referring to the role some museums played, especially in the context of the French Revolution and how it contributed to the idea of 'French' national culture[21]. Nora's passionate plea was to move away from the idea of monolithic national culture to a more nuanced understanding of how people remember themselves. In this context, one has to re-imagine the museum not merely as a nation-building institution but also an institution that represents the collective memory of societies. Museums, as social organizations, are not fixed structures but flexible entities capable of adapting to their surrounding contexts and social needs. If our present context demands that we make way for the inclusion of diverse memories of communities, especially marginalized groups, the question is not 'if' but 'how' museums can transform themselves to do so. For, ultimately, museums are institutions that people have created to serve the public. The plethora of modern memorial museums that have evolved are but a resounding testimony that museums are in fact capable of addressing the diverse needs of communities.

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19 Barbara Gabriel, 'The Unbearable Strangeness of Being; Edgar Reitz's Heimat and the Ethics of the Unheimlich' in Postmodernism and the Ethical Subject, edited by B. Gabriel and S. Ilcan, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press (2004).

20 Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire', Representations 26 (1989): p 8,

21 For an in-depth understanding of memory in the context of museums, read Lorena Rivera-Orraca, 'Are museums sites of memory?' The New School Psychology Bulletin 6.2 (2009): 32-37.

In all contexts, diverse and sometimes conflicting narratives exist alongside official memorialisation initiatives, to the extent that for some individuals the official commemoration carries little meaning, while others actively resist government-led efforts to use memory for the purpose of reconciliation. This is not surprising if collective memory is seen as consisting of competing narratives with which different societal groups seek recognition and acknowledgement. Museums are slowly but steadily opening up to embody multiplicity and contestation as successfully as they have once represented and celebrated unity and belonging.

By this framework (a unitary national identity vis-à-vis multiplicity of memories) I am not proposing that these two paradigms are dichotomies or binary opposites of a spectrum. In fact, I am proposing that both are inherent in each other, and museums can easily embody both. Remembrance and identity are interconnected. They may project, manifest one or the other depending on the point at which they find themselves vis-à-vis the communities they serve, but then can very comfortably choose to accommodate both. I would argue that it is more the selection (or more accurately the curation) of what to remember, what to include or exclude that makes a museum what it is in essence. In her article 'Are museums sites of Memory' Riverra- Orraca argues a similar point; museum and the exhibition serve as mediating instances between past and present as well as history and memory.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Image 2: A tricycle and helmet are displayed at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Hiroshima, Japan.

Constructed in 1955, just 10 years after the end of WWII, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is an oasis of tranquility at the heart of Hiroshima. It honours the memory of those who lost their lives during the American atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Kenzo Tange and, a decade after the indescribable explosions killed over 200,000 Japanese civilians, the memorial hall preserves objects that once belonged to the victims, including personal items like a watch that stopped when the first explosion occurred, and materials showing Hiroshima and its residents before and after the attacks. The museum is surrounded by a sculpture garden and exhibition space, where historic architectural elements meet forward-looking modernism in a setting that is both mindful of its history and optimistic about the future.

Today, museums are dealing with a wide array of histories and memories. More and more, alternative narratives of smaller communities and individuals are included. The roles of the curator, community, and critic have become central to museum studies. As centres of education and experiential learning museums continue to create space for imagination, representation, debate, and contestation in ways that few other public institutions do.

As Sri Lanka is moving into a post-war context, its needs are as complex and diverse as the plethora of communities it embodies. The key question to raise here is to understand what these needs are and explore how Sri Lankan museums, the ones that exist already, and the ones that can come into being in the future, can support its future trajectory, serving best the communities, their histories and memories they intend to embody and represent. On one hand there is the need for remembering and acknowledgement of what it has experienced recently, especially for those who were directly affected. Then, there is also the need for bringing communities together to find a common ground around which they wish to project a peaceful future. In this sense, museums are more than mere sites of memory. They are also sites where collective futures are negotiated.

5. Evolution of museums in Sri Lanka

"A National Museum which brings the past and the present together can be considered as a guide to the future."

Sirimavo R. D. Bandaranaike, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, in her felicitation message to the centenary celebrations of the Colombo National Museum in 1977

Globally, museums are products of modernity and their development is deeply implicated in the formation of modern nation states. Museums are also 'technologies of classification and have played a historically significant role in modernist and nationalist quest for order and mapped boundaries'.[22] Throughout the 18th and 19th century, colonial encounters led to a need to 'categorize' and 'understand' foreign cultures, resulting in an explosion of natural history, ethnological and archeological museums, all steeped very much in Orientalist fervor. Aboriginal Australian writers have referred to 'scientific colonialism' which museums and anthropologists have promoted so far and contend that cultural colonialism continues to control the representation of aboriginal culture, even today.[23] Museums in the West with large oriental collections still struggle with questions of ownership, repatriation and representation as their history and evolution are inextricably interwoven with that of the colonial empires.

In the context of, (though not limited to) Sri Lanka, the evolution of museums must essentially be understood against this backdrop of colonialism and struggle for independence. Royal Asiatic Society was instrumental in vying for a permanent structure for the cultural artifacts collected by colonial excavations by the 1850s. Colombo Museum was thus established in 1877, as a link in a series of colonial museums opened by British administrators in South Asia, such as the Indian Museum Calcutta and Raffles Museum Singapore (now National Museum). Colombo Museum's mission was clearly defined by 1872, when it was first proposed to the island's legislative council, as 'a scientific teaching institution' with the scope of 'natural history, antiquities and industrial products'. Furthermore, it was noted as 'a response to clearly expressed and urgent desire of the "persons of all classes"'.[24]

Similarly, archaeological surveys began in India and Ceylon in the 1860s and by 1871, work on Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa had led to photography of principal structures in Ceylon. By 1890, the Department of Archeology was established. There is a mention of a 'local museum' to house the 'curious' antiquities, that had survived the ravages of time and vandalism.[25]

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22 Gordon Fyfe and Sharon Macdonald, 'Theorizing Museum/ Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World', (1996), p. 7.

23 Moira G. Simpson, Making representations: Museums in the post-colonial era, Routledge, 2012. p. 1.

24 P.H.D.H. De Silva, ed., '1877-1977 One Hundred Years: Centenary Souvenir of Colombo Museum', 2nd Edition, (2000), p. 12, p. 39.

25 www.archaeology.gov.lk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=54&Itemid=54&lang=en

The personal involvement of Sir W H Gregory, the Governor of Ceylon in establishing the Colombo museum, along with the many battles he fought with the Colonial Office for an allocation of rupees 50,000 is well documented. The remarks he has made on the matter are worth dwelling on, as they may foreshadow the articulation of a national identity Sri Lanka is at the moment trying to redefine. Speaking of his pet project Gregory observes at the Legislative Council, "It was strange that nothing of the kind have been previously attempted, and yet all our other colonies united could not furnish such a collection of objects of such varied interest as Ceylon". [26] Upon its establishment, the Colombo Museum, thus became a crystallized articulation of a certain identity framework for Ceylon and its people. The colonial gaze which admired and exotified Buddhist archeological finds thus laid the foundation for defining Ceylon as a 'Buddhist' country, a feature which found its way into the modern day constitution of Sri Lanka. In his paper 'Shared Culture and Heritage for Conflict Resolution: A South Asian Perspective' Seneviratne refers to this very point as he writes that 'It is colonialism's imaging the world beyond its metropolitan base that gave rise to new forms of conflict based on imagined identities. The sum total of this was, as Romila Thapar notes, the subsequent development of "exclusionist nationalism" in South Asia.

If archaeology provided 'scientific' backing of constructing such imagined identities, then museums became their public articulation. Thus, a mutually reinforcing dynamic developed between the nationalist struggle and the fields of archaeology, history and museology. As the colonizers left, the local administrators took over. Dr. P E P Deraniyagala, the first Sri Lankan to become the director of the Colombo Museum, oversaw the enactment of the National Museums Ordinance in 1942 which converted the Colombo museum into a 'National' museum. The ordinance also allowed the establishment of branch museums in the provinces. National Museums were established in Kandy, Jaffna and Ratnapura and were brought under a new government department, called the 'Department of National Museums'. Colombo museum, which had a collection of objects numbering 804 at its establishment, expanded to over 94,000 objects by 1977.

By 1940, due to unprecedented number of excavations and findings, the Archaeological Department started establishing their own exhibitions and collections in 'Puravidu Bhavana' (Archaeological Mansion), in Anuradhapura. Until then, the more elegant findings were handed over to the Colombo Museum and others were stored in archaeological laboratories while 'some others were haphazardly heaped at sites where they were found'.[27] The department then changed its previous policy of centralized museums into site museums, where archaeological findings were exhibited in their own original locations. Thus, evolved a plethora of site museums administered by the Department of Archaeology spread across the country. For reasons which are not quite clear, the Jaffna museum that was handed over to the Department of Archaeology from the Department of National Museums, and by 1970 a museum was established in the Eastern Province. Currently, there are 17 Archaeological Museums and 10 information centers according to the department website. By 1980, the Central Cultural Fund was established as an independent government organization working in tandem with the Department of Archaeology and also establishing its own museums.

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26 P.H D.H. De Silva, ed., 1877-1977 One Hundred Years: Centenary Souvenir of Colombo Museum, 2nd Edition, (2000), p 32.

27 www.archaeology.gov.lk

In the post-colonial period, the orientalist identities invented by the colonial administrators were continued by the nationalists. Seneviratne notes, 'in the post-colonial period, an inward-looking ideology of identities based on parochial views of the past was fostered due to political expediency'.[28] Due to the predominance of heritage, archaeology and history, most government run museums ended up being archaeological and history museums. Most museum publications and their articles illustrate the overpowering nationalist framework within which the disciplines now exist.[29] Some of the key sentiments commonly found in these articles are:

➤ We have scientific evidence that we had a glorious past unparalleled to anywhere else in the world

➤ Our art, science and technology are far more developed and superior than other countries

➤ Our enemies are threatening to destroy our heritage and we need to protect our heritage

➤ Museums must protect our heritage for our future generations

However, it must be noted that there is ready acknowledgment of Sri Lanka as a multicultural society, even in the earliest writings. In an article titled 'The Role of the Museum in the National Life of Sri Lanka' Dr. H. Weerasinghe writes, "In a multi-racial country like Sri Lanka, the awareness of one another's cultural heritage, with understanding, would go a long way not only to strengthen the ties of mutual relationships but also contribute towards reinforcing the feelings of national solidarity, good will and unity. No institution, other than the museum is capable of fulfilling this national mission, for the museum is an effective instrument of cultural integration."[30] Similarly, in her felicitation message to the centenary celebrations of the Colombo National Musem, Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike writes 'most important, is that it (the museum) serves as a medium of national harmony and international understanding for it is here that all races - local and foreign - meet each other and exchange knowledge."

Interestingly, the centenary publication of the Colombo National Musem also records the acquisition of 'a large stone figure of Durga and a plain stone lingam from Hindu ruins to the north of the town of Anuradhapura' as early as 1907. 1908 records 'a magnificent collection of Hindu bronzes from Siva devales no 1, 2 and 4A from Polonnaruwa'.[31] It further notes, 'this collection of bronzes came to be known as the Polonnaruwa bronzes, consisted of 25 objects, including statues of Siva as Nataraja, Siva with his consort Parvati, statues of the apostles of Siva, namely, Manikka Vachaka-Svami, Chandeswara, Tirugnanasambanda Svami, Sundaramuriti Svami, etc.' This complicates the simplistic understanding that the Colombo museum would have from the beginning indicated a bias towards the display of Sinhala/Buddhist artifacts. However, without locating an exhibition history of the Polonnaruwa bronzes, no conclusion can be arrived at, and at the moment, this level

28 Matthew Liebmann, Archaeology and the postcolonial critique, Rowman Altamira (publisher), 2008, p. 178.
29 I refer to articles published in many volumes of 'Kauthukagaara', a serial published by the National Museum Colombo.
30 P.H.D.H. De Silva, ed., 1877-1977 One Hundred Years: Centenary Souvenir of Colombo Museum, 2nd Edition, (2000), p. 129 -130.
31 Ibid., p. 50

of detail is simply beyond the scope of the study. Today, the Polonnaruwa bronzes hold pride of place in the Colombo National Musem and are prominently displayed.

A safe observation to make is that museum collections, true to the multicultural nature of the island, was indeed diverse in its cultural idiom. However, in the attention and priority it received within the museum (for example, the Islamic community, the plantation Tamil community) would have been vastly different due to the focus on ancient archaeology. What's obvious is that the history of more recent communities in the island, who did not have 'archaeological artifacts' from 5th century AD, were not considered 'museum-worthy'. Given the prevalent understanding of a museum as a national institution with an overt mission of communicating 'national identity' in the grand sense of the word, would the day to day utensils of a plantation family be considered worthy of a museum display?

Furthermore, what seemed to have received no attention at all is articulating the people's story, and nurturing a healthy, critical perspective, as well as dealing with difficult histories. Being over focused on an ancient past has led to a neglect of modern history and inclusion of groups who have not left material artifacts that would have survived time. Or the groups who would have inhabited the island more recently. The Independence Memorial Museum, set up in 2008, increased the chronological scope up to the Independence struggle, but is a classic example of being trapped in the nationalist rhetoric that has dominated the post-colonial politics of the island.

On the bright side, India which has had a similar trajectory to that of Ceylon, has produced museums such as the Partition Museum, Amritsar (October 2016) and Remember Bhopal Museum (December 2014) in the last five years. This is perhaps the best indication of the potential to revisit the past and re-interpret it with new eyes, in this part of the world, and these museums can be exemplary case studies of the paradigm shift within the museum discourse.

6. Understanding the institutional landscape

As mentioned already, due to their very nature, museums have been the exclusive domain of state institutions in Sri Lanka. Today, there are a few private museums run by individual trusts, social organisations, religious institutions etc., but the majority still remain under state departments. The following is an attempt at collating an overview of museum administration in Sri Lanka.

State sector

Main state organisations

There are three main state actors administering museums in Sri Lanka, namely,

- ➢ Department of National Museums (DoNM), Ministry of Internal Affairs, Wayamba Development and Cultural Affairs
- ➢ Department of Archaeology (DoA), Ministry of Education
- ➢ Central Cultural Fund (CCF), Ministry of Education

Other state organisations

- ➢ University and school museums
- ➢ Military museums (Army, Navy, Air Force museums)
- ➢ Other departments (Railway Department, Central Bank, Postal Department, Forest Department, Wildlife Department etc.)

Private sector and civil society

- ➢ Religious institutions
- ➢ NGOs and civil society groups
- ➢ Private trusts and other private organisations

Out of the total of 100 museums listed in the inventory, an overwhelming majority is administered by state sector organisations.
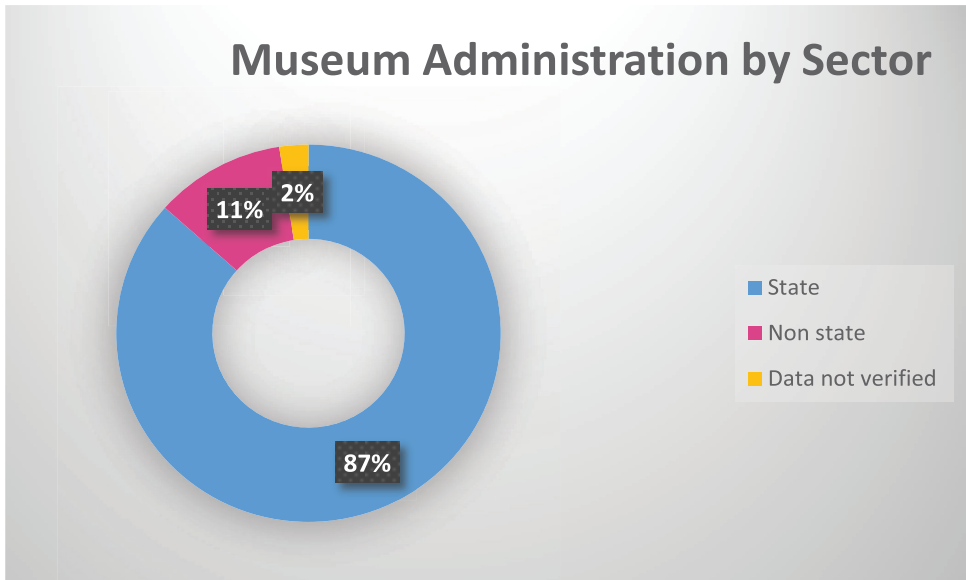
Museum Administration by Sector

- State
- Non state
- Data not verified

2% · 11% · 87%

Figure 1: Museum administration by sector

However, one can safely conclude that the private sector and civil society do not see museums as their domain of engagement. This may be an understanding that could be challenged if museums are thought of differently. Though it is clear that all over the world, most museums are not-for-profit institutions heavily subsidized by the government, given the context of growing tourism (both local and foreign), small museums can be established as part of bigger commercial ventures. Moreover, although the potential of civil society to utilize museums as a mode of educational engagement exists, the old school understanding of a museum as a large and complex organization housing encyclopaedic collections only managed by the state has kept other organisations from venturing into museum making. As Sri Lanka is yet to discover small-scale community museums as financially feasible and administratively manageable ventures that can add value to social change processes, a development in this front maybe slow, but the benefits it brings to local communities and their economies may justify the promotion of the concept.

Museum management, funding sources, and ticketing

The three main state sector players, DoNM, DoA, and CCF each manages more than one museum. In fact, they centrally administer what can be called a 'chain of museums'. DoNM manages 10 museums, DoA manages 17 museums and 10 information centres, CCF manages six museums. DoNM has over 400 staff working in the 10 museums and the central administrative unit which is the DoNM. This already exhibits a tendency towards these three organisations being rather bureaucratic and centralized in their procedures. The dynamic between these three organisations is an important consideration when engaging in museums or heritage in general. Though DoNM is the institution that has explicit focus solely on museums, CCF tends to manage and design museums with a vision of on-site heritage management. DoA has a much broader framework explained

in annex 5. All three departments are funded by the central government, but compared to DoNM and DoA, CCF enjoys a relative freedom to receive funds and expertise from collaborators. Thus, CCF remains the strongest institution in terms of financial strength. For instance, most CCF museums are designed in partnership with foreign governments (Sigiriya with Japan, Maritime Archaeology with the Netherlands) and tend to reflect a higher overall ranking than other museums.

The philosophies of the three organisations is best understood by looking at their ticket pricing. DoA museums are free of charge for anyone. It rests on the idea of public interest organization serving many. DoNM museums charge tickets but are very nominal for both local and foreign visitors. CCF museums are the most expensive, and the difference between local and foreign tickets is substantial. CCF however, combines tourism and heritage management on one, and has successfully found a profit-making model.

The figures below give a breakdown of ticket pricing at two museums, offering a comparison. The Polonnaruwa Museum is managed by the CCF while Kandy National Museum is managed by the DoNM.
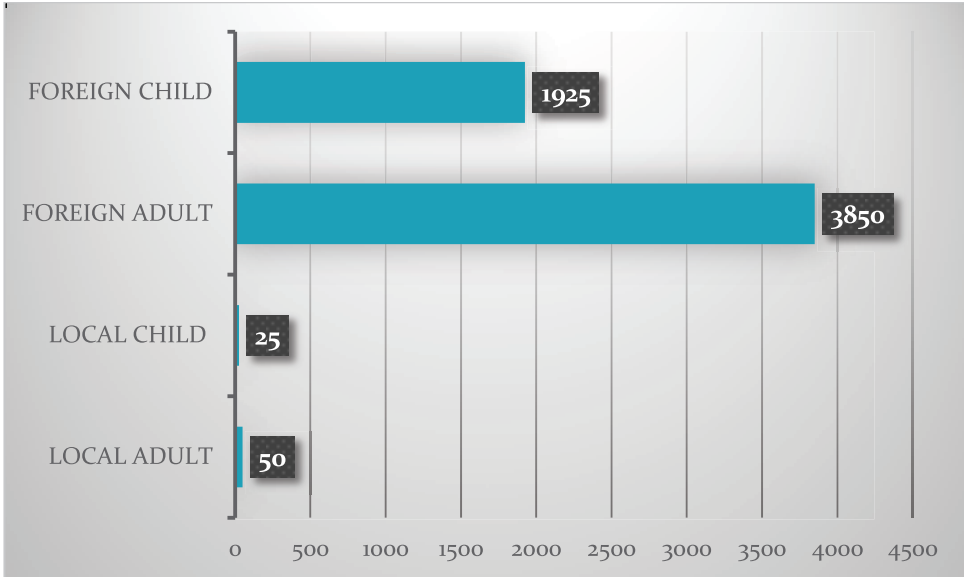
Figure 2: Ticket prices in LKR, Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre (managed by CCF)
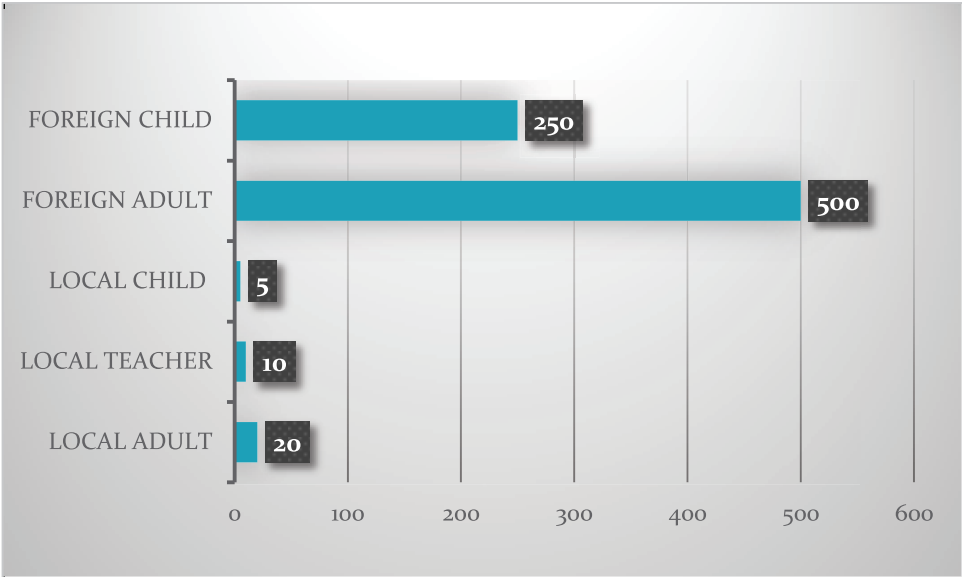
Figure 3: Ticket prices in LKR, Kandy National Museum (managed by DoNM)
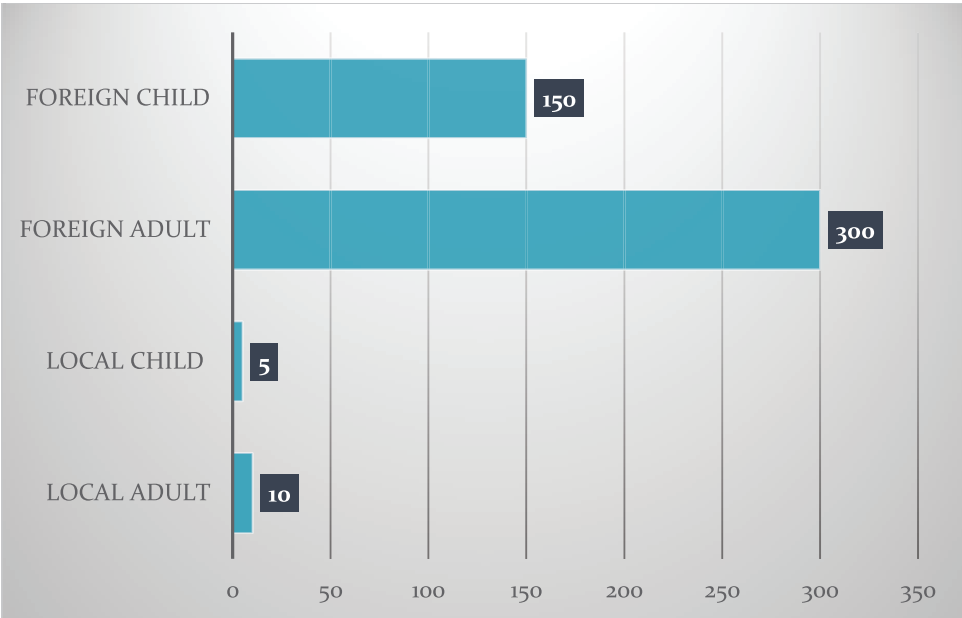
Figure 4: Ticket prices in LKR, Independence Memorial Museum (managed by DoNM)
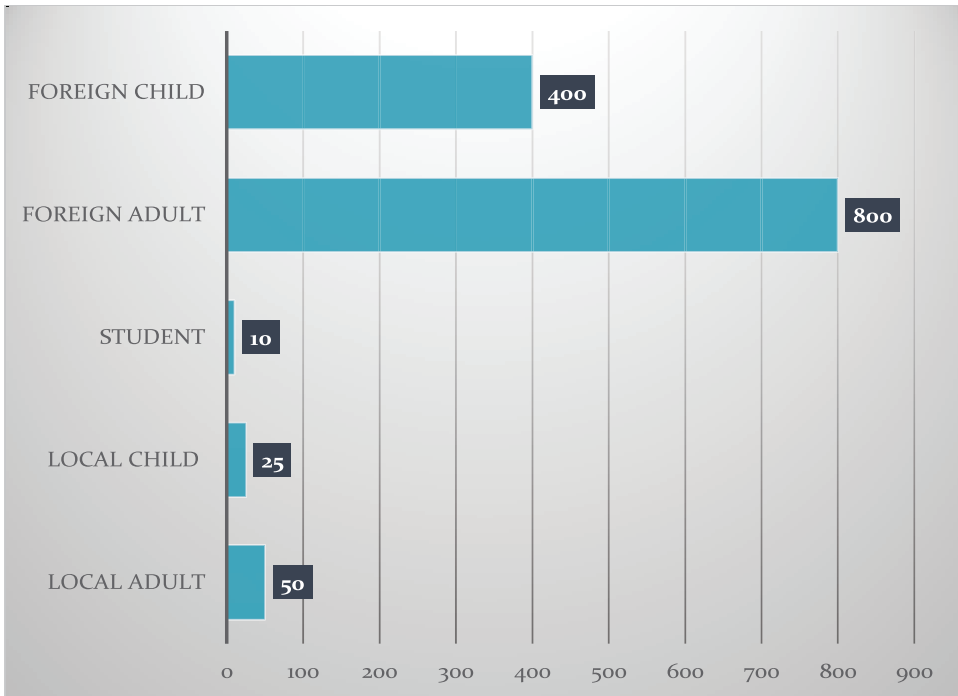
Figure 5: Ticket prices in LKR, Martin Wickramasinghe Museum (managed by Martin Wickramasinghe Trust)

The following is a comparison of six museums in terms of pricing of tickets. DoA is not included as the entrance for DoA museums is completely free. Two other privately-run museums are also included for comparison.
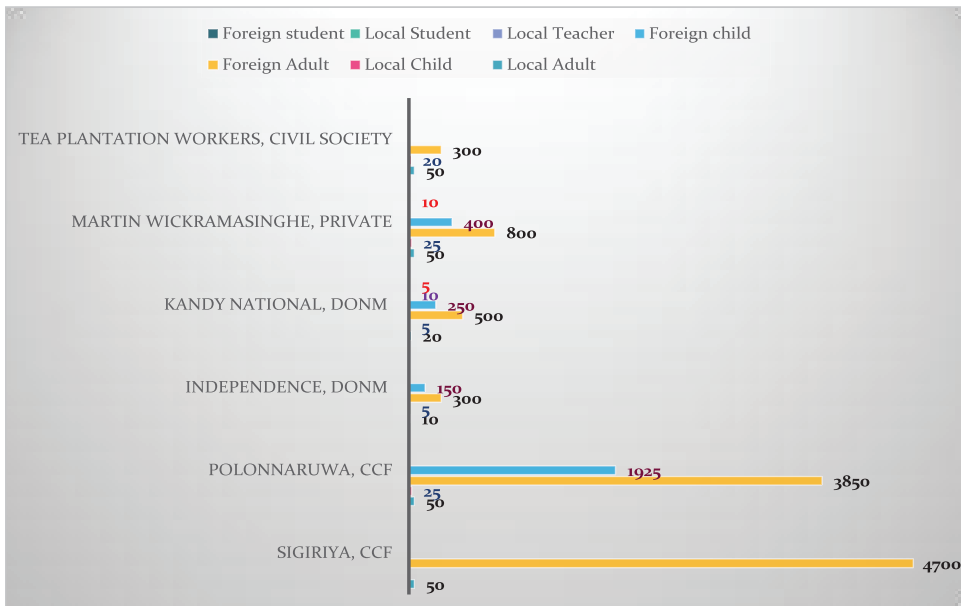
Figure 6: Comparison of ticket pricing of 6 museums in LKR

	Sigiriya Museum, Sigiriya	Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum, Polonnaruwa	Independence Museum, Colombo	Kandy National Museum, Kandy	Martin Wickramasinghe Museum, Koggala	Tea Plantation Workers Museum, Gampola
Responsible Authority	CCF	CCF	DoNM	DoNM	Private Museum	Civil Society Organisation
Local Adult	50	50	10	20	50	50
Local Child		25	5	5	25	20
Foreign Adult	4700	3850	300	500	800	300
Foreign child		1925	150	250	400	
Local Teacher				10		
Local Student				5	10	
Foreign student	Discount available					

Table 1: Ticket prices (LKR) in a chart

However, to compare CCF tickets out of context gives a distorted picture. At Sigiriya, the ticket (USD 30) includes not just the museum but the Sigiriya fortress as well. In most of their sites, CCF combines the museum ticket with the heritage site entrance ticket. The CCF website records that discounts are available for foreign students upon furnishing a student ID card. There is also a discount for SAARC countries and the cost is 50% of the foreign ticket. The sites are extremely popular tourist destinations and attract a high number of visitors, with seasonal ups and downs.

DoA's policy of free entrance with a donation box seems the most wonderful policy in terms of public service. However, unlike in the West where museums have diversified their income base, the DoA remains dependent solely on government funds and struggles with decreasing budgets. This policy has in some ways contributed to a low level of maintenance in DoA museums.

The low ticket pricing of DoNM has been both praised and criticized in visitor feedback books. While the low fee has enabled all strata of society accessing the museum, it also has its down side when considering the labour-intensive effort of managing and maintaining a museum. For instance, a visitor from Colombo to the Kandy National Museum on 28/10/2011 notes: 'This museum is extremely important to our country. Kindly consider increasing the price of the ticket.'[32]

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32 Field notes, 23/05/2017

High ticket costs seemed to have pressurized certain museums to deliver more. For instance, the Sigiriya Museum was one of the only two museums that offered something interactive to its visitors. When asked why they thought of introducing drawing activities for children, the education promotion officer mentioned that many foreign visitors complain that they have not got value for their money and therefore given feedback to the museum to offer something more. Due to the demand pressure created by an overwhelmingly touristic audience, the museum has introduced colouring activities and temporary exhibitions with dedicated staff. Many visitors seemed to have taken part in the 'Complete the Lion activity' and their work was displayed, as seen in figure 8. The researcher questioned the officer-in-charge about the lack of drawings from local students displayed on the wall, to which he replied: 'Local kids are too shy to take part in these kinds of activities. It's mostly for the foreigners.'[33]

Thus, the high prices of tickets have also forced the museums to reconsider what they are offering, consider the feedback given by visitors seriously, and take remedial action. What it has also led to very clearly is a segregation of audiences as foreign and local, as implied in the comment of the education officer regarding local students. The same amount of attention is perhaps not given to engage local school children, as there seems to be an implicit understanding that the 'activities' are for 'foreigners'. CCF museums seemed to segregate their audiences and treat them differently, as also observed by the facilities available to them, for example, different toilets for local and foreign guests.

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33 *Field notes, 2/8/2017*

Image 3: Drawing board at the Sigiriya Museum

Image 4: Visitors giving feedback on the mirror wall

7. Mapping Sri Lanka's museums

The preliminary desk study conducted led to a compilation of a museum inventory which indicated over 90 museums in Sri Lanka in 2017. Tewnty-five museums were visited by the researcher during the course of field work undertaken for the baseline survey in Colombo, Kandy, Jaffna, Trincomalee, Galle, Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, Kattankudy, and Koggala, covering the Western, Northern, North Central, Southern and Eastern Provinces.

Kindly refer annex 9 for the map.

The 25 museums were also chosen to represent different sectors. Fifteen of them were state-run while the other 10 were non-state museums.
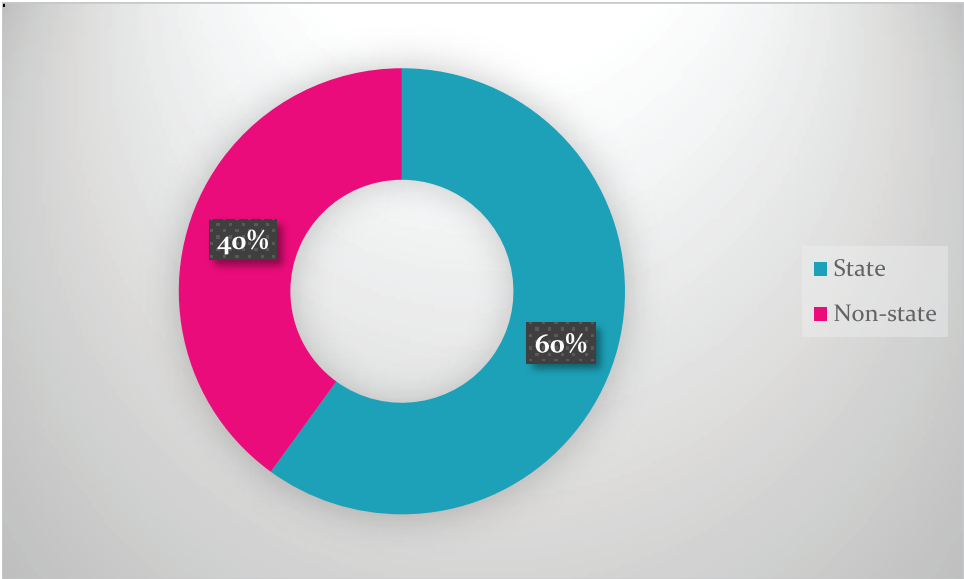
Figure 7: Sectoral analysis of museums visited

The 25 museums were also selected to represent different management structures as illustrated in the following figures:

Figure 8: Administration of museums visited (Total 25)
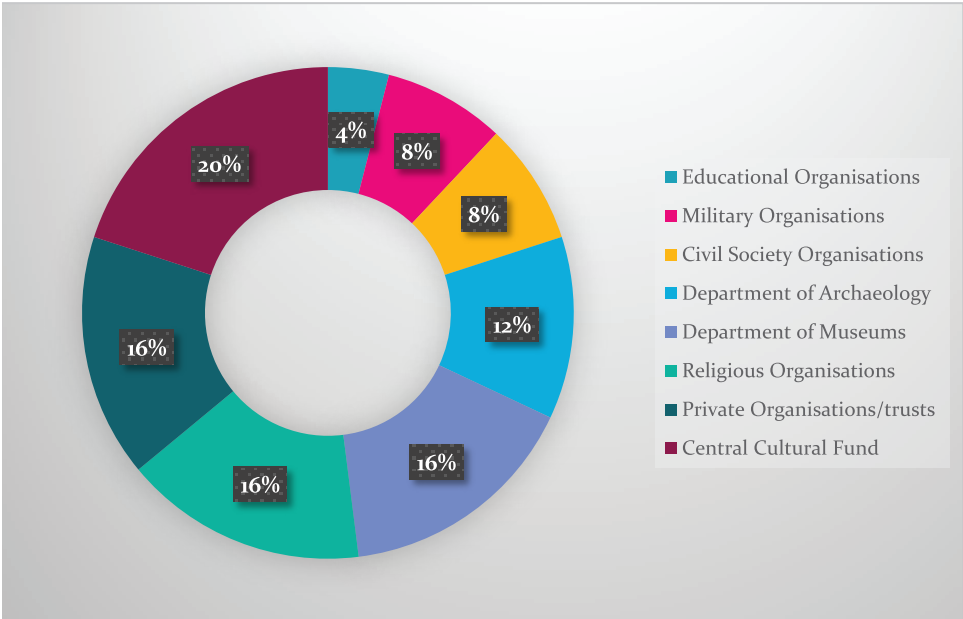
Figure 9: Museums visited, by administration
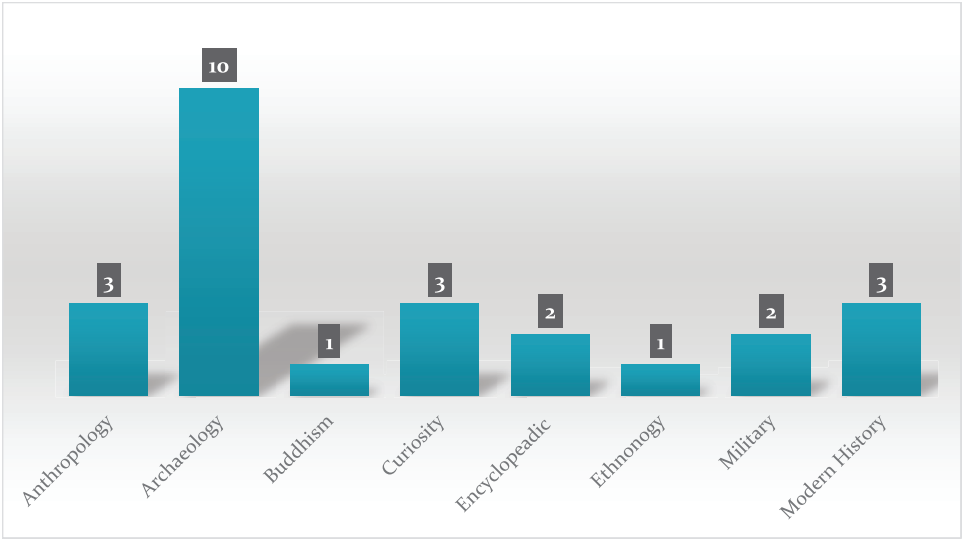
Figure 10: Typology of museums by subject domain

As represented in the sample of museums visited, the majority of Sri Lanka's museums are focused on Archaeology. This is partially connected to the colonial beginnings as explained in Section 4, 'Evolution of museums in Sri Lanka'.

The Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre is actually not a museum, but was included in the places visited during the field study due to its relevance to conflict history, its location and potential for future engagement. This was the closest that came to resembling a memory museum, though the information centre is not in a position where it could be referred to as a museum in the full sense of the word. Thus, as a baseline, the number of museums on memory would actually be 0.

8. Baseline evaluation

The evaluation of the 25 museums was done in three tiers. First, a framework was developed to evaluate the museums in a quantitative way in order to establish a baseline. The 25 museums were ranked and baseline values were established for each museum under each criterion.

Secondly, information sheets were developed for the 25 museums, giving more qualitative information as well as key data regarding the outreach, theme, and human resources.

In the case study section, a selected museum is presented for narrative analysis for a more qualitative and nuanced understanding.

The framework for evaluation was set up by identifying six different criteria under which all 25 museums could be evaluated:

1. Accessibility: How centrally located is the museum? Is it easy to find? Do people visit the museum daily?

2. Narrative strength: Does the museum tell a compelling story about a chosen subject? Is the theme clear? Does it engage the audience? Does it challenge them to think differently about the topic presented?

3. Display quality: Is the display of artefacts/the exhibition of an acceptable quality? Are the labels in place? Is the context given through explanatory texts? Are the lighting and other technical aspects in order? Is the display too crowded? Are the artefacts presented in a way that is logical and interesting? Is the museum building in a good condition?

4. Interactivity/pedagogy: Is the display interactive? Is it using modern technology, beyond that of artefacts, models, replicas, photographs, and texts? Are there educational programmes available?

5. PR and promotions: Does the museum have any supplementary material such as leaflets, CDs, DVDs, etc.? Does it have a souvenir shop? Does it have an event calendar? Does it have a webpage? Is the museum on social media?

6. Relevance to reconciliation: Does the topic covered by the museum have any relevance to the post-war context? Does is deal with the memory of conflict? Does it deal with the recent war, political conflict or a difficult social topic?

A scale of 5 to 1 was developed based on the above criteria and annex 6 explains what each of these points indicate.

A ranking on the 25 museums was done according to this scale, and an overall ranking was developed, as well ranking under separate criteria. The overall ranking can be found in annex 4.

Accessibility is the best performance criteria with 16 out of 25 museums receiving either good or excellent ratings. Most of the state-run museums are usually centrally located, or located within heritage sites or popular tourist destinations. For example, the museums neighbouring the Temple of the Tooth Relic, and in Polonnaruwa, Sigiriya, and Galle are open on most days except public holidays and record high numbers of daily visitors. Refer to annex 8 for comparison of outreach.

Only two museums received poor or very poor ratings in terms of accessibility - one for being located inside a tea estate with poor road conditions and the other being located inside a navy base with security concerns and public access difficulties. The Tea Plantation Workers' Museum is managed by a civil society organization and the Hood's Tower Museum is managed by the Sri Lanka Navy.

The Martin Wickramasinghe Museum, Koggala, though not situated in a main town, also drew remarkable numbers of visitors. The fact that the work of Martin Wickramasinghe is in the school curricular drew many school groups. The Museum curator admits that though the numbers fluctuate, there have been days with nearly 7,000 visitors. However, there were no supporting documentation available at the museum for this claim.

Narrative strength was a criterion that many museums scored rather poorly on, given that in Sri Lanka the focus remained on collection and preservation rather than education and recreation. Very little attention has been given to story-telling or engaging the visitor. Of the museums visited, Sigiriya Museum, the International Buddhist Museum, Kandy and the Mini-museum for Raja the Tusker Kandy scored four out of five. In these three cases, the thematic focus/the story was clear and logically and precisely articulated in a convincing manner. For example, Sigiriya focused on the story of a rocky outcrop in Central Sri Lanka and traced its historical layers in a creative manner, using elements of architecture, lit displays, models, artefacts, and graphic recreations. The text was clear and concise and consistently trilingual. The International Buddhist Museum brought together many stories of Buddhism around the world. Unlike Sigiriya which had a cohesive linear narrative, the museum allowed many stories to collate into one. The main story of the museum is the spread of Buddhism around the world, and the feat was accomplished by allowing 13 different countries to present their Buddhist practices in different galleries. Most of the artefacts presented were replicas and had no archaeological value. However, a visitor walking through the museum had no qualms about authenticity. The museum used audio-visuals in an attractive manner to tell a compelling story about Buddhism beyond Sri Lanka. The Mini Museum of Raja the Tusker, was the smallest museum included in the study. It is a small room next to the Temple of the Tooth, using simple photographs of Raja's life assembled on the wall, along with the taxidermied figure of Raja. However, the emotional element and the unusual topic made the mini-museum a powerful memorial to Raja. While a few museums ranked average in terms of story-telling, most museums lacked clarity and creativity in their articulation. Inevitably, the power of the museum to engage the visitor, challenging them to probe deeper into a particular field of study and to think differently, were diminished.

Display quality was another area where there was much variety. Only five museums ranked well. Many tended to be collection heavy and seemed to have lacked curation support. Many of the site museums belonging to the Department of Archaeology also had poor display quality and maintenance issues. CCF museums and the renovated DoNM museums showcased technical improvement of their display, such as object placement and lighting. However, most displays lacked interactivity and creativity in their presentation. In terms of the use of technology, most museums tended to be traditional, with only a few incorporating audio-visual material in to their displays. Again, CCF museums scored better, and their Sigiriya museum was the only museum to have an interactive touch screen, although this was only to access general information. Though internal details were not officially available to the researcher, most museums indicated a struggle for finances in order to improve their displays.

Interactivity and pedagogy was again an area where all museums performed poorly. Most displays remained traditional, using objects, artefacts, photographs, replicas and models supported by text panels to provide information. Few museums had audio-visuals. The Sigiriya museum had a touch screen that worked. The International Buddhist Museum had a touch screen that did not work. The Sigiriya museum had a drawing activity for children - 'Complete the Lion'. The Orr's Hill Army Museum had an interactive game of rifle shooting for which the visitors had to pay extra.

CCF and DoA currently fall within the Ministry of Education. Most CCF museums and the Colombo National Museum had school and educational programmes such as guided tours, monthly lectures, art competitions, debate competitions, rehabilitation camps, teachers' workshops and special programmes for international days such as Earth Day, Cultural Day, and Museum Day.

Though all museums indicated that they offer guided tours, it was only three museums where the researcher could verify guided tours. The Martin Wickramasinghe Museum, Hood's Tower Navy Museum and Orr's Hill Army Museum all had dedicated educators/ museum guides taking the visitors through the museum. Thus, private and military museums seemed ahead of other state museums in offering guided tours. At more touristic museums such as Sigiriya and Polonnaruwa, the tourist guides took the place of museum educators. When questioned why there is no guidance for local visitors, an officer responded that the locals prefer to go through the museum themselves as they are often familiar with the context. Other officers also indicated that school teachers often educate their students themselves. Thus, except in the case of one museum, there were actually no guided tours, though every museum claimed to do so. Personal observation of the researcher is that museum professionals have mixed feelings regarding the role of the museum educator as the role was understood more as one of a glorified tourist guide. Though technically, DoNM and CCF both have designated Education Officers/ Education Promotion Officers their roles often remained vague and extremely general. When questioned of the duties they performed, they listed museum management, maintenance and secretarial work such as keeping visitor counts etc. Thus, though some of the museums do have some educational programming, the quality of these programmes may suggest room for improvement.

It must be noted that assessing the quality of the educational programmes in a systematic way was beyond the scope of this study. The impression gained is that the plethora of activities are close to traditional one-way communication formats. For instance, though it is commendable for a museum to tackle a community issue, the case of Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum running a rehabilitation camp for drug addicted youth, is a sign that the activities may not be thought through. When asked what the rehabilitation camp was like, the answer was rather vague 'we try to get them to appreciate the value of our history.'

The main reason for weak pedagogy within museums is perhaps a larger issue pertaining to the Sri Lankan education system in general, which is rather didactic and one-way in its communication. Though Sri Lankan museums seem to be aware of the educational value of museums, the pedagogy available to them seem extremely traditional and outdated. The few training programmes that are available for Sri Lankan museum professionals are predominantly on conservation, and the researcher was unable to find anyone who had received formal training in museum education during the course of the research.

Public relations and promotions remains an area that has not received much attention from the museum professionals. Again, CCF museums produced better quality leaflets, as did the International Buddhist Museum. Most private museums had a better web presence. The Ceylon Tea Museum, which scored rather low in most other aspects, had a full-fledged website helpful for the visitor. CCF, DoNM and DoA all suffered from its central management, which doesn't really allow each museum to have independent websites, leading to extremely poor quality of information available online for visitors. Out of the three departments, CCF runs its own Facebook pages for each location/museum, thus scoring a three for PR in the baseline ranking. The Facebook page announces some of the events and photographs. Again, similar to museum education, promoting and marketing museums has room for much improvement.

Relevance to reconciliation had to be evaluated within a rather broad parameter. Since it was difficult to find museums that dealt with memory issues in the manner in which it is framed in the West, this criterion looked at several aspects to set a value for each museum: Did the museum deal with display artefacts connected to the civil war, political violence, or political history in general? Is the museum recognizing diversity of its population, or promoting multiple narratives? Is the museum located in a war- or conflict-affected area? When evaluating according to the above criteria, it was obvious that there are no 'memory museums' in Sri Lanka. However, the study can identify three types of museums that are present within Sri Lanka that are contributing to reconciliation in both positive and negative ways.

1. *Military museums:* All existing museums that dealt with the memory of war were military museums, which displayed spoils of war, and propagated a one-sided narration of a military offensive, very much framed within popular and dominant discourses of valour, victory, terrorism, humanitarian cause etc. For example, Orr's Hill Military Museum, which is an open-air museum, displays military weaponry, war vehicles, radio and radar equipment used during the war, and varieties of bombs including a suicide kit worn by female LTTE suicide fighters. The routes

and advances of the last military offensive were explained using maps and the final interactive element involved trying out rifle-shooting. The Orr's Hill Museum ranks rather high in overall ranking of the museums, as it is rather successful in engaging a curious visitor, even more so a younger audience. However, the museum leaves little space for reflection and has a single narrative that does not invite much critical thinking or room for contestation. Administrators of the Hood Tower Navy Museum, which is set up in a similar fashion to the Orr's Hill Army Museum, conceded that they were aware that school children should not be visiting the museum, as it does not deliver a message that 'brings people together'.[34] The museum displays spoils from sea tigers and a land vehicle used by Charles Anthony, Velupillai Prabhakaran's eldest son. Despite the open admission of its administrators, school children continue to visit the museum, and the only effective mechanism for control that has been enforced is limiting the entry of school children to no more than 600 students a day. Thus, in terms of relevance to reconciliation, the military museums must be acknowledged as the dominant players at the moment.

2. *Historical dialogue museums:* At another level, there are other museums such as the Independence Memorial Museum Colombo, Archaeological Museum and Information Centre Polonnaruwa, Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle, and Sigiriya Museum that contribute to a broader idea or issues connected to reconciliation to varying degrees. Polonnaruwa has a rather direct connection to the history of ethnic relationships, and is thus presented as an important case study for historical dialogue. Galle attempts to position Sri Lanka as a historically multicultural island nation, and highlights ongoing connections with the rest of the world. Sigiriya tries to trace its history to a point where current identities become irrelevant, thus contributing to more inclusive narratives. Colombo contributes in much more complicated fashion due to the limitations of its narrative framework but has the potential to be a place of historical dialogue. Thus, this category is a mixed bag of museums but definitely touches upon central discourses on identity and history that lie at the root of present-day conflicts.

3. *Alternative history museums:* Even in their nascent stage, alternative history museums are promising in their contribution to the discourse on identity conflict in Sri Lanka. Tea Plantation Workers Museum, Kattankudy Heritage Museum are both articulating minority perspectives, and thus deserve attention. However, both museums remain elementary in their articulation and may need external support in improving not just technical aspects of their exhibitions, but also their narration, especially in how they engage with dominant discourses and transcend parochial victim identities. Although the Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre is hardly a museum, the baseline included it as a site which has potential to be an alternative history museum or a memory museum.

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34 *Notes taken during interview, Rear Admiral Travis Sinniah, 15/06/17*

Military	Historical Dialogue	Alternative History
➢ Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee ➢ Naval and Maritime Museum, Trincomalee ➢ Hoods Tower Museum, Trincomalee	➢ Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum ➢ National Museum Colombo ➢ Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle ➢ Martin Wickramasinghe Museum of Folk Culture, Koggala ➢ International Buddhist Museum	➢ Kattankudy Heritage Museum, Kathankudy ➢ Tea Plantation Workers Museum, Gampola ➢ Jaffna Archaeological Museum ➢ Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre

Figure 11: Three museum categories with implications to reconciliation and memory work

In a summary, the highest value scored by a museum on the six criteria are:

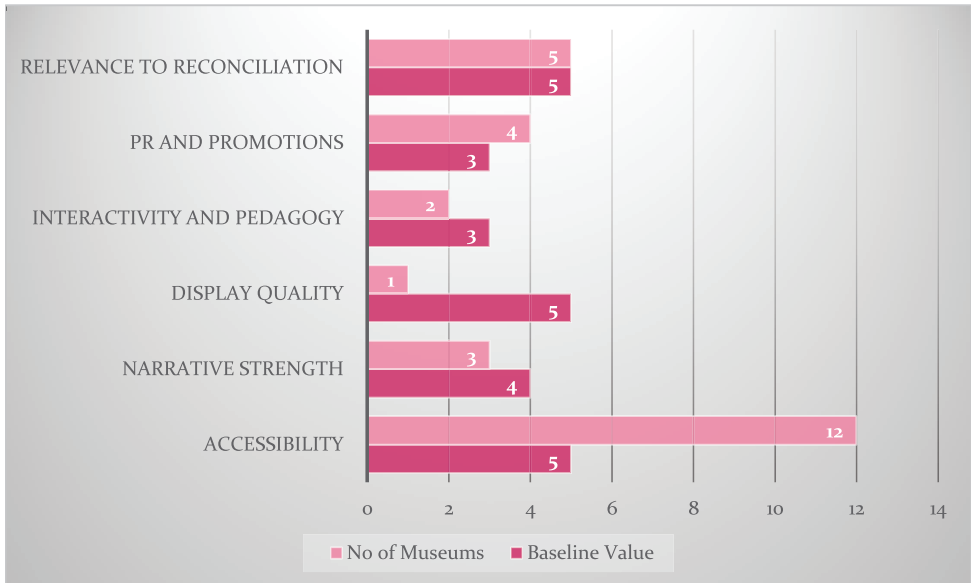| Criteria	Baseline value	Quality indication	No. of museums that achieved the highest score
Accessibility	5	Excellent	12
Narrative strength	4	Good	3
Display quality	5	Excellent	1
Interactivity and pedagogy	3	Average	2
PR and promotions	3	Average	4
Relevance to reconciliation	5	High	5

Table 2: Highest scores received by museums

Figure 12: Highest baselines scores

There were a number of poor performers in each criterion, which is even more valuable in understanding the gaps. The following graph illustrates the number of museums scoring below average marked by 3.
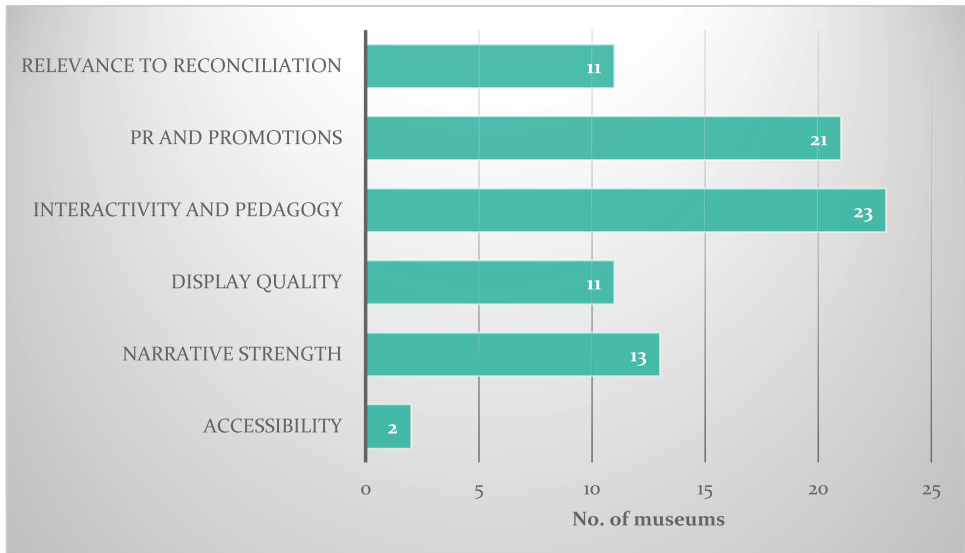

Figure 13: Number of museums performing below average

Figure 14: Average scores of 25 museums

9. Key insights and observations

As Romila Thapar pointed out for India, Sri Lanka has been slow in reinventing the museums answerable to the present and the future requirements. Sri Lankan museums still seem saddled with the nationalist rhetoric ironically rooted in colonial wonderment, displaying rather stoic, outdated, and often exclusionary curatorial vision. Thus, a museum is popularly understood as a bastion of essentialised 'culture', leading the museums to be archaic, aloof, less interactive and disconnected from the day-to-day cultural realities of the people.

Sri Lankan museums tend to reflect and reiterate the dominant identity politics found in state-structures, education, mass media etc. This is seen through the poor conditions or lack of museums reflecting other cultures, other histories and lack of curatorial vision for an inclusive future even when the collections themselves are vastly inclusive and rich. Few Sri Lankan museum contextualizes the island in a larger regional or global context, creating the impression that museums are solely to represent 'national' culture and nothing beyond the island's boundaries. Thus, there is an urgent need to reinvent the museums in the island to be more relevant, inclusive, futuristic, and global in their outlook.

Exceptions do exist, such as the Colombo National Museum and the Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle. These exceptions deserve careful study and highlighting. However, such instances where multiculturalism is highlighted over nationalism have taken place where strong individuals with an inclusive vision took the driving seat of the state bodies. As seen in the case of the Galle, once these individuals left their positions, such visionary changes were also discarded, or overwritten again by more dominant nationalist rhetoric.

When reading the Administrative Reports of the Colombo National Museum, one cannot 'label' Colombo National Museum as an institution of exclusive Sinhala nationalism. It is an institution that has gone through much change, and again, for the better. Though it still carries a huge burden of being a 'national' museum, it has tried to recognize and represent the diverse communities in Sri Lanka. The Statue of Durga from 8th century has been moved to the entrance lobby, though still placed behind the Tholuvila Buddha. Main galleries display Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic heritage though the prominence given can be argued. Museum professionals are aware of required changes and are open to making the Colombo National Museum a more interactive and inclusive space. This needs to be recognized as an important, incremental process in which 'the nation' is in fact being redefined. As slow and painful as it may appear, there is indeed a tacit understanding that the museum needs to contribute to and address the current needs of Sri Lanka.

When trying to understand the context more closely, a host of interconnected issues surface, which hinder Sri Lankan museums in reaching their potential as modern centres of learning, contributing positively to its economic, social, and cultural development. I have tried to categorized them under four large clusters, illustrated below.
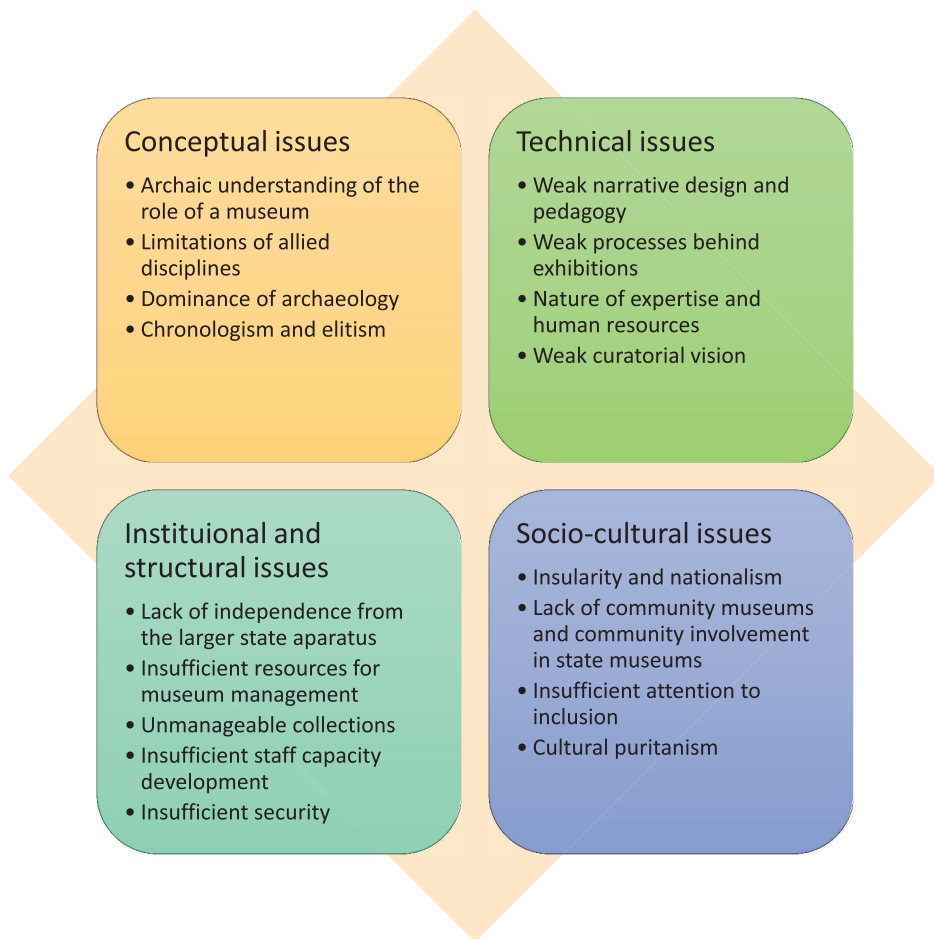
Figure 15: Clustering of issues faced by museums in Sri Lanka

Conceptual issues

Archaic understanding of the role of a museum

For a host of interrelated reasons, it seems that the Sri Lankan museums still espouse an outdated concept of a museum as a thing of the past, where its role seems to be limited to safeguarding historical objects from a 'glorious past'. As seen in the Sinhala colloquial term *'Katu Ge'*, the museum is reduced, simplified, and fixed to being a storehouse and a bastion of monolithic tradition. This is not restricted to the professionals in the field. Comments by local visitors found in guest feedback books consistently congratulate museums for 'protecting our cultural heritage.' Though both the public and the museum may appear to fulfil each other in this respect, it is a comfort zone the museums urgently need to step out of. When analyzed closely we understand it is not an anomaly, it is just what museums the world over have gone through, especially colonial museums

revamped by the nationalist movements. However, redefining the role of a museum in a modern context, as an institution that responds to the present and the future, through the resources of the past, is a pre-requisite paradigm shift to the progress of our museums.

Limitations of allied disciplines

The limitations of the museums in Sri Lanka are also interlocked in the limitations of the academic disciplines of archaeology, anthropology, culture studies, history and art history.[35] Unravelling the deep-rooted framework of 'narration of nation' within which our museums operate also requires change in corresponding discourses in these mentioned disciplines. Without such revision of perspectives, the nature of museums may only undergo superficial technological quick fixes rather than the much-needed paradigm shift. This requires rethinking and adopting a critical distance to our museums and the way in which they have evolved to be what they are today, and asking ourselves which role we want them to play in our society in the future.

Dominance of archaeology

The dominance of archaeology over history, due to 'scientific' precedence has also created its own dynamic. While in several instances, archaeology has contributed positively to historical dialogue by establishing facts that support more inclusive narratives or challenge commonly-held essentialist narratives, in many instances, archaeology has also remained trapped within its colonial beginnings and nationalist reservations. Executed within a parochial nationalist discourse, archaeology can alarmingly and 'scientifically' delegitimize the present, as seen in the discovery of Buddhist sites in the East Coast of Sri Lanka now predominantly inhabited by Muslims.[36] As a result of the dominance of archaeology, an overwhelming number of museums remain archaeological museums that have evolved little since the colonial past, as opposed to the number of science, natural history, art, or any other form of museum. This has inevitably led to the common understanding that museums are storehouses for archaeological artefacts from the past, and defining their role as custodians of heritage, thereby undermining their potential contribution to the present and the issues thereof.

Chronologism

Stemming from the point above, the overriding obsession with chronologism and periodization in our museums is another fairly common feature. The result of over-chronologising is the liner approach to history and narrative, and rejecting those narratives that do not fit within a certain period.

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35 Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, 'Framing the Ways of Seeing: Workshop and Symposium in Sri Lankan Art History", 17-18/07/2017.
36 Interview, Prof. Jagath Weerasinghe, 14/07/2017

Another common trap is the lack of a subaltern perspective. The museums present simply the story of the ruling elites, through the remaining ruins and artefacts. Anything beyond is only formulated as general civilizational trends, but not as human stories.

Technical issues

Issues of narrative design and pedagogy

Again, poor storytelling stems from the archaic understanding of a museum as a storehouse. Indeed, storehouses only need categorization and labelling at most. They are not meant to engage the public. If the museums are to fulfil their role as public educational institutions, then stronger narratives that can intellectually and emotionally engage different audiences will need to be developed. Furthermore, as reflected in the baseline values, Sri Lankan museums at the moment are weakest in interactivity and pedagogy, as not much attention has been paid to the nature of the audience, and their experience, in designing the exhibitions. Though most museums gather visitor feedback, except for one museum, none had a proper mechanism to process this information, or use the feedback in redesigning their exhibitions.

Weak processes behind exhibitions

Designing processes behind museums are not inclusive processes. In the case of the state museums, a few experts from outside and department professionals are the sole designers of the exhibitions. They do not seem to offer space for audience comments, or experts who are outside the regular circle, even though there are many collaborations with other countries. Officers also mentioned time pressure as a main barrier for designing better exhibitions, (i.e., the president wishes to open the exhibition during Vesak celebrations). In addition, as mentioned elsewhere, monitoring and evaluation processes are weak, if existent at all.

Nature of expertise and human resources

Museums by their very nature, require an extremely wide range of expertise and skills, to design, execute and run them. Not only in terms of specific subject matter, but also craftsmanship needed for model designs, lighting, designing educational material and overall institutional management requires highly skilled staff. At present, being a museum professional is neither a lucrative nor a prestigious vocation, and hiring and retaining staff with an extremely specialized skill set is not possible given the current internal structures and processes - a problem common to state and private museums both.

Lack of curatorial vision

There is a dearth of expertise needed to design exhibitions that address issues relevant to current socio-economic and political issues. Apart from the Colombo National Museum, other museums do not seem to have trained curators working consistently with their museum collections. Curators who know their collections well and have the creativity and awareness of the needs of the post-war challenges the country faces need to be trained and nurtured urgently.

Institutional and structural issues

Lack of independence from the larger state apparatus

Since 87% of the museums are state-run museums, most museums in Sri Lanka struggle with being a part of a larger state apparatus. Unlike modern museums around the globe, our museums are not independent institutions who can hire its own staff, raise and utilize its own income, decide for itself regarding its own day-to-day operation. This is perhaps the biggest challenge faced by the museums, which lies at the heart of a host of other interconnected issues, and perhaps the most difficult to address. In a way, the establishment of the Central Cultural Fund can in some ways be seen as a mechanism created to mitigate this. However, many other museums remain embedded within the state structure and is prone to issues faced by many public sector organisations.

Insufficient resources for museum management

Constraints of financial and human capacity, is a challenge faced by all museums.[37] Due to their monumental/encyclopaedic nature, museum buildings themselves are costly to upkeep and maintain. Replacing broken lights, display boxes, and air conditioners seem to preoccupy museum professionals, as they involve lengthy bureaucratic procedures. The paltry annual allocations received by some important museums, such as the Jaffna Archaeological Museum, highlight the need to maintain/upgrade current museums rather than starting new ones. Thus, all museums - private and state run - need to develop better staff and income generating plans. As not-for-profit public service institutions, striking a balance between generating income while being faithful to one's mandate is challenging, though not impossible, as seen in the case of CCF.

Unmanageable collections

The increased number of university departments in archaeology, leading to increased number of excavations, has led to the discovery of more artefacts than can be taken care of. The focus on material culture has led to museums being trapped in showcasing only tangible cultural heritage. Issues of storage space, security, resources for conservation and other practical implications are only one side of the story.[38] A much more complicated domain is the interpretation and display within museums. Thus, practical and ideological issues related to a growing collection of artefacts are highlighted as a constant struggle faced by the museum professionals.

Insufficient staff capacity development

As there are no Museum Studies or Museology available at bachelor level education in the country,[39] most young museum professionals come from history and archaeology disciplines, while there are quite a few from other sciences as well. Many do continue to enroll at the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology that offers courses in Museology, when they start working in the museums. As seen in the case of CCF, the institutions

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37 Not just in Sri Lanka, but all over the world, museums are experiencing budget cuts and are struggling to balance their public service mandate with income generation needs.
38 Interview, Dulma Karunanayake on 24/05/2017.

also have actively invested in getting their staff to follow these courses by covering their course fees and providing study leave. Lack of exposure to the standards of museums in other parts of the world creates a situation where the visitors may see more museums than museum professionals in Sri Lanka. As expressed by an officer 'Forget about foreign museums, we haven't even seen other museums in Sri Lanka.'

Insufficient security

Most museums in Sri Lanka have insufficient security systems, not just from theft but also overall safety measures required of a museum. The Colombo National Museum came to the limelight with the case of theft of Kandyan era artefacts widely reported in the newspapers. A former museum director admitted that the funds provided by the government was not enough to strengthen the security or even pay the people who work at the museum.[40] Unfortunately, this has resulted in the museum space becoming unnecessarily insecure and the museum professionals coming under tremendous pressure.

Socio-cultural issues

Insularity, nationalism, and inability to transcend national boundaries

Nationalist identity politics that has defined the broader socio-politics of Sri Lanka since independence is reflected clearly in museum practice. Nationalist rhetoric has driven the narratives of museums and has resulted in the rather stagnant and monolithic interpretations of history discussed above. With only one exception, no Sri Lankan museum depicts the culture or history of another country. Considering that today, museums are locations where young audiences first come into contact with other cultures, this remains at the root of insular mindset of the popular masses, characterized by suspicion of other cultures and a misplaced sense that Sri Lankan history and culture are superior to that of any other country in the world.

Lack of community museums and community involvement in state museums

Apart from the Tea Plantation Workers' Museum and the Martin Wickramasinghe Museum, there are few private sector and civil society museums. This inevitably leads to the lack of community voices and alternative perspectives to those held by the state. In turn, the state museums do not actively encourage community involvement. Thus, museums remain sources of one-way communication without becoming interactive public spaces where communities negotiate their priorities.

Insufficient attention to inclusion

The idea that multiple cultures, histories, and truths need to be represented in a museum seem to be slow to take root in Sri Lanka. Not only do our museums neglect the rest of the world, but they also insufficiently acknowledge the diversity of the country's own

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39 Globally, Museology remains a niche subject offered by a handful of professionals, and specialized departments on Museology are only a handful.
40 http://www.sundaytimes.lk/120708/news/museum-robbery-4-months-on-mystery-deepens-5510.html

histories, cultures, and people. The result is that the general public remains unaware of the true potential of a museum as a place where one can encounter new ideas, absorb, appreciate, and interact with those that are different to one's own. Instead it continues to be a place where one is taught to believe a restricted sense of being, reiterating old identity politics rooted in the post-colonial politics of the 1950s.

Overemphasis and expectations of cultural puritanism

Connected to insularity is the idea of cultural purity. While fully acknowledging that which is unique to the island, the idea that there is something 'pure' that will be 'corrupted' by being 'exposed' to 'outside/western' influence is a very popular sentiment reiterated through media and the education system. Museums, either consciously or unconsciously, contribute to such notions when they try to represent 'Sri Lankan culture' as an unchangeable phenomenon, through lack of serious scholarship that can illuminate the complex provenance as well as the uniqueness.

10. Recommendations and conclusions

This section will outline some preliminary thoughts for reinventing Sri Lankan museums to address the challenges of the present and the future. They are not meant to be taken as separate action points, but more as interconnected areas that deserve attention, further thought, and follow-up action. I have categorized them under general recommendations and those more specific to reconciliation, as I consider it imperative to address the general conditions as one tries to address issues related to museums and post-war reconciliation. Annex 10 is a concept note submitted to the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation by the researcher, delving into some of the more specific recommendations.

General recommendations

Introducing New Museology in practice

Introducing new museology in Sri Lanka requires de-colonizing and de-nationalising museums; in other words, dismantling the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological legacies of colonialism and nationalism. What's easy to understand is that there needs to be a paradigm shift in the way people, the state and museum professionals consider museums and the roles they play in today's society. What is not so obvious is how to create the change in perception. Some of the practical steps that can be taken towards changing the current understanding is to encourage more research, share research, and organize events that can raise the profile of the topic. Bringing the *'katu-ge'* out from its dusty corner and putting it on the discussion table in itself is advocating for change.

A second approach would be the practice itself. Promoting small community museums, mobile exhibitions, better museum pedagogy will transform the museum in practice. Supporting museums to deal with their own legacies is an essential part of supporting societies to deal with theirs.

Recognizing the diplomatic and economic potential of museums

When considering the global context, the importance of cultural diplomacy and the role of museums in it, is clear and requires no further argumentation. Today, new museums are built through intercultural cooperation, bringing resources, people, histories and cultures into contact and interaction. The cooperation between the French Government and the Abu Dhabi Government over Louvre Abu Dhabi and the governments of Japan and Egypt working together on the Grand Egyptian Museum at Giza are two examples from the contemporary global museum scene. Considering that Sri Lanka has topped the travel destination lists after the end of war opens new possibilities in the travel and tourism sector. Museums are an essential component of developing the travel, leisure, and tourist industry. Improving the capacities of Sri Lankan museum professionals to meet the current world standards of museum practice and management is essential if museums are to make an active contribution to the country's economy, education, and culture.

Supporting universal museums that transcend national boundaries

Today, people go to museums to explore not just their own past, but also to explore the world. As mentioned before, Sri Lankan museums lack collections from outside Sri Lanka. Though one may initially view this as impossible, there are many ways in which museums can facilitate a dialogue with the outside world for the local public. Opening up space for temporary exhibitions from outside the country, forming collaborative partnerships with neighbouring countries, and networking with regional museums can result in irrefutable benefit to local audiences. Acknowledging that only a minority of the Sri Lankan population has the ability to travel outside the country to enjoy such enriching experiences, museum collaborations can bring the world to the school audiences and the general public.

Developing the capacities of museum professionals

When one recognizes the multiple responsibilities a museum bears, in terms of contributing to a country's economy, education and research, cultural and heritage management, community development and diplomatic relations, it becomes obvious that there needs to be a concentrated effort in developing the capacities of museum professionals in Sri Lanka. Training and exposure programmes, academic courses, and research on audience feedback, etc. requires that museums invest in their staff with a long-term perspective. One of the biggest challenges in terms of capacity development is to allow museums to recruit, train, and retain a permanent staff.

Supporting museum education

Today Museum Education has developed beyond a mere guided tour of a museum. When considering the industry standards the world over, Sri Lanka has much to do in terms of catching up. As one of the weakest elements as found in the baseline survey, much energy and attention has to be spent on reformulating the role of the 'Education Promotion Officer' one finds in Sri Lankan museums. Museums need to work closely with the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education that designs curricula. Special educational exhibitions, seminars, and teacher trainings should be organized, allowing the teachers and students to exploit the museums' educational resources for primary and secondary education. At tertiary level, research and internships and volunteering opportunities should be created. Most museums now have a separate department for museum education with its own staff specializing in national curricula, pedagogy, and teacher training. Mobile museums and school museum programmes are all part of an exciting and endless array of museum education initiatives one could come up with.

Recommendations for museums and reconciliation

Memory or historical dialogue?

The overall findings of the study point out that there are no 'memory' museums in Sri Lanka that articulates the history of the recent conflict, especially including the victim's perspective. However, there are certainly several with potential to be developed into memory museums, such as the Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre, Tea Plantation

Workers' Museum, and the Kattankudy Heritage Museum that can articulate their own community experience. On the other hand, a number of military museums do articulate the conflict from a military perspective, in other words, from the perspective of one of the key stakeholders/perpetrators of the conflict. As the military does not see themselves directly as perpetrators, and mostly as the force behind a humanitarian operation, one can argue that there is space for them to include victims' narratives, though these then, will probably be the narratives of the victims of the LTTE. One may also question how realistic it would be for Sri Lanka to conceptualize a museum that can include all narratives about the recent conflict. Even in other parts of the world, such attempts have taken generations, and remain highly controversial even then. Thus, the fundamental question, 'What kind of contribution can a memory museum make to Sri Lanka's reconciliation process?' needs to be reflected upon. Perhaps a better question to ask would be, 'what kind of museum can make a meaningful contribution to Sri Lanka's reconciliation process right now?'

Archaeology and history play a much more prominent role in the social psyche than memory or memory work as understood in the transitional justice discourse. These are relatively new concepts when compared to the presence that archaeology and history has enjoyed in the island. Relatively small but diverse countries with multiple layers of histories such as Sri Lanka, may require a different approach in bringing difficult topics into the museum. Considering that perhaps Sri Lanka has not yet arrived at a point where it could look back upon the recent conflict, historical dialogue seems to be a more opportune and suitable concept to work on, as it offers more space to work with disciplines of history, archaeology, art history etc. Broader, inclusive, and balanced depictions of what the island went through in the past century - especially dealing with the memory of colonialism and the struggle against it - may be a precursory step in memorializing the more recent civil war.

Promoting intangible cultural heritage and oral history

Supporting the museums to move away from the trap of materialism and dominance of ancient archaeology, could be an interesting approach to take, complementing the memory approach. This could lead to museums making better connections with the present communities that surround them, increase audience engagement, and refocus on more recent history. Intangible culture is now a trend in Heritage Management, a concept backed by UNESCO and a less controversial entry point than memory work directly related to the recent conflict.

Promoting school and community museums/archives

A potential way of demystifying the idea of the grand museum is to promote small-scale community and school museums. The practice will involve communities and students in collecting tangible and intangible heritage material, designing their own exhibitions, and creating activities and events around it. Most of all, the idea is about setting up small-scale, community-owned museums, managed by small groups in not-for-profit public service institutions, to articulate their own local concerns, history, etc.

Moving away from identity-based museums to issue-based museums

While acknowledging the importance of celebrating the ethnic diversity of the country and supporting the articulation of minority identities leading to better recognition and appreciation of minority cultures, a true shift of perspectives would include moving away from designing identity-based museums, to issue-based museums that are sensitive to identity issues in the country. A practical example of this would be, for instance, a combination of the Tea Plantation Workers' Museum and the Ceylon Tea Museum. Instead of adopting an identity-focused approach, issue - or subject - based museums can build common ground and include the stories of different communities around a specific topic/subject etc.

Policy/state level interventions for reconciliation

During the study, the researcher discovered a number of instances in museums that contribute negatively to reconciliation by promoting cultural stereotypes or celebrating exclusionist or triumphalist narratives. Attention of higher state authorities responsible for working towards reconciliation, such as the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of National Integration and Reconciliation, Office for National Unity and Reconciliation, and Ministry for National Dialogue, is necessary for corrective measures. Higher authorities need to enter into a dialogue with those who are managing these museums to minimize the long-term impact on visitors of these museums, a majority of whom are school children. This could be a starting point of a more long-term process of facilitating a discussion among museum management professionals on promoting reconciliation actively as an integral part of their mandate. At present, reconciliation does not seem to be a priority of most museums, and/or many remain marginally aware of the role a museum plays in reconciliation or inclusive nation-building.

In conclusion, it must be noted that while recognizing the importance of museums in a post-war context, it is also necessary to recognize that museums are institutions with their own baggage. Pushing for ad-hoc changes in the exhibition is perhaps not the way to go about it. The best is to adopt a multi-stakeholder approach, nurturing partnerships between state institutions such as Cultural Affairs, Education, Tourism, etc., as well as promoting private-public and international cooperation to improve the capacities of museum professionals - allowing museums to be independent institutions with a clear mandate to promote an inclusive Sri Lankan identity as they continue to serve the future generations.

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CASE STUDIES

Image 5: Exhibit at the Mobile History Museum by HistoricalDialogue.lk

The case study section will provide a closer look at four of the 25 museums included in the study. Most of the museums visited presented interesting cases, with significant implications to reconciliation, and it is important to mention some of these at least in passing. However, in order to limit the study, four museums were chosen to represent the three categories/types of museums relevant to the Sri Lankan reconciliation agenda:

- ➢ Military Museums: Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee
- ➢ Historical Dialogue Museums: Archaeological Museum and Information Centre, Polonnaruwa, Colombo National Museum
- ➢ Alternative History Museums: Kattankudy Heritage Museum, Kattankudy

The Colombo National Museum is significant as the first museum established in Sri Lanka. It is selected to highlight the potential of Sri Lankan museums and museum collections to positively contribute to reconciliation. The Colombo National Museum case study will be presented as the script of a museum walk - 'Symphony in Bronze and Stone: A Walk through the Colombo Museum' - conducted on 22nd February 2018. This is already an example of simple museum education activities, which can contribute to a national dialogue.

Brief introductions to some of the other museums worthy of attention are given mentioned before the four in-depth case studies.

Image 6: Exhibits of maritime artefacts at the Maritime Archaeological Museum in Galle Fort

Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle is a museum run by Central Cultural Fund. It was developed with the support of the Dutch government and is situated within the Galle Fort. The museum tries to position Sri Lanka as an island that has been at the crossroads of East and West, benefiting from the fusion of cultures since pre-history. It highlights how the island has maintained contacts with the outside world throughout history - with the West, East and the Middle East. Originally, the museum also displayed a replica of a kovil (Hindu Shrine) often found at ancient ports of Mannar and Trincomalee, an overt acknowledgement of the island's multiculturalism, which was eventually removed due to change of administration in the museum.[41]

Martin Wickramasinghe Museum of Folk Culture, Koggala is the cultural legacy of the Sri Lankan intellectual par excellence Martin Wickramasinghe. It is run by the Wickramasinghe Trust and interprets some of the elements of Southern cultures in the island through an anthropological lens. Though the museum focuses of traditions and arts of the South of the island, it steers away from state-based, nationalist, and hegemonic narratives and promotes a more grounded, people-oriented cultural history. Provided that the schools and general public receive the tools and opportunities to grasp the nuanced discussion, the museum has an undisputable potential to contribute to a discussion on 'Sinhalese' or 'Southern' cultures in a less exclusionary and more engaging manner.

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41 *Ms. Lasantha Priyanthie de Silva, Education Officer, Maritime Archaeology Museum, Galle, interviewed on 20.07.2017 at the Maritime Archaeology Museum, Galle.*

Image 7: Entrance, Archaeological Museum, Jaffna

Archaeological Museum, Jaffna is a classic case of the plight of heritage in conflict. Initiated in 1978 as a national museum under the Department of National Museums, and later transferred to the Department of Archaeology, the museum has harrowing tales of surviving three decades of war. Due to the conflict, the museum is presently in a state of neglect and disarray. Discussions with museum officers unearthed how the museum collection had to be moved to avoid destruction through air-bombing. With no proper transportation, many artefacts were taken home by various officers and neighbours for protection. Once the emergency situations were over, some of the artefacts were returned. It is difficult to trace how much of the original collection was lost during the war, as there are no systematic records or institutional memory. The above information has been gathered by the researcher through anecdotal evidence and discussions with museum officers and random people in the museum locality.[42] The present-day status of the Jaffna Archaeological Museum is clear indication of the low resource investment in maintaining the museum. Though many visiting members of the Tamil diaspora have contributed financially towards the upkeep of the museum, the centralized system of the Department of Archaeology under which Jaffna Archaeological Museum is administered does not allow the museum to directly use its income for its improvement. Instead, all donations to the museum have to go to the National Treasury and the museum depends on the meagre allocation of LKR 50,000 per year for its maintenance. The system has been criticized by the donors of the museum and has led to a decrease in the voluntary contributions, since it has no direct benefit to the museum and the community it serves. According to the officers present, the current government allocation is not sufficient for even the basic repairs of the building.

42 Ms. Getsy Thavaraja, Development Officer, Jaffna Archaeological Museum, Department of Archaeology, interviewed on 12.06.2017 at the Archaeological Museum, Jaffna.

Image 8: Teaching Museum, Jaffna University

Jaffna University Teaching Museum, Jaffna operates under the Department of Archaeology. It is a modest room full of collections resulting from activities of the university department. Similar to the Archaeological Museum, Jaffna, the Jaffna University Teaching Museum is not without tales of disturbing memory. One tale in particular was narrated to the researcher in graphic detail:

> *During the occupation of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in the late 1980s, the university famously became a base for IPKF operations. The room in which the museum was located was used as a kitchen. Some of the stone slabs/archaeological artefacts with flat surfaces were used as chopping boards.[43]*

The university museum is in a similar state of neglect to the Jaffna Archaeological Museum. However, due to its location and affiliation to the university, it presents an undeniable pedagogical and research opportunity. An initiative to catalogue its collection and redesign its exhibition with the participation of students could be a worthy undertaking. Since a museum is strongly associated with the community's identity the revitalization of museums in Jaffna can be a powerful symbolic gesture.

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43 Informant chooses to remain anonymous.

Image 9: Tea Plantation Workers Museum, Gampola

Tea Plantation Workers' Museum in Gampola is a rare example of a museum run by a civil society organization. It is a community museum telling the story of the tea plantation workers who arrived as indentured labour to Sri Lanka, tracing their hazardous journey from India to central Sri Lanka, as well as their later struggles to become recognized citizens. The museum started as Mr. Muthulingam's pet project in 1994. Muthulingam has been a community leader and an activist in the plantation sector when he started collecting objects belonging to the community. After visiting several museums outside of Sri Lanka, he was inspired to establish a proper community museum and started collecting objects and oral histories in a more systematic manner from 1997 to 2007. In 2005, he acquired an abandoned 'line-room', (similar to but much smaller than a tenement house) entirely on the donations of the community and started conceptualizing the physical space of the museum. Along with the collection, the museum now recreates a line-room of a tea plantation worker family, showcasing their everyday objects in a time capsule method. Considering that this is the only museum in which plantation workers are represented, the initiative is worthy of attention. It features a period of history and a group of people overlooked by other museums due to an exclusive focus on ancient archaeology found in most national and archaeological museums across the country. Ethnographic detail, capturing peoples' struggles through literature such as poetry, songs, and oral history, inclusion of women leaders, puts the museum ahead of its grander counterparts in terms of vision. Though the museum suffers from weak accessibility and an average display quality, it is perhaps the most notable contribution to representing an alternative narrative of history from a community perspective.

Image 10: Entrance of the Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre

Case study on a historical dialogue museum:
Archaeological Museum and Information Centre, Polonnaruwa

Established in 1998 as a collaboration with the Netherlands, the Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre presents a classic case study of representing identities. The museum functions as an introduction to the main archaeological site in Polonnaruwa. Thus, it is important to consider the whole site together with its museum, as a location of contested histories of two ethno-religious communities in the island.

Accessibility and Display Quality

Total number of visitors by month – 2017, Polonnaruwa Museum

20,399	29,350	13,467
Jan	Feb	Jun
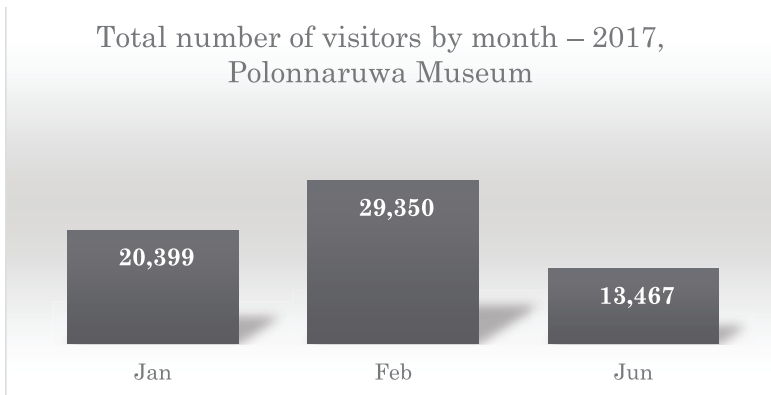
Figure: 16: Total no of visitors by month, 2017, Polonnaruwa Museum

Image 11: Display Gallery, Archaeological Museum and Information Centre Polonnaruwa
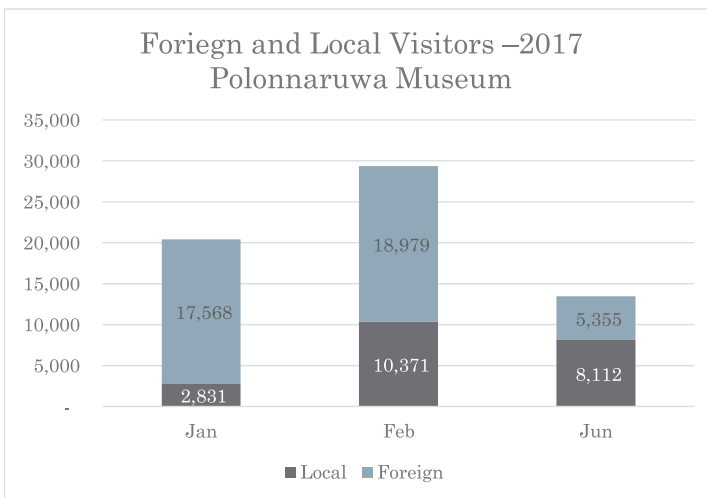
Figure 17: Foreign and local visitors, 2017, Polonnaruwa Museum

Open from 9 am to 6 pm, and sometimes longer, the museum is easily accessible and monthly numbers reported in January, February, and June 2017 record an average of over 20,000 visitors a month. The average of local visitors in the three months is around 7,000, though there is a considerable variation between 2,000 and 10,000 within the three months. A rough idea of school groups can be gauged by selecting two days in the month of June, where on 10th June only 22 students visited the museum while on 23rd June there were 1,080 student visitors. An average number of visitors per day derived from the

three months is around 660. Despite high and low seasons, Polonnaruwa is a well visited museum, both by foreign and local travellers. The tickets are reasonably priced for the local guests and the US$ 25 for an adult foreigner includes entry not just to the museum, but also to the extensive archaeological site of Polonnaruwa.

Managed by the Central Cultural Fund with a staff of about 15, the museum displays a satisfactory level of display quality. The building is well designed and easy to navigate. The displays are structured into seven galleries and presented logically - with good lighting and without overcrowding. Texts are clear and consistently tri-lingual. Though interactive technology is not used, the museum provides an interesting introduction or recap for the visitors. The weakest aspect of the display is its lack of interactivity.

The museum offers toilet facilities, highly appreciated by travellers. The air conditioning isn't optimal, as the ones that were installed were out of order and new ones were being fixed. But the museum staff seemed adequately concerned about the comfort of visitors. The museum also has a mini-auditorium and a library and the officers reported these spaces are used by students and researchers as well as for other activities like the monthly forums organised by the Central Cultural Fund.
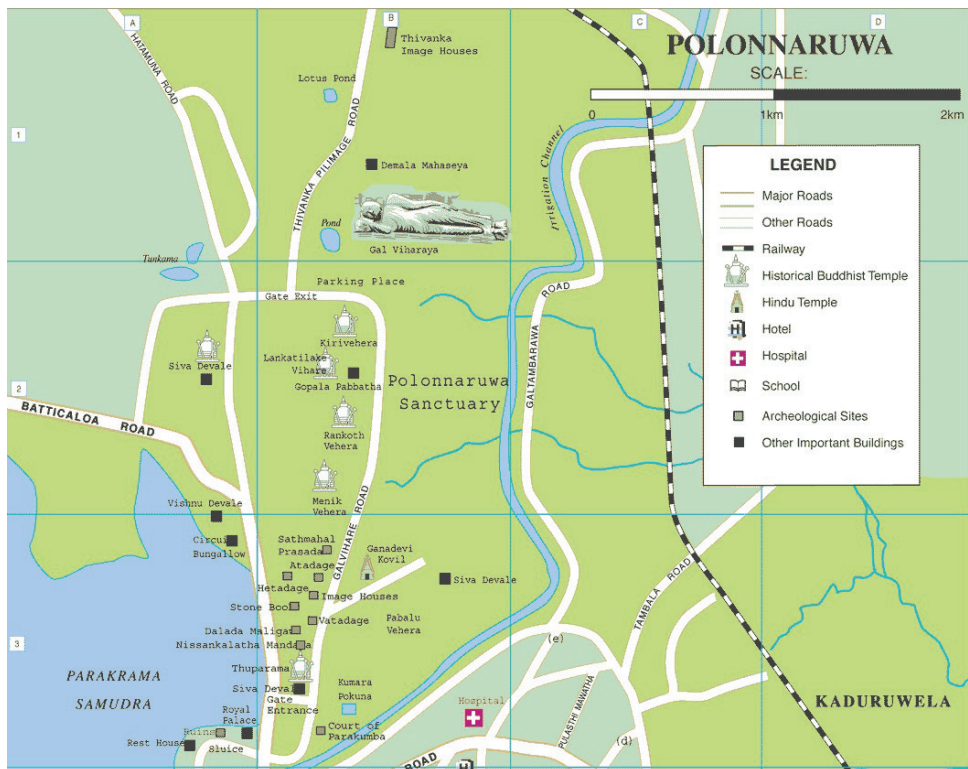

Image 12: Map of Polonnaruwa archaeological site

Narrative strength and relevance to reconciliation

The Polonnaruwa museum could be considered one of the more inclusive museums, as it presents a story of a multicultural past. The central theme is of relevance to reconciliation as the museum displays valuable archaeological evidence of the intermingling of Hindu and Buddhist communities. The narrative framing is around the rise of the Polonnaruwa kingdom and its architectural, cultural, and spiritual life, which displays a mixed heritage. However, a close and critical examination reveals that, in the presentation of archaeological artefacts, the museum still supports a dominant Sinhala Buddhist perspective, in an implicit way, through the organisation of galleries. For example, the way in which the museum organizes its exhibition into seven galleries, also creates a division based on an ethnic categorisation:

Gallery 1: Entrance lobby, which explains the layout of the museum

Gallery 2: Brief historical perspective of the change of kingdoms

Gallery 3: The citadel

Gallery 4: The outer city

Gallery 5: Monastic establishments

Gallery 6: The periphery

Gallery 7: The Hindu monuments

Here, the overall logic of galleries seems to be a spatial one, as it presents the citadel area, outer city, the periphery etc. All galleries also display models of the original form of the ruins. Thus, it is one of the few museums in Sri Lanka that balances the space axis with the time axis. However, presenting the Hindu artefacts separately in the last gallery is not in line with the spatial integration found in the archaeological site.

When examining the Polonnaruwa archaeological site, one can notice that there is no spatial segregation of Buddhist and Hindu sites. In fact, the museum relates an anecdote on *'Nayi Pena Vihara'* which was actually a Vishnu kovil mistaken by the villagers as a Buddhist temple. Thus, the boundaries of Buddhist and Hindu remain amorphous as seen in the map.

The museum presents artefacts from this site - both Buddhist and Hindu - some even difficult to categorise. The Hindu sculptures get segregated from the rest, and are presented in the final gallery. If one removes the ethnic lens, these beautiful bronzes would have been presented in the gallery which corresponded to the space they were discovered in, in this case, Gallery 3 or 4. From an artistic point of view, some of the bronzes such as the Sivanataraja, Sivakamasundary and Ganesha, could have held pride of place in the entrance lobby. However, now, they are excluded from the rest of the story, labelled, and displayed without much context in the last room. Although, unavoidably, Galleries 2 - 6 are scattered with Hindu influences, the central narrative does not sufficiently acknowledge this.

Of course, Polonnaruwa presents a history of conflict as much as it presents a story of co-existence. It is interesting to note that the predominant narrative in the museum is that of the conflict between the invading Chola kings and the Sinhalese rulers. Gallery 2 introduces the visitor to the 'Revival of Sinhala Rule', and describes the South Indian Chola intrusions

Image 13: Sivanataraja in Gallery 7

Image 14: Bronze Ganesha in Gallery 7

from 993 AD, where 'Buddhist monuments went into neglect and disrepair and the Hindu faith was given great impetuses.'[44] The texts explain the recapture of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa by Vijayabahu who revived the Sinhala monarchy and the Buddhist faith.

Some of the headings of the texts indicate the narrative flow of the museum: 'King and the Country', 'State and Religion' both explain how kings acted as the 'benefactors of the people' and that 'divinity of kings' was accepted. Furthermore, Sangha played an important role in the management of the state affairs, even in civil strife and internecine warfare. On the other hand, it also mentions that 'Hinduism got a foothold in Polonnaruwa and at one point, Tamil mercenaries became the protectors of king and the tooth relic while Tamil clergy held positions of importance within the court.'[45]

The Nissankamalla slab inscription presented at the museum, reads 'Non-Buddhists like Cholas, Pandyas and Kerala kings should not be appointed to the throne. Similarly, however powerful they were, the govi-kula clan should not aspire to the throne. Such attempts are comparable to a jackal attempting to be a lion, worm a cobra, sheep a horse and firefly the sun.' Obviously, holding onto power was a precarious game wherever and whenever.   Thus, the narrative analysis of the Polonnaruwa museum highlights opportunities for immediate improvement. If the narrative is framed differently, choosing to highlight coexistence over conflict, the museum collection could be presented and contextualized differently.

Such a redesign process should essentially include members from both communities, not only to avoid biases, but also because such reinterpretations of history is an act of reconciliation by itself.

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44   Text panels from Gallery 1, 2, Archaeological Museum, Polonnaruwa.
45   Text panels from Gallery 1, 2, Archaeological Museum, Polonnaruwa.

Image 15: Lecture at Polonnaruwa Museum mini auditorium

Interactivity, pedagogy and promotions

Similar to most other Central Cultural Fund sites, Polonnaruwa conducts some educational programmes such as the monthly lecture series, art competitions, and rehabilitation camps (for drug addicted youth) as reported by the staff. The officers also mentioned one-day workshops for teachers, school programmes, and a serial educational publication. It was not possible within the study to verify the quality of such programmes. However, what is noted is that there are some educational activities that take place regularly. The descriptions given by officers indicate that these programmes are very similar to lectures and events, often one-way communication that involves students sitting in a classroom. Programmes such as drug rehabilitation indicates that perhaps these are not well thought through, but merely responding to ad hoc requests. The odd motley of programmes indicate a lack of vision or understanding of the potential of the museum to contribute to an issue of national significance. None of the programmes mentioned a focus on topics related to reconciliation, social cohesion or co-existence of communities. Clearly, the officers seemed to lack awareness of such topics or did not recognize the relevance of the site to these topics.

On a similar note, there was no programme that used the immersive learning environment the museum presented. The officers mentioned that they only conducted guided tours when requested. Due to a conflict between external tourist guides and the museum staff, it was decided that the museum staff would no longer guide the tourists. The researcher could not trace evidence of a consistent practice of guiding the school groups. When questioned, the officers indicated that school groups spent relatively little time at the

Image 16: CCF Polonnaruwa FB page

museum, as they had too many things to see in such school trips. Similar to not recognizing the value of Polonnaruwa as a multicultural site, the museum personnel also do not seem to recognize the pedagogical potential of the museum. However, it may be unfair to blame the museum professionals entirely, since archaic pedagogical practice is an inherent issue in the entire education sector. As clearly illustrated in the photograph of a lecture event inside the museum, instead of utilizing the immersive learning environment of the museum, 'educational' programmes tend to fall back on the conventional 'lecture' type activities.

Compared to the museums of Department of National Museum, Central Cultural Fund had a better grip of their promotional material. All sites administered by Central Cultural Fund ran their own Facebook pages and produced leaflets for their archaeological sites and museums. Promotional material also tend to reflect the lack of awareness on the need for inclusive representation of identities and communities, as seen in the profile picture of a Buddha statue.

Overall, one could indeed argue that the Polonnaruwa museum is one of the better museums in Sri Lanka, despite the rather traditional displays, one-way communication, and limitations of the narrative framing. The fact that it deals with a history of conflict and harmony makes it extremely relevant to the present moment, and the narrative focus on conflict between the two groups rather than co-existence is a telling sign of the identity politics at play, and perhaps speaks more about the present-day relations between the two identity groups, than about the past.

Image 17: Visitors from Jaffna given a guided tour in Tamil at the Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee

Case study on a Military Museum: Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee

Of the 25 museums visited, only military museums discussed the recent conflict in Sri Lanka directly, which in itself highlights a glaring issue for those interested in promoting a nuanced discussion on post-war healing. Another prominent indication of the lack of space for these conversations is the number of military museums in the North and East of Sri Lanka. Due to the presence of the military in the area, museums have been built and managed by the military as seen in the three museums in Trincomalee, two of which are run by the Army and the Navy, while a third has now been handed over to the Department of Archaeology.

Declared open to the public on 19th September 2016, Orr's Hill Army Museum is an open air museum displaying military paraphernalia such as 'infantry weapons, armoured vehicles, artillery guns,' including those weapons used in the civil war, introduced by the army as 'mostly the weapons that were used against terrorists during the peak of the humanitarian operations before May 2009,'[46] 'that provides a glimpse of colonial and recent military history.'[47] According to the Ministry of Defence website, funds generated by the museum are to be utilized for welfare initiatives of War Hero families, disabled and serving troops. It must be mentioned that this is the first instance the researcher came across a declaration of what happened to the income generated by a museum. The museum website www.army.lk elaborates that, 'All funds, generated through the Museum are to be used for welfare of families of fallen War Heroes, disable veterans

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46 http://www.army.lk/news/army-beautifies-trincomalee-new-museum-0
47 http://www.defence.lk/new.asp?fname=Orrs_Hill_Army_Museum_open_for_public_in_Trin comalee_20160920_03

and serving Army personnel in the 22 Division and elsewhere. A certain percentage of the proceeds has been allocated for maintenance and improvement of the Museum.' No other museum clearly indicated this detail the way the Army Museum did, thus, cleverly establishing a link between the visitor and the soldier. The website also mentions that the museum was designed by 'a renowned architect' who has 'voluntarily prepared the roadmap for its birth'.

Accessibility and display quality

The Orr's Hill Army Museum, centrally located in Trincomalee, is fast becoming an attractive tourist destination all year around. The researcher could not obtain figures of visitor numbers accurately, as this would have involved officially writing to the higher authorities in the Army. However, on both occasions the researcher visited the museum, middle-school students and high school students were being offered guided tours through the museum. Thus, it is safe to assume that the museum is fairly well visited, given that it could be considered an interesting outing in Trincomalee with its scenic setting overlooking the bay.

The open-air museum displays military paraphernalia in a rather basic fashion. Displays are organized in a logic that makes sense to the military. The labelling is inconsistently trilingual. However, the museum offered guided tours in both Sinhala and Tamil, consistently. It displayed a keen interest in guiding the Tamil visitor.
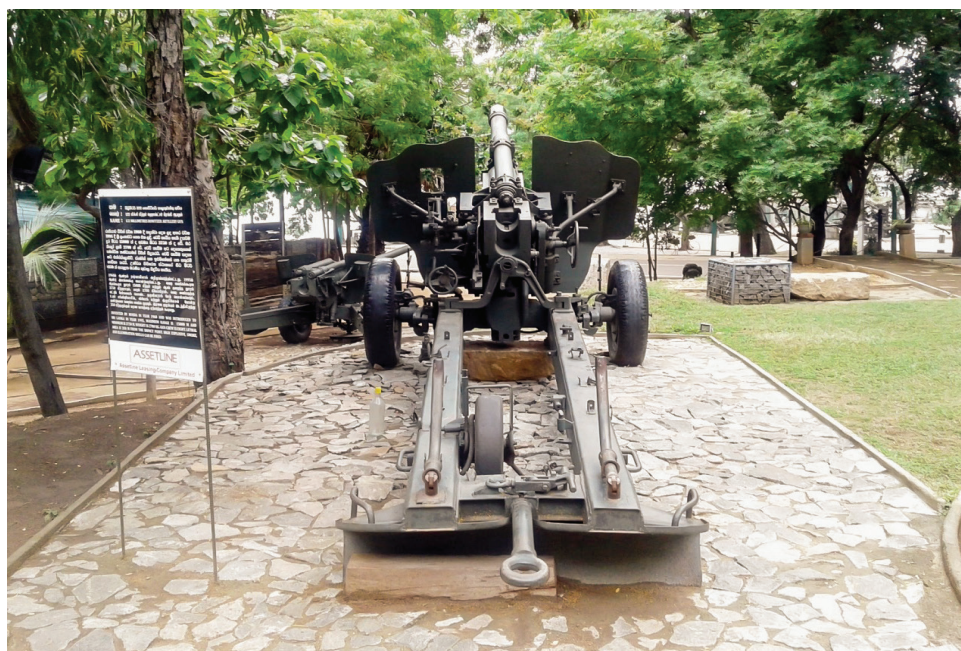
Image 19: Open air display of army vehicles used in the last stages of the war

Narrative strength and relevance to reconciliation

The museum focuses on the 'defeat of terrorism' as well as memorializing the war heroes. A close narrative analysis shows that rather than been ethnically biased, the museum conveys a story of defeating 'terrorism' in keeping with more global narratives. The museum and the guides use objective terminology in their contextualization such as 'enemy', 'terrorist', etc. It de-ethicizes the conflict by excluding terminology such as 'Sinhala' and 'Tamil', in a bid to present the war as not against the Tamil people, but a humanitarian operation to save them from the 'terrorists', a narrative that is used commonly by many military museums. There is no clear victim, and often the victim is the soldier.

It is interesting to note that there is no separation of Army/LTTE in displaying arms and weapons used. The explanations given of the military offensives connect the visitor with the gritty reality of warfare, as experienced by the soldier. Some of the guides also have first-hand experience in fighting in the last battles, thus adding an element of authenticity and inspiring awe in the visitor who does not have such an experience of 'heroism'. One could argue that it valorizes, exoticizes and justifies the war, in a way in which visitors could 'feel proud' of the military victory. The museum does not attempt to hide how ruthless the army was at the final stage of the war. In the words of the guide, it is retaliation: 'poison to kill poison'. The visitor walks away convinced that the army needed to be so. Unless, the visitor is a strong pacifist, the narrative of the museum is powerful enough to justify the war - invoking empathy towards the soldier.

Image 20: Visitors from Jaffna interacting with the museum display

Interactivity, pedagogy and promotions

Compared to other museums included in the study, the military museum capitalizes on the experiential environment of the museum. Thus, it tops the list as the most interactive museum included in the study. Visitors could touch and interact with the military equipment, and many young adults, both girls and boys displayed enthusiastic engagement. Visitors could also climb inside armoured tanks used in the war and try their hand at shooting at the air-rifle shooting range. During the second visit, the researcher observed a group of high school students from Jaffna closely interacting with the artefacts. Although many museums claimed that they offer guided tours, the researcher only saw two occasions where there were actual guided tours offered by the museum personnel - at the Martin Wickramasinghe Museum and the Orr's Hill Army Museum. The latter seemes to be the only museum which offers guided tours consistently to all the visitors, in the two local languages. It appears that due to the advantage the military has in being able to deploy many personnel, it has come up with a consistent museum management system that runs like clockwork. The museum also has an underutilized audio-visual room, a feature common to all other museums visited. It offered no other educational programmes, given the nature of the topic, but provided the opportunity for the visitor to closely interact with soldiers who have been active in the last stage of war.

Thus, the Orr's Hill Army Museum is an undeniable epicentre of creating a narrative of the final stages of war, which will perhaps be accepted and taught, rather alarmingly, as 'history'. Unsurprisingly, it is a rather one-sided account of the war, presented in the style of a Hollywood action movie, with no reference to human tragedy, apart from briefly memorializing the fallen soldier.

Image 21: Entrance, Heritage Museum, Kattankudy

Case study on an alternative history museum: Heritage Museum, Kattankudy

Alternative history museums present narratives that are marginalized or excluded from the mainstream state museums or even historical dialogue museums. Similar to what the Tea Plantation Workers Museum does to the Tamil minority in Central Sri Lanka, the Heritage Museum, Kattankudy articulates the 'history of the Muslims in Sri Lanka and the valuable contributions to the nation.'[48] The four-storey building tries to achieve this by displaying artefacts of historical value, models of domestic life of the Muslim community, and information tables. The museum is the brainchild of Mr. M L A Muhhammad Hizbulla, a politician from the East and a member of parliament. First conceptualized as an exhibition in 2013, the museum was opened in 2015 as a reaction to the growing misconceptions about the Muslim community in the island among the other ethnic groups. Initially, the museum drew criticism from the Muslim community itself, as it included the display of human figures, and some galleries were temporarily closed. Eventually, the museum administration was entrusted to the Department of Archaeology, which currently manages the museum.

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48   *Entrance plaque, Heritage Museum, Kattankudy administered by the Department of Archaeology as of 26th October 2017.*

Image 22: Dioramas depicting scenes from everyday life, scene from madrasa

Accessibility and display quality

Though centrally located in Kattankudy, the museum isn't the most visited place due to the mere fact that Kattankudy is not a major town in Sri Lanka. Though set in the East coast, which is becoming popular for both foreign and local tourism, Kattankudy is not on the tourist map, like Trincomalee or Jaffna. Lack of promotion and web presence had also led to the museum remaining a hidden gem. Thus, compared to the museums run by the Central Cultural Fund, National Museums in Colombo and Kandy and the Martin Wickramasinghe Museum, the Heritage Museum Kattankudy remains underutilized.

The museum has managed to achieve a satisfactory level of display. The galleries are presented in the four storeys in a following fashion:

Ground floor: entrance lobby, founders' gallery, dioramas of Muslim family life

Second floor: Dioramas of Muslim social life, historic depictions

Third floor: Dioramas of Muslim social life

Fourth Floor: Information panels about Muslims in Sri Lanka

As indicated above, the museum could improve its logic of presentation and gallery structure, especially by incorporating the fourth gallery into the other galleries.

However, a noticeable positive feature was the presentation of Muslim social life through dioramas with automatically activated sound effects. This makes the museum particularly appealing to younger audiences.

Image 23: Depiction of women engaged in day to day commercial activities

Another aspect worthy of appreciation is the simplicity of the displays. They simply display the day-to-day life of a Muslim community in the East, such as their market places, traditional occupations, domestic scenery, madrasa room, etc., in a way that appeals to a general audience and particularly beneficial to younger audiences. The dioramas are self-explanatory and do not need long texts.

The most positive aspect of the museum is its inclusiveness in depicting women, as they did their daily activities. Importantly, young girls are shown in the madrasa and at home, studying. Their attire indicates the life before the spread of Wahabism.

Image 24: Diorama depicting a scene from 2nd century BCE, Muslim advisors at the royal council of King Dutugemunu

Narrative strength and relevance to reconciliation

The Heritage Museum, Kattankudy, is one of the few museums that has a strong narration running through the gallery structure, scoring a 4 out of 5 in the baseline assessment. Its mission has been clear from the outset. The museum tries to communicate some of the following messages to its audience:

➢ **The Muslim community has its own unique identity and place in Sri Lanka and its history.** The museum portrays the early settlements of the Muslim community in the island, gives key information about contemporary life and livelihoods, and geographic areas etc., through dioramas.

➢ **Muslims have always had a cordial relationship with the Sinhalese** (majority) historically. For example, one diorama depicted the royal court of King Dutugemunu, the most notable Sinhalese historic figure from 2nd century BCE, where Muslim advisors were shown to be among his cabinet.

➢ **Muslims have contributed to Sri Lankan economy and culture.** For example, the gallery with information panels highlights many Muslim personalities that have contributed to the Sri Lankan economy and culture. Notable figures are political leaders such as T B Jaya and the popular musician Mohideen Beg.

Image 25: Frieze, Battle of Danture

Muslims in Sri Lankan history are not widely acknowledged. Perhaps the most controversial aspects of the museum is the re-articulation of historical Muslim figures, thereby complicating and contesting some of the established popular historical narratives. For example, one information panel attempts to identify a famous sculpture in Potgul Vehera from 12th century AD, popularly known as the statue of King Parakramabahu, as a Muslim minister in the council of King Parakramabahu. Historians and archaeologists are yet to come to a conclusion as to the exact identity of the statue. The Museum tries to re-articulate the sculpture's identity according to its own logic, by suggesting the sculpture to be the depiction of a Muslim minister of the royal council. Had the museum been differently located and easily accessible to a more Sinhala Buddhist audience, this is a depiction that could potentially lead to controversy. However, as it is right now, the panel goes largely unnoticed.

One of the less contentious but notable re-articulations is the identification of the Hero of the Danture Campaign, a famous battle between the Portuguese and the local forces in 1594, as Gopala Mudaliyar Sheik Saldin bin Attas who was a General in the army of the Kandyan king, and seemingly a leader of both Sinhalese and Moor communities. Such articulations indicate more inclusive identity formations, where the idea of ethnic identities as they are understood in the present are challenged through presentations of historic re-configurations.

Another noteworthy example is the story of a Muslim woman, who sacrificed her life to protect the life of the Kandyan King Rajasinghe II fleeing from the Portuguese in 17th century CE.

Thus, one could argue that the museum presents an interesting case of re-articulating certain historic identities in a new light. Though some of these efforts calls for historical verification, the attempt highlights an opportunity for a dialogue. Firstly, these are simple stories that are palatable to a general audience. Inviting people to reflect on such narrations can be a positive experience, especially given the context where ethnic identities are understood in exclusionary terms. Secondly, these are some issues that can spark some scholarly research and debate, paving the way to a more inclusive understanding of history.

On the other hand, there are notable omissions. Given that Kattankudy is located in the East coast, it is surprisingly silent on the Muslim-Tamil relationship. Nowhere is the museum, was the subject mentioned, and the overwhelming focus was on showcasing the cordial relationship with the Sinhalese. In this context, as much as it is positive, the omission of the Tamil, is a deeply troubling aspect, albeit a telling sign of the underlying identity politics of the island. In depicting the relationship with the Sinhalese, the avoidance of difficult topics is also notable. There was one cursory information panel on the Sinhala-Muslim riots in 1915, which again highlighted the event as an anomaly against the long-standing friendship between the Sinhalese and Muslim communities. Instead of taking the opportunity to reflect on why such violence takes place despite the said cordial relationships, the museum rushes past it. Thus, one could also argue that the museum almost tries too hard to prove that the Muslim community had had a cordial relationship with the Sinhalese majority, while asserting their own identity and history in the island, and in the process neglects that its audience may comprise those other than Sinhalese and Muslims.

Interactivity, pedagogy and promotions

The Heritage Museum, Kattankudy appeals to a younger audience through its simple depictions of day-to-day life in dioramas with audio effects. However, the museum does not have a well thought through educational programme. Overall, the museum also suffers from low public relations and promotional activity. Though the museum does indeed present a valuable opportunity for dialogue, its remote location in Kattankudy limits its access to a larger public and more distant school communities.

Image 26: National Museum Colombo

Case study on the Colombo National Museum

Established in 1877 during colonial rule, the Colombo National Museum is the largest and most visited museum in the island. It has the advantage of historically being the country's foremost museum and therefore possesses an impressive collection of artefacts. Between January to April 2017, the museum attracted 54,470 visitors of whom 35,063 were school children. An in-depth study of the subject domain of the Colombo museum is beyond the scope of this study. However, it must be noted that the museum deserves such an analysis.

While the Colombo National Museum also focuses mainly on the island's ancient history, similar to most other museums in the island, it has limited reference to Memory Work as understood in the current context, especially in dealing with the memories of the past 30-year conflict. The collection at the museum is the sum collective of the many communities of the island. Thus, it has the potential of becoming an inclusive museum that showcases Sri Lanka as a multi-cultural island, and can contribute towards cultivating a historic understanding of different communities and cultures in the island.

The Museum Walk: Symphony in Bronze and Stone, presented herewith, is an attempt at highlighting the potential of the Colombo Museum collection in promoting a dialogue between cultures. The first Museum Walk was conducted on 22nd February 2018 with the participation of 16 participants. It was a follow-up step of two continuing presentations on the baseline survey to a limited number of participants.

The walk focused mainly on the bronze and stone galleries in the museum, highlighting the presence of diverse cultural strands in the island historically, while also contextualizing the museum through its colonial heritage. In an attempt to introduce interactive pedagogy, the museum walk also adopted a participatory approach: some of the characters involved in its initiation, such as the Governor, William Gregory, colonial photographer Joseph Lawton, art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy etc., were brought to life by involving participants to read out observations made by the historical figures during the walk. The script of the museum walk is presented as it was originally conducted by the researcher, together with worksheets prepared for a younger audience.

Museum Walk: Symphony in Bronze and Stone

Script, 22.02.2018

Introduction: welcoming participants and brief orientation

1. Location: entrance of the museum

> ➢ Objective: to highlight the Colombo National Museum as an illustrative case of colonial museology and how it has evolved to become a historical dialogue museum and its potential to be a universal museum contributing to a dialogue across cultures

> ➢ Structure of the walk: two parts - colonial legacy of the museum and the collections of the bronze and stone galleries

> ➢ Instructions to participants: Handing out cards to the participants, asking them to take on the roles of some historical characters, and to read out the observations of these characters when they are called upon to do so during the walk. Ask participants to buy museum entry tickets.

Part I : Legacy of colonial archaeology: Joseph Lawton, James Smither and William Gregory

2. Location: museum gate

Let's travel back in time to the 1800s, when Ceylon was a part of the British Empire. Needless to say that colonialism is inherently hierarchical and is based on the assumption of the cultural superiority of Western civilisation. But when the British officers and civil servants of India and Ceylon started exploring their surrounding geography, they began discovering archaeological remains that challenged this assumption. Not only were the ruins much older than those found in the golden days of Europe (which by the way, had only begun with the wealth drawn from the colonies), but also aesthetically different and undeniably quite developed. In his beautiful book Archaeology and Photography, The Early Years 1868-1880, Ismeth Raheem notes how the military officers of the Royal Engineers and the officers of the Ceylon Civil Service deliberately recorded the archaeological details through photography. I want to briefly introduce you to three gentlemen who have contributed to what the museum is today.

Joseph Lawton *(pass the book around, show photo of Lawton, his works in Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa)*

So let's meet Mr. Joseph Lawton. We don't know exactly when he arrived in the island, probably somewhere in the 1860s, but he was active in the period 1864 to 1872. Within just 10 years, he produced a wealth of photography that went on to being exhibited in the Paris International Exhibition of 1878 where his works won a silver medal. Moreover, 227 images were dispatched to the Colonial Office in London in 1872 and are now deposited at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in excellent condition. Unfortunately, the original glass plates and negatives have been lost and some of the remaining were deposited with Department of Archaeology which is opposite of this building. These are now faded,

largely through neglect and inadequate storage facilities. Working in the arid jungles of the central province probably cost Lawton his life. Adding to the works of archaeologists like H C P Bell, Lawton's work contributed to a representation of Ceylon in the eyes of the West.

Colonel A B Fyers quote: (to be read out by a participant)

"I must take this opportunity of stating how much I regret the death of this very careful and excellent photographer. Mr. Lawton entered into an agreement to take photographs of the principal ruins at both ancient cities and visited them twice. He did not confine himself only to his legitimate work, which considered merely taking photographs after the ruins had been cleared, but he looked after the coolies employed in excavating and cutting down and I fear, exposed himself more than he ought to have done. At all events, he was never fit for anything after his return from the last visit to Anuradhapura. He was recommended to try a change of air and scene to Bombay, but he returned, little, if at all, benefited. He was then ordered to England, where he died."

- Colonel A B Fyers, Proceedings for 1872, Journal of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society; xix

James Smithers (refer to photograph of James Smithers, his architectural drawings in _Archaeology and Photography, The Early Years 1868-1880, Ismeth Raheem_)

When Lawton became the official photographer for the Archaeological Commission in 1868, he was to work under another gentleman named James Smithers. As Lawton photographed, Smithers recorded the architectural drawings. He is best known for designing the building, the National Museum Colombo. Designed in the Italianate style, the building cost Rs. 119,993.93. The contractors were Wapache Marikkar and S M Perera.

The wonderment around these discoveries often led to exoticisation, but on a more positive note, the Royal Asiatic Society was formed. The compulsive need to collect, categorise, and label, in order to understand, led to a chain of museums across the British Raj. The Royal Asiatic Society was instrumental in vying for a permanent structure for the cultural artefacts collected by colonial excavations by the 1850s. The Colombo Museum was thus established in 1877, as a link in a series of colonial museums opened by British administrators in South Asia, such as the Indian Museum Calcutta and Raffles Museum Singapore (now National Museum). The Colombo Museum's mission was clearly defined by 1872, when it was first proposed to the island's legislative council, as 'a scientific teaching institution' with the scope of 'natural history, antiquities and industrial products'. Furthermore, it was noted as 'a response to clearly expressed and urgent desire of the "persons of all classes." '[49]

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49 De Silva, P.H.D.H., EDT. "1877-1977 One Hundred Years: Centenary Souvenir of Colombo Museum" 2nd Edition, (2000), p12, p39.

Location 3: Gregory Statue, museum lawn

Sir William Henry Gregory

The personal involvement of Sir W H Gregory, the Governor of Ceylon, in establishing the Colombo museum, along with the many battles he fought with the Colonial Office for an allocation of Rs. 50,000 is well documented. The remarks he has made on the matter are worth dwelling on, as they may foreshadow the articulation of a national identity Sri Lanka is at the moment trying to redefine.

> W H Gregory at the Legislative Council, 1872, quote 1
>
> "It was strange that nothing of the kind have been previously attempted, and yet all our other colonies united could not furnish such a collection of objects of such varied interest as Ceylon."
>
> "… for a comparatively small sum, considering the object in view, a museum may be constructed which shall not be a random collection of miscellaneous objects, but a scientific teaching exhibition, which while ministering to the amusement of many, may convey instruction to all who seek it."
>
> - W H Gregory at the Legislative Council, 1872

The tussle between the Colonial Office and the Governor over the museum.

> Lord Kimberly, Secretary of State, Colonial Office, London
>
> "The museum is evidently a hobby of Mr. Gregory and as he does his work zealously and well, I am afraid I must indulge his fancy; though I am doubtful of its utility, especially since I have seen it so much puffed."
>
> - Lord Kimberly, Secretary of State, Colonial Office, London

Gregory was personally invested in making the museum, as see in some of his private correspondence.

"…I shall make a good thing of the museum.

"… I am very busy too about my new museum. I hope to make it a creditable institution."

"My museum is at a standstill owing to the utter imbecility of the Department of Public Works."

- W H Gregory to Henry Layard, National Gallery London, private correspondence, 1872

Not only was Gregory invested in putting up a grand building, but he also thought through the management of it, for the long run:

Appointment of Director, quote

"Believing as I do that the success and the utility of this institution will depend on the character and attainment of its Director, I shall ask you, by granting him a liberal salary, to offer an inducement to a man of high acquirements to undertake the task. Far rather would I exercise parsimony in the structure, than in the salary of the Director."

- W H Gregory, 25th September 1872, Ceylon Legislative Council

Even after his retirement, Gregory kept influencing the expansion of the museum.
The Museum opened on the 1st of January 1877 with an original collection of 804 Arts and Antiquities and 384 Ceylon Products.

Dr. P E P Deraniyagala, first Sri Lankan Director, 1939-1963, established the Department of National Museums by enacting the National Museums Ordinance 1942. He established branch museums in other locations.

Part II : Bronze and stone galleries inside the museum

4. Location: Tholuwila and Badulla Buddhas

For the colonial scholars who had a vast empire to categorise, a feature that defined Sri Lanka from India was its Buddhist heritage.

The large bronzes from Badulla and the figure from the Tholuwila shrine are exceptionally dignified and monumental. They may be assigned to the 6th century. The Badulla figure, especially in the feeling of the right hand, recalls the finds of 6th century bronzes from Boddhavani in the Madras Presidency.

- Ananda Coomaraswamy

The Tholuwila figures belong, moreover to the tradition of the great Anuradhapura Buddha, (near the Jetawanarama Dagaba) which is certainly the greatest work of art in Ceylon, and is not surpassed in India.

- Ananda Coomaraswamy

5. Location: Durga statue, Tamil ruins of Anuradhapura, 7th - 8th century CE in the entrance gallery placed behind the Tholuwila Buddha

Polonnaruwa is the iconic location for Hinduism, but this Durga statue comes from the Anuradhapura period already.

Hinduism in Sri Lanka

In *The Heritage of Sri Lankan Bronze Sculpture*, published by the department of National Museums, 1995, former director of the Colombo Museum, Sirinimal Lakdusinghe writes,

"… Hindu belief and Customs were known to the Sri Lankan people from the beginning of the country's history. It is with the early inhabitants who are thought to have come to the island from the North West and North East regions of the South Asian mainland that the beliefs and practices of Hinduism in its original Brahmanic form, came into the country."

"One of the **factors influencing the spread of Hinduism** in Sri Lanka at this time was the political connections that Sri Lanka had with South India. In the 7th century there was a Hindu Revival in South India under the patronage of the Pallava Kings. Sri Lanka had a close connection with the Pallava Kingdom during this period. King Manavamma (684 to 718) was a great friend of the famous Pallava king Narasimhavarman who with the aid of his navy restored Manavamma to the throne of Anuradhapura which he had lost to usurpers."

"South Indian princes and adventurous who invaded the country were able to capture the throne several times during the early half of the Anuradhapura period. During the latter part of the Anuradhapura period a large number of South Indian mercenaries were brought over to Sri Lanka."

Tamil ruins of Anuradhapura

In 1892, H C P Bell, the first commissioner of the Archaeological survey of Sri Lanka, in the course of his excavation work at Anuradhapura discovered a group of about a dozen small Hindu temples which he termed Tamil ruins in the area between the pathways leading from two of Anuradhapura's major Buddhist monasteries the Jetavana and Abhayagiri Vihara, to the outlying Vijayarama and Pankuliaya monasteries. In the subsequent report for 1893, he records the discovery of four or five more shrines and also residences for officiating priests. The Hindu temples seem to have been built in the capital during the latter part of the Anuradhapura period, all probably constructed in the Sri Lankan style of timber and brick construction, possibly to cater to the religious interests of South Indian mercenaries who were brought to Sri Lanka by the Sinhalese king and who had settled in the capital.

6. Location: Gallery 1: Buddhist bronzes, Anuradhapura

The Buddhist bronzes offer an insight into the practice of Mahayana Buddhism in the island. Mahayana Buddhism unlike the Theravada tradition practiced in the island today accommodates a large pantheon of Bodhisattvas and Goddesses.

The existence of a Mahayana cult in Ceylon is abundantly supported by the discovery of many images of Bodhisattvas and Mahayana feminine divinities in Ceylon. It is now obviously more than ever inaccurate to speak of Northern and Southern Buddhism as if these geographical terms connoted a distinction of Hinayana and Mahayana.

The First discovery of Mahayana relics is recorded in the Sixth Progress Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon (Colombo, 1896).

- Ananda Coomaraswamy

l6.1. Bodhisattva Avalokiteshwar, Veheragala

Veheragala
c. 9th century, Anuradhapura period
Gilt bronze solid cast
Height 49.8 centimetres

This superb portrayal of Bodhisattva reflects in an unparalleled measure the compassionate nature and divine quintessence of such beings. Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva par excellence, the Mahayana Lord of Compassion and the Saviour of the world of the present age, is depicted seated in a graceful stance - a synthesis of the majestic pose of the Maharajaleelasana and relaxed Lalitasana, which has become the most favourite sitting posture of this bodhisattva in the art of Sri Lanka. The sculpture style shows affinity to South Indian products of the 7th- 9th centuries. The soft and sensitive treatment of the

smooth surface and the sinuous lines of the drapery recall in particular the stylistic trends of the Chalukyas and, to a lesser extent, those of the early Cholas, although the high degree of sensitivity and delicacy observed in this present exhibit appears unparalleled.

6.2. Replica of Tara (Original at the British Museum)

Height: 143 centimetres (not including plinth)
Width: 44 centimetres
Depth: 29.5 centimetres
8th century AD, Anuradhapura period

Taken by force from the last King of Kandy when the British annexed Kandy in the early nineteenth century, it was given to the British Museum in 1830 by the former British Governor of Ceylon, Sir Robert Brownrigg. This account however is rejected by the British authorities who believe that the statue was simply found in the early 1800s somewhere between Trincomalee and Batticaloa on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka and subsequently acquired by Sir Robert Brownrigg. Kandy came under British rule in March 1815 under the terms of the Kandyan Convention which was organised by Brownrigg.

When the British Museum acquired the statue, in the 1830s, they were concerned that the large exposed breasts, narrow waist and curvaceous hips would be seen as too erotic for the public so it was kept out of sight for thirty years. The statue was only available for scholars to study even though it was never in doubt that the purpose of this statue had always been religious rather than to arouse. It is thought that the statue would have only been seen in Sri Lanka by chosen priests and monks and it would not have been seen by the general population of Buddhists. The British Museum had a number of items that from 1830 were considered too erotic. By the 1860s this store of objects was labelled the Secretum.

Today the Tara is prominently displayed at the Asia gallery of the British Museum.

6.3. Ardhanari Nateshwar - oldest Hindu bronze piece in Sri Lanka

This figurine is one of the earliest bronze pieces depicting a Hindu cosmic concept found in Sri Lanka. The figure was found at a Buddhist site in Anuradhapura and dates from 7th-8th century. It was discovered during excavation of the inner boundary wall of the Abhayagiri Stupa. The dancing posture is a feature which is not found in similar statues discovered in India. Traditionally the female half of the statue is on the left side and the male half on the right but in this statue the opposite is the case. This great artwork is based on the Hindu creation myth of the Genesis of the human race by Agni and Soma, the principles of heat and cold.

7. Location: Gallery 2, Hindu bronzes, Polonnaruwa

Moving on to 11th century Polonnaruwa Kingdom.

When Chola ruler Rajaraja I (985-1014) conquered Sri Lanka around 993, the country underwent its most intense period of Hindu activity. In India at this time Hindu art

and architecture attained its most brilliant expression under the patronage of the mighty Chola emperors. The spirit of Chola building activities spread to Sri Lanka immediately after the country became a province of the Chola Empire. A Shiva shrine the Vanavanmadevishvaram, named after the queen of the Chola Emperor Rajaraja I, was built in Polonnaruwa and is preserved as one of the best examples of Hindu temple architecture to be seen in Sri Lanka.

Since the discovery of a group of Hindu bronzes from Polonnaruwa in 1907, scholars have expressed divergent views on the question of their origin. H C P Bell, who actually discovered them expressed:

> There is every likelihood that when the Cholas who brought the Sinhala people under subjection began building shrines to worship their gods and started making images of their deities and saints, they started employing Sinhala artisans.
>
> - H C P Bell

The argument highlights how it was initially difficult to accept this work as Sri Lankan, as these were deemed South Indian in origin.

> "They are inferior as works of art to the best of the Buddhist images, the best images of Saiva Saints in Ceylon and the two splendid Natarajas in the Madras Museum."
>
> - Ananda Coomaraswamy

On the other hand, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam expressed:

> Let it be asserted once and for all that they are Polonnaruwa bronzes, for the better or for the worse.
>
> - Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam

7.1. Parvati, Siva, Saumyamurti

> "Highly finished productions, great care being bestowed upon the head-dress in particular."
>
> "In some instances there is a good deal of monotony and repetition but on the other hand some remarkable and uncommon types are represented."
>
> - Dr. Willey, on the Polonnaruwa Bronzes

7.2. Siva Natarajas

> The Saiva bronzes of Polonnaruva are in all respects very different from the old Buddhist works. They may have been cast in Ceylon, but as a group they belong to the prolific South-Indian school of mediaeval bronzes represented by the Madres Natarajas and the Tanjore Siva. […] They probably mark one of periods of Tamil occupation of Polonnaruwa, though the possibility is by no means excluded that Siva Devales flourished contemporaneously with the Buddhist viharas without conflict.
>
> - Ananda Coomaraswamy

7.3. Uma and Siva from Gampola

8. Location: Transitional gallery, Trilingual Slab Inscription

Tamil Inscriptions in the National Museum by S. Pathmanathan

9 Location: Stone gallery , slab inscriptions

Ports of Sri Lanka
During the period of Hindu Revival in South India under Chola Empire, kovils have been built at various locations in Sri Lanka, especially in port towns and in places where South Indian troops established their settlements. Port towns seem to have had a fair population of Tamils from very early times. This seems to be the reason why the most renowned Hindu temples of Sri Lanka such as Koneshwaram, Thiruketheeswaram and Munneswaram are found at famous   ports.

The Rajaraja Choala inscription records donations made to two Hindu temples at Mantai and Mantota . Even after the Chola empire, the Sinhalese kings continued their patronage of the Hindu temples.

10. Location: Stone gallery, Hindu sculptures

Shiva Lingams/Phallic worship in Sri Lanka
The Mahavamsa, the great Pali chronicle, records that King Pandukabhaya built dwelling places for brahmans and sivika-salas. Paranavitana believed that the word sivika-sala means a shrine housing a Shiva Linga. Since phallic worship was known in India since very early times it is not impossible that there were shrines housing lingas in Sri Lanka in the fourth century BC.

11. Location: Gallery of crafts: Conch

This artefact serves as the emblem of the Colombo National Museum. Fittingly, it is a conch used in the Hindu rituals, adorned with figures of a bull, coiled snake etc., found in Hindu worship. It also has decorative elements from Sinhala culture, especially seen in the Kandyan arts. The Tamil Inscription on the conch has been deciphered by S. Pathmanathan.

Part III : Participant observation and wrap up discussion

Time to observe and figure out two questions,
  ➢ What do you appreciate about the museum and its collection?

  ➢ What would you would like to change?

Annex 1: List of Interviews

Colombo
1. Ms. Sanoja Kasthuriarachchi, Director, Colombo National Museum
2. Ms. Sanjeewani Vidyarathne, Education Officer, Colombo National Museum
3. Prof. Anura Manatunga, Department of Archaeology, Kelaniya University
4. Prof. Asoka de Soya, University of Kelaniya
5. Prof. Jagath Weerasinghe, Director, Postg Graduate Institute of Archaeology
6. Ms. Sunila Galappatti, Consultant, GIZ Memory Culture Project
7. Dr. Malathi de Alwis, Consultant, GIZ Memory Culture Project

"Framing the Ways of Seeing: Symposium and Workshop on Sri Lankan Art History", conducted on 17th and 18th July 2017 by the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, Colombo

Kandy
8. Ms. Dulma Karunarathne, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya
9. Dr. Choolani Rambukwella, Department of Archaeology, University of Peradeniya
10. Mr. Gamini Bandara, Manager, International Buddhist Museum
11. Ms. Swarnapali Samaradiwakara, Education Officer, Kandy National Museum
12. Mr. Ajith Manamperi, Sangharaja Museum, Malwathu Maha Viharaya
13. Ms. Anusha Athukorala, Officer-in-charge/Development officer, Archaeological Museum and Department of Archaeology, Kandy

Jaffna
14. Ms. Getsy Thavaraja, Development Officer, Jaffna Archaeological Muesum, Department of Archaeology
15. Mr. K D Palitha Weerasinghe, Assistant Director, Department of Archaeology, Northern Province
16. Prof. Pushparatnam, Director, Northern Province, Central Cultural Fund and Head of the Department of Archaeology
17. Ms. T G S A Gamage, Museum Curator/ Project Manager, Central Cultural Fund
18. Mr. Lakshman Chandana Maithripala, Project Officer, Jaffna, Central Cultural Fund
19. Mr. N Ratnasingham, General Manager, Uthayan Publications
20. Mr. Prem Anand, Executive Editor, Uthayan Publications
21. Mr. Swaminathan Vimal, Department of Sinhala, University of Jaffna
22. Mr. K. Ahilan, Department of Fine Arts, University of Jaffna

Trincomalee

23. Rear Admiral Travis Sinniah, Commander, Eastern Naval Area & Flag Officer Commanding Naval Fleet, Sri Lanka Navy

24. Lieutenant Commander Muditha Abeywardene, Sri Lanka Navy

25. Development Officer, Naval and Maritime Museum, Dept. of Archaeology, Trincomalee

26. Officers and Educators of Hood's Tower Museum, Naval and Maritime Museum and Orr's Hill Army Museum

Galle

27. Ms. Lasantha Priyanthie de Silva, Education Officer, Maritime Archaeology Museum, Galle

28. Mr. Siripala Ponnamperuma, Education Promotion Officer, Maritime Museum, Galle Fort

29. Mr. J. Jayanethi, Curator, Martin Wickramasinghe Museum, Koggala

Kattankudy

30. Mr. Raheem Jesmil, Kathankudy Heritage Museum, Kattankudy

Annex 2: Museum Inventory

Name	Location	Adminstration	Subject	Focus	Established in	Contact Person and Address
Abhayagiriya Mahatissa Fahien Museum	Anuradhapura	Central Cutlrual Fund	Archaeology	History of the Abhayagiriya monastery at its peak as a south asian centre for learning/ site specific artefacts		025-2222351
Agriculture Museum	Kandy		Agriculture			Horticulture Crops Research and Development Institute, P.O Box 11, Gannoruwa, Peradeniya
Aluvihare Temple Museum	Matale	Aluvihare Temple	Archaeology, religion/ Buddhist history	Antiquities from the site of Aluvihare, copies of Tripitaka, old 'Balume ge' depicting punishments to crimes committed during the 'times of the kings'		
Antiquities Replica Museum	Gampaha	Central Cultural Fund	Archaeology	Replicate images in different forms of art that includes paintings, sculptures, and carvings predominantly of Sri Lanka's past that represents our rich civilization. THIS SOUNDS A BIT OFF - PARTICULARLY THE END.		Antiquities Replica Centre, Bataleeya, Pasyala
Anuradhapura Museum (National)	Anuradhapura	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Archaeological objects from different regions, situated in the old kachcheri building	1947	

Archaeological Museum and Information Centre	Polonnaruwa	Central Cultural Fund				Alahana Pirivena Project, Polonnaruwa
Archeological museum in Kandy (Regional)	Kandy	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquities found in the central province		
Arumuganawalar Museum	Jaffna	Department of Museums	Archaeology	Focuses on Sri Lankan archaeology research evidence	1978	Nawalar Road, Jaffna
Batticaloa Museum (Site)	Batticaloa	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Rare collection of palm-leaf manuscripts, British era government items, tools and utensils.	1999	
Buduruwagala Archaeological Museum	Buduruwagala	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Archaeological objects found in Buduruwagala area and also relics belonging to Anuradhapura, Pollonnaruwa and Kandy	1988	
Ceylon Tea Museum Kandy	Kandy	Sri Lanka Tea Board, Planters' Association of Sri Lanka	History / Colonial/ Tea Industry	exhibits on tea pioneers, vintage tea-processing paraphernalia	2002	P.O Box 179, Hanthanawaththa, Kandy. 070-2803204 0112587814
Colombo Dutch Museum	Colombo	Department of Museums	History / Colonial/ Dutch	History of Dutch colonial rule in Sri Lanka	1982	No. 95, Prince Street, Colombo 11. 0112448466
Colombo Port Maritime Museum	Colombo	Sri Lanka Ports Authority	History	Maritime industry, history of ports in Sri Lanka	2003	

Currency Museum	Colombo	Central Bank of Sri Lanka	Commerce	has a collection of ancient usage of coins, dating back from about 3 BC, to modern usage coins & notes in Sri Lanka	1982	58, Sri Jayawardhanapura Mawatha, Rajagiriya. 0112477809
Dambadeniya Museum (Site)	Dambadeniya	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	History of Dambadeniya, site specific artefacts	2008	
Dambulla Painting Museum	Dambulla	Central Cultural Fund	Art History	Art history in periods		
Dedigama Museum (Regional)	Dedigama	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Artefacts of the site in-situ		
Dighavapi Museum (Regional)	Dighavapi, Ampara	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	antiquities found in the Eastern Province, mainly from Dighavapi site		
Elephant Transit Home and Museum	Udawalawe	Department of Wildlife	Wildlife	Information about elephants and their life cycle, work of wildlife department and ETH		
Folk Museum (Anuradhapura)	Anuradhapura	Department of Museums	Anthropology, Ethnology	Lifestyle of rural Sri Lanka and its transition to modern times	1971	
Galle Maritime Archaeology Museum	Galle	Central Cutlrual Fund	Archaeology	Marine biological and anthropological aspects of the southern coast of Sri Lanka. Exhibits marine artefacts that are found during underwater expeditions.	1992	
Handicrafts Exhibition Centre-Museum	Battaramulla					National Craft Council, Janakala Kendraya, Battaramulla

Haththikuchcha Museum	Kurunegala	Department of Archaeology		Archaeological objects found in Hatthikuchchi and surrounding area	1990	Galagamuwa
Heritage Museum of Kattankudy	Kaththankudy	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology, History, Ethnology	Islamic Heritage of Sri Lanka	2015	Jesmil Abdul Raheem - Heritage Museum Kattankudy. 94 65 2248311 /94 77 616 2437 herimuseumkky@gmail.com
Highway Museum	Kiribathkumbura	Road Development Authroity	History/ Transportation	collection of former construction equipment such as stone road rollers, steam road rollers, oil road rollers, tar boilers, coal scales, road signs, etc.	1986	
Hoods Tower Museum	Trincomalee	Sri Lanka Navy	Military	Maintained by the navy for symbolic reasons. Coastal Artillary	1990s	
Independence Memorial Museum	Colombo	Department of Museums	History	infromation on national heroes invovled in the independence struggle	2008	
International Buddhist Museum	Kandy	Temple of the Tooth Relic	Religion/ Buddhism	contributions of 17 countries such as Sri Lanka; "world's first International Buddhist Museum''	2011	
Isurumuniya Museum (Site)	Isurumuniya	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Site specific artefacts, including the famous gupta sculpture 'Isurumuniya lovers'	1984	
J. R Jayewardene Centre - Museum	Colombo		Ethnology	Personal memorabilia of J. R Jayawardene		No 195, Dharmapala Mawatha, Colombo 07

Jaffna Museum (Regional)	Jaffna	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Religious heritage of Hindu and Buddhist cultures, donated artefacts of persons in Nothern Province	1978	
Jaffna University Museum		University of Jaffna				
Jethavana Museum	Anuradhapura	Central Cultural Fund	Archaeology	Artefacts belonging to the Jethavana era	1996	
Kandy Royal Palace Museum (Regional)	Kandy	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology, History, Religion			
Kasagala Museum (Site)	Kasagala	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Site specific artefacts, including hisotry of Kasagala vihara		
Katharagama Museum	Monaragala	Central Cultural Fund	Archaeology	Multi-religious history of the city and its surrounding area	2008	Puja Bhumiya, Katharagama
Keleniya University Teaching Museum	Kelaniya	University of Kelaniya	Archaeology	Terracota and masks	1983	
Kotte Museum (Regional)	Kotte	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Artifacts from Kotte period	1992	622/1, Bangala Junction, Kotte
Magampura Ruhuna Heritage Museum	Hambantota	Department of Museums	Archaeology	Heritage of magampura/ Southern Province	2015-2016	
Mahaweli Centre Museum	Colombo	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology			No 96, Ananda Kumaraswami Mawatha, Colombo 07
Maligawila Museum (Site)	Maligawila	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology			
Martin Wickramasinghe Folk Museum	Galle	MW Trust	Ethnology	Biographical/ ethnological / history of Sri Lankan folk culture		Koggala, Habaraduwa. 0912283427

Mask Museum	Ambalangoda			Introduce the richness of the mask tradition of Ambalangoda and to strengthen this cultural heritage		No. 417, Patabadhimulla, Ambalangoda. 0912258948
Matara Star Fort Museum (Regional)	Matara	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	History of Matara-Items of archaeological heritage and antiquities of historical value are exhibited at this regional museum		
Mihintale Museum (Site)	Mihintale	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Displaying antiquities found from the sacred area of Mihintale	1984	
Mini museum for Raja the Elephant						
Mulkirigala Museum (Site)	Mulkirigala	Department of Archaeology		Exhibit antiquities belonging to the place, illustrating the historical value of Mulkirigala Vihara		
Museum Department of Parasitology	Colombo					Department of Parasitology, Medical Faculty, Colombo 08
Museum of Temple of Tooth, Kandy	Kandy	Temple of the Tooth Relic	History/ Religion/ Buddhist	Monastic history, records of the LTTE attack in 1998		Sri Dalada Maligawa, Kandy. 0812236201
Muslim Cultural Museum	Ampara	South Eastern University	Muslim cultural Heritage	ola leaf manuscripts, domestic utensils, dress and jewellery and other items connected with the social and economic life of the Muslims of the past		

Nalanda Museum (Site)	Matale	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Photography museum-Photographs of Nalanda archaeological museum and of other archaeological sites in the vicinity are on display.	2008	+94 81 3827734
National Maritime Museum Galle	Galle	Department of Museums	Arcehology	Exhibits marine artefacts that are found during underwater expeditions.		Rajini Street, Fort, Galle. 0912242261
National Museum of Colombo	Colombo	Department of Museums	Archaeology/History	Preservation of cultural and natural heritage inherited from the past.	1877	P.O Box 854, Sir Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo 07. 0112694366
National Museum of Galle	Galle	Department of Museums	Archaeology	Traditional cultural heritage of Southern Sri Lanka	1986	
National Museum of Kandy	Kandy	Department of Museums	History	over 5000 artefacts on Kandyan era, post British colonial era	1942	Anagarika Dharmapala Mawatha, Kandy. 0812223867
National Museum of Natural History	Colombo	Department of Museums	History	Natural heriatage of Sri Lanka	1986	P.O Box 854, Sir Marcus Fernando Mawatha, Colombo. 0112691399
National Museum of Ratnapura	Ratnapura	Department of Museums	Archaeology	Prehistoric archaeological inventions, natural heritage, geological, anthropological, zoological artifacts and models related to the Sabaragamuva Province	1988	Ms. Thamara Damayanthi Jayasekara-Education Promoting Officer 0452222451

National Telecommunications Museum	Padukka	Sri Lanka Telecom	History of telecommuni-cations	Early equipments related to telecomunications, hisotry of telecommunications	2016	"National Telecommunication Museum Sri Lanka Telecom Meepe, Padukka Opening hours: 9.00hrs to 16.00hrs on Mon-Sat Phone: 0094 112859666 | 112087404 E-mail: gagarinie@slt.com.lk"
Natonal Savings Bank Museum	Colombo	National Savings Bank	History of Banking			National Savings Bank, Colombo 03
Naval and Maritime museum	Trincomalee	Department of Archaeology		Historic evolution and gradual transformation of banking traditions from manual account opening register/ledger to modern ATM cards introduced to its customers by the National Savings Bank.		
Orr's Hill Army Museum	Trincomalee			Colonial and recent military history	2016	
Painting Conservation & Research Center, Painting Museum	Dambulla	Central Cultural Fund	Archaeology/ Paintings	Painiting research and conservation of ancient paintings	2003	"Ajith Jayasundara-Officer of In charge Mobile: 0094714395725 Email: ajith_jayasu@yahoo.com"

Panduwasnuwara Museum (Regional)	Panduwasnu-wara	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Archaeological antiquities, found in excavations, donations, artifacts received under court orders and from the Kurunegala Provincial Council Museum	1970s	
Peradeniya Archaeology University Museum (Senarath Paranavitana Teaching and Research Museum)	Kandy	Department of Archaeology,	Archaeology			
Pidurangala Museum (Site)	Pidurangala	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquities found at the archaeological site of Pidurangala and photographs	2008	
Polonnaruwa Museum	Polonnaruwa	Central Cutlrual Fund			1962	
Postal Museum	Colombo	Department of Postal Services	Postal history	Hats postmen wore, antique telephones, a collection of stamps etc...		Postal Department, Colombo 01
Puttalam Museum (Site)	Puttalam	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquities of the area	2006	
Railway Museum	Kadugannawa	Sri Lanka Railways		History of Rail Transportation in Sri Lanka	2014	Kadugannawa
Rajanganaya Museum (Site)	Rajanganaya	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Historical value of Haththikuchchi Vihara displaying the antiquities found from the site	Not open for the public yet	Tambutta, Mailewa

Ratnapura Gem, Mineral and Folk Art Museum	Ratnapura					Pothugalvihara Mawatha, Getengama, Ratnapura
S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Sirimavo Bandaranaike Memorial Museum	Colombo		Ethnology	Valuable documents, photographs, films, audio cassettes and personal items relating to both Premier SWRD Bandaranaike and Premier Sirimavo Bandaranaike		BMICH, Colombo 07. 0112691139
Sarvodaya Museum	Moratuwa	Sarvodaya	Modern History	History of the Sarvodaya movement	Not open for the public yet	"Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, No 98, Rawatawatta Road, Moratuwa , Sri Lanka. Tel:+94 11 264-7159 (Main Office)"
Seruwila Museum (Site)	Seruvila	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquities collected by the chief Incumbent Thero of the Seruwila Vihara and antiquities found from the archaeological site		
Sigiriya Museum	Sigiriya	Central Cutlrual Fund		Regional history around sigiriya area from pre-hisotry to the reign of Kashyapa		
Sir John Kothalawala Memorial Museum	Ratmalana					Kothalawala Defence Academy, Kadawalawatta, Ratmalana

South Eastern University Cultural Museum	South Eastern University	South Eastern University	Anthropology, Ethnology			
Sri Lanka Air Force Museum	Ratmalana	Sri Lanka Air Force		The field of aviation as well as the history of the Sri Lanka Air Force		
Sri Lanka Infantry Regiment Centre Museum	Colombo					Regiment Centre, SLIRC, Army Colony, Panagoda
Tantirimale Museum (Site)	Tantirimale	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquities found from the sacred area of Tantirimale. Aims to reveal the archaeological and historical heritage of the area.	2012	Rajamaha Viharaya, Tanthirimale
Tea Plantation Workers' Museum	Gampola	Institute for Social Development	Archaeology	Cultural heritage of the early plantation community	2007	
Temporary exhibition of the Central Cultural Fund Gallery		Central Cultural Fund				
Thoppigala Heritage Museum	Thoppigala	Sri Lanka Army				
Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre		CS				
Uva Province Museum	Badulla					Muthiyangana Viharaya, Badulla
Vavuniya Museum (Regional)	Vavuniya	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquities of archaeological heritage and historical value in the region		

Veheragala Museum (Site)	Veheragala	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquities found from the sacred area of Veheragala		
Victoria Museum, Nuwara Eliya	Nuwara Eliya					Uda Pussellawa road, Nuwara Eliya
Walisinghe Harischandra Museum	Negambo		Ethnology	Commemorate Brahmachari Walisinghe Harishchandra Esqr and his services to Sri Lanka	1996	Nugavala Junction, Tibirigaskatuwa, Katana. 0312233644
Wayamba Heritage Museum	Kurunegala					Kandy Road, Kurunegala
Weheragala Museum	Anuradhapura					Archaeological Museum, Weheragala, Kahatagasdigiliya
Welgam Vehera Museum (Site)	Meuelr	Department of Archaeology			Being arranged as a site museum	
Weliwita Saranankara Sangaraja Museum	Kandy	Malwatta High Temple	History/ Religion/ Buddhist	History of Buddhism under threat/Kandyan period/life history of Sri Saranankara thero		
Yapahuwa Museum (Site)	Yapahuwa	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Archaeological heritage of Yapahuwa and antiquities discovered from the sacred area of Yapahuwa	2010	94 37 3981395
Yatala Museum (Site)	Yatala	Department of Archaeology	Archaeology	Antiquties found during the excavations of Yatala Dagaba and antiquities around the sacred area of Yatala stupa including various Buddha statues, carvings and inscriptions		94 91 3907787

Annex 3: Data Collection Sheet

Date of visit:

Name of the Museum:

Name of the informant:

Section 1: Key data on the museum		
1.	Date and nature of establishment of the museum/ exhibition under review	
2.	What is the type of the museums (national, community, subject specific?)	
3.	What is the focus of the museum (preservation, education, nation-building)?	
4.	What are the key features of the museum?	
5.	How many visitors per day? (outreach)	
6.	What are the funding sources for the museum? - Government - Other/corporate - Visitor tickets	
7.	How big is the museum management? - No of departments - No of staff	
Section 2: Curation and presentation methodology		
8.	Is there a distinction between permanent collection and temporary exhibitions?	
9.	How/when the permanent exhibitions were designed (inclusive/participatory?)	
10.	What are the display techniques? - Structure and layout of exhibitions - Use of technology - Lighting and design	
11.	How often are the exhibitions revised? What are the processes followed?	
Section 3: Education and visitor engagement		
12.	What are means of visitor engagement?	
	- Guided tours, Workshops, educational programming? - Interactivity? - Mobile units?	
13.	Does the museum have a profile of the visitors?	

14.	Does the museum obtain feedback from the visitors? How?	
15.	Does the museum have an education department? No of staff under education?	
16.	Does the museum have an event calendar? How is it communicated to the public?	
17.	Does the museum have a web presence? Does it use social media?	
Section 4: Narrative analysis		
18.	Is the narrative presented cohesive?	
19.	Are the vision / mission of the museum clear from the display? - Is it clear to museum personnel? - Is it clear to visitors?	
20.	Is the connection between past and the present clear?	
21.	What is the dominant narrative the museum supports? Is there space for contention?	
Section 5: Relevance to reconciliation and memory work		
22.	Does it deal with the memory of conflict, war or political violence? Is the depiction one sided?	
23.	How are different communities and their historical narratives in Sri Lanka represented?	
24.	Is the trilingual policy of language being followed?	
25.	What's the potential for immediate improvements?	
Section 6: Visitor feedback		

Annex 4: Overall ranking of museums

Name	Accessibility	Narrative Strength	Display Quality	Interactivity	PR and Promotions	Relevance to Reconciliation	Total	Management
Sigiriya Museum	5	4	5	3	3	2	22	CCF
Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle	5	3	4	2	3	4	21	CCF
Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre	5	3	3	2	3	5	21	CCF
International Buddhist Museum	5	4	4	2	3	2	20	RI
Martin Wickramasinghe Museum of Folk Culture, Koggala	5	3	3	2	2	4	19	PI
Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee	4	3	3	3	1	5	19	MI
National Museum, Colombo	5	3	4	2	2	3	19	DoNM
Independence Memorial Museum	5	3	3	1	1	5	18	DoNM
Naval and Maritime Museum, Trincomalee	3	3	4	2	1	3	16	DoA
Kattankudy Heritage Museum	4	4	4	2	1	4	19	DoA
National Museum Kandy	4	2	3	1	1	4	15	DoNM
Temporary Exhibition of the Central Cultural Fund Gallery	4	2	4	2	2	1	15	CCF
Mini Museum for Raja the Tusker	5	4	1	1	2	1	14	RI
Jaffna Fort, Central Cultural Fund Stall	5	1	1	1	2	4	14	CCF
Hood's Tower Naval Museum, Trincomalee	2	2	3	1	1	5	14	MI
National Maritime Museum, Galle	5	2	3	1	1	2	14	DoNM
Historical Mansion Museum, Galle	5	2	2	1	2	1	13	PI

Name	Accessibility	Narrative Strength	Display Quality	Interactivity	PR and Promotions	Relevance to Reconciliation	Total	Management
Tea Plantation Workers' Museum, Gampola	1	3	2	1	2	3	12	CS
Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre	3	1	1	1	1	5	12	PI
Jaffna Archeological Museum (Navalar Museum)	3	1	1	1	1	4	11	DoA
Palace Museum, Kandy	5	1	1	1	1	1	10	RI
Archaeological Museum, Kandy	4	1	1	1	1	1	9	DoA
Ceylon Tea Museum, Hantana	3	1	1	1	4	1	11	PI
Jaffna University Teaching Museum	3	1	1	1	1	2	9	UI
Weliwita Sanghraja Museum, Malwathu Vihara, Kandy	3	1	1	1	1	1	8	RI
Average Score	4.04	2.32	2.52	1.48	1.72	2.92	15	

Scale: 1 - Very Poor
          2 - Poor
          3 - Average
          4 - Good
          5 - Excellent

DoNM = Department of National Museums
DoA = Department of Archaeology
CCF = Central Cultural Fund
RI = Religious Institution
PI = Private Institution
UI = University Institution
MI = Military Institution
CS = Civil Society

Annex 5: Department of Archaeology, Regional Office North: internal structure

Duties of division (Technical)

1) **Exploration and documentation**
   1. Inventorisation and documentation
   2. Protection
   3. Research
   4. Monitoring and evaluation

2) **Excavation**
   1. Emergency/salvage excavation (e.g.: resulting from archeological assessment)
   2. Research excavation
   3. Excavations to serve exceptional national requirements (e.g.: worship, aesthetic)
   4. Post-excavation analysis, report writing, archiving
   5. Improving initial storage of excavated goods
   6. Transferring excavated finds to museum branch for display
   7. Monitoring outsourced projects

3) **Museums**
   1. Inventorising and computerizing of collections
   2. Improving storage and access to collections
   3. Restructuring and re-organizing
   4. Enhancing quality of displays
   5. Enhancing public awareness of archaeological heritage
   6. Providing research facilities to the public

4) **Architectural conservation and site presentation**
   1. Initial (curative) conservation of sites/monuments
   2. Initial landscaping of sites/monuments
   3. Improving storage and access to documentation
   4. Monitoring outsourced projects

5) Chemical conservation

1. Initial (curative) conservation
2. Preventive conservation and monitoring condition
3. Inventorising antiquities submitted to conservation branch
4. Research (dating, ancient technology)
5. Monitoring projects

6) Epigraphy and numismatics

1. Inscriptions
   - Inventorising
   - Replacing damaged/lost copies
   - Systematic storage of copies
   - Research

2. Coins
   - Inventorising
   - Storage
   - Research

7) Monument maintenance

1 Protection
2 Maintenance and preventive conservation
   - Endangered sites/monuments
   - Archaeological reserves
     - Overall maintenance
     - Access roads, signage, visitor centers

8) General services

1 General public relations
2 Public awareness of archaeological heritage
3 Coordination with government institutions/universities
4 Training coordination (local/international)
5 Library and library activities
6 Photographic unit-cataloguing, computerizing, conservation of photo archive
7 Records archive

Annex 6: Evaluation crieteria and ranking scale explained

Evaluation Crieteria	1 - Very Poor	2 - Poor
Accessibility	Not at all situated in a town area. People have to drive out of the way for more than an hour, with bad road conditions. Poor signage. Poor attendance. Museum not open every day.	Not situated in a town area. Poor attendance.
Narrative Strength	No story. Just a collection of objects.	No or weak story or theme. Weak link between different galleries.
Display Quality	Poor quality of the building. No AC. No fans. Displays are not proper or updated. No proper protection for objects. Very poort texts and captions. Trilingual policy not followed.	No proper lighting or thought through display. Crowded displays.
Interactivity	Collection of objects only.	Collection of objects with audio visual. Guided tours upon request. Some educational promotional activities not directly related to the museum available such as monthly lecture series.
PR and Promotions	No leaflets, proper sign boards.	Some low quality leaflests and basic infromation available. Low quality website available.
Relevance to Reconciliation	No relavance, both positive or negative. No link between past and present.	Marginal relavance to soft issues of war, violance, reconciliation or other community issue.

3- Average	4 - Good	5 - Excellent
Average attendance. Located in a fairly easy place to find.	Located centrally. Well visited. Open for public at least from 9am to 5 pm on most part of the week.	Located centrally in close proximity with other highly visited sites or a World Heritage Site. High daily attendance. People can easily give directions to those who do not know where the musuem is. In some cases, wheel chair accessible.
There seems to be a theme and a focus, though articulation can use some improvement.	The theme and the focus of the museum are well articulated. Vision / mission obvios to the visitors. People are able to understand the texts easily.	Strong story and theme which is articulated in a creative and emotionally gripping way. Strong intertextuality. Layered narratives for adult and younger audiences.
Display is not modern, but decent. Texts are in more than one language. Perhaps with some grammer errors.	displays are good. Building is well maintained. Decent lighting, AC	Modern technology, state of the art, good and porfessional ligthing, placement of objects thought through. Trilingual policy consistantly followed. Centrepieces strategically placed.
Interactive touch screens. Some educational programmes such as interactive activity available while touring the museum.	Displays are not one way, but has the visitor engaged in a discussion with the guide. Regular activities related to the museum theme with school groups.	Proper educational programming exists with allocated staff performing educational activities through out the day. Visitors know of and attend educational tours and programmes.
Some decent leaflets available. Have a facebook page or website.	Well feldged website. Address lists of people who attend museum events available. Events are communicated.	Well thought through promotional campaigns exist along with a regular event calendar or newsletter.
Average relavance to softer issues of diversity, multicuturalism and pluralism. The main topic is not reconciliation but displays certain artifacts related to the topic.	High relvance to issues of diversity, post war context. Or displays work, objects related to the multicultural past of sri lanka or the war period. Museum is located in a war affected area.	Direclty deals with issues of post war and memory, consciously. The main theme/story of the museum is a related topic. Actively promotes a certain standpooint regarding the poltical issues related to idenity and reconciliation.

Annex 7: Ranking of museums based on single criteria

1. **Most accessible museums (Score of '5-Excellent' in the evaluation scale of 1-5)**
    - National Museum Colombo
    - Sigiriya Museum, Sigiriya
    - Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre
    - Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle
    - Palace Museum, Kandy
    - International Buddhist Museum, Kandy
    - Martin Wickramasinghe Museum of Folk Culture, Koggala
    - Independence Memorial Museum, Colombo
    - National Maritime Museum, Galle
    - Historical Mansion Museum, Galle
    - Jaffna Fort, Central Cultural Fund
    - Mini Museum for Raja the Elephant, Kandy

2. **Highest Standards of Exhibition/Display Quality**
    (Score of '5-Excellent' and '4- Good' in the evaluation scale of 1-5)
    - Sigiriya Museum, Sigiriya (5)
    - National Museum Colombo (5)
    - International Buddhist Museum, Kandy (5)
    - Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre (4)
    - Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle (4)
    - Naval and Maritime Museum, Trincomalee (4)

3. **Museums with clear narrative design**
    (Highest score received is 4- Good in the evaluation scale of 1-5)
    - Sigiriya Museum, Sigiriya
    - International Buddhist Museum
    - Mini Museum for Raja the Elephant, Kandy
    - Heritage Museum, Kattankudy

4. **Most interactive museums with educational activities and innovative pedagogy**
    (Highest score received is 3- Average in the evaluation scale of 1-5)
    - Sigiriya Museum, Sigiriya
    - Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee

5. **Best Public Relations and Outreach (Highest score received is 3- Average in the evaluation scale of 1-5)**

> ➢ Sigiriya Museum, Sigiriya
> ➢ International Buddhist Museum
> ➢ Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre (4)
> ➢ Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle (4)

6. **Highest Relevance/Impact on post-war reconciliation (Positive Impact or Negative Impact)**
   (Score of '5-Excellent' in the evaluation scale of 1-5)

> ➢ Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre
> ➢ Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre, Jaffna
> ➢ Independence Memorial Museum, Colombo
> ➢ Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee
> ➢ Hood's Tower Naval Museum, Trincomalee

Annex 8: Visitor numbers of selected museums

Data from museum reports:

Colombo National Museum
April 2017 total nu of visitors: 54,471
Local adult: 9594
Local children: 836
Foreign adult: 6309
Foreign children: 97
School students: 35063
Teachers: 2572

Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre			
Average monthly visitors: 25000 (average of data from 3 months)			
Monthly figures			
2017	Jan	Feb	June
Local:	2831	10, 371	8112
Foreign:	17568	18979	5355
Total:	20399	29, 350	13 467
School students			
2017. 06.19 – 22 students			
2017. 06. 23 – 1080 students			

Data from verbal interview/ no source reports available:

Martin Wickramasinghe Museum of Folk Culture, Koggala
Average school children per day 2000 - 3000
Sometimes over 7000
But there are times during school examinations when there is less
Foreigners – range of 10 during low seasons to 200 during high seasons
Locals – 75 – 100 per day

Hood's Tower Naval Museum, Trincomalee
Upto 2000 people per day out of which about 1000 are school children
At a point restricted to 600

Galle Maritime
Average school children per day 600 – 700
Sometimes over 1000
But there are times during school examinations when there is less
Foreigners – range of 50 during low seasons to 200 during high seasons
Locals – 75 – 100 per day

Annex 9: Map of museums visited

Museums evaluated in baseline study

Museums Visited

1. Colombo National Museum

2. Independence Memorial Museum

3. National Museum Kandy

4. Palace Museum, Kandy

5. International Buddhist Museum, Kandy

6. Weliwita SanghrajaMuseum, Malwathu Vihara,Kandy

7. Archaeological Museum Kandy

8. Ceylon Tea Museum, Hantana

9. Temporary Exhibition of the central Cultural Fund Gallery

10. Mini Museum for Raja the Elephant

11. Maritime Archaeological Museum, Galle

12. National MaritimeMuseum, Galle

13. Historical Mansion Museum, Galle

14. Jaffna Fort, Central Cultural Fund Stall

15. Jaffna Archaeological Museum

16. Uthayan Newspaper Information Centre

17. Jaffna University Teaching Museum

18. Orr's Hill Army Museum, Trincomalee

19. Hood's Tower Naval Museum, Trincomalee

20. Naval and Maritime Museum, Trincomalee

21. Polonnaruwa Archaeological Museum and Information Centre

22. Martin Wickramasinghe Museum of Folk Culture, Koggala

23. Kathankudy Heritage Museum, Kathankudy

24. Tea Plantation Workers Museum, Gampola

25. Sigiriya Museum, Sigiriya

A sample of 25 museums out over 100 museums from major cities and tourist sites were chosen for evaluation

17. Jaffna University T...
14. Jaffna Fort, Centra...
18. Orr's Hill Army Mus...
20. Naval and Maritime ...
19. Hood's Tower Naval ...
25. Sigiriya Museum, Si...
21. Polonnaruwa Archaeo...
23. Kathankudy Heritage...
8. Ceylon Tea Museum, H...
24. Tea Plantation Work...
National Mus...
2. Independence Memorial...
22. Martin Wickramasing...
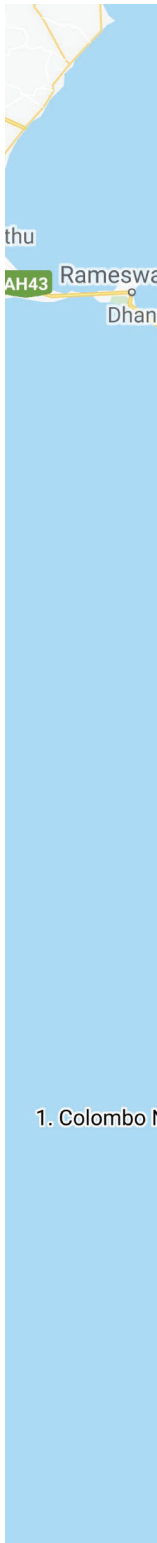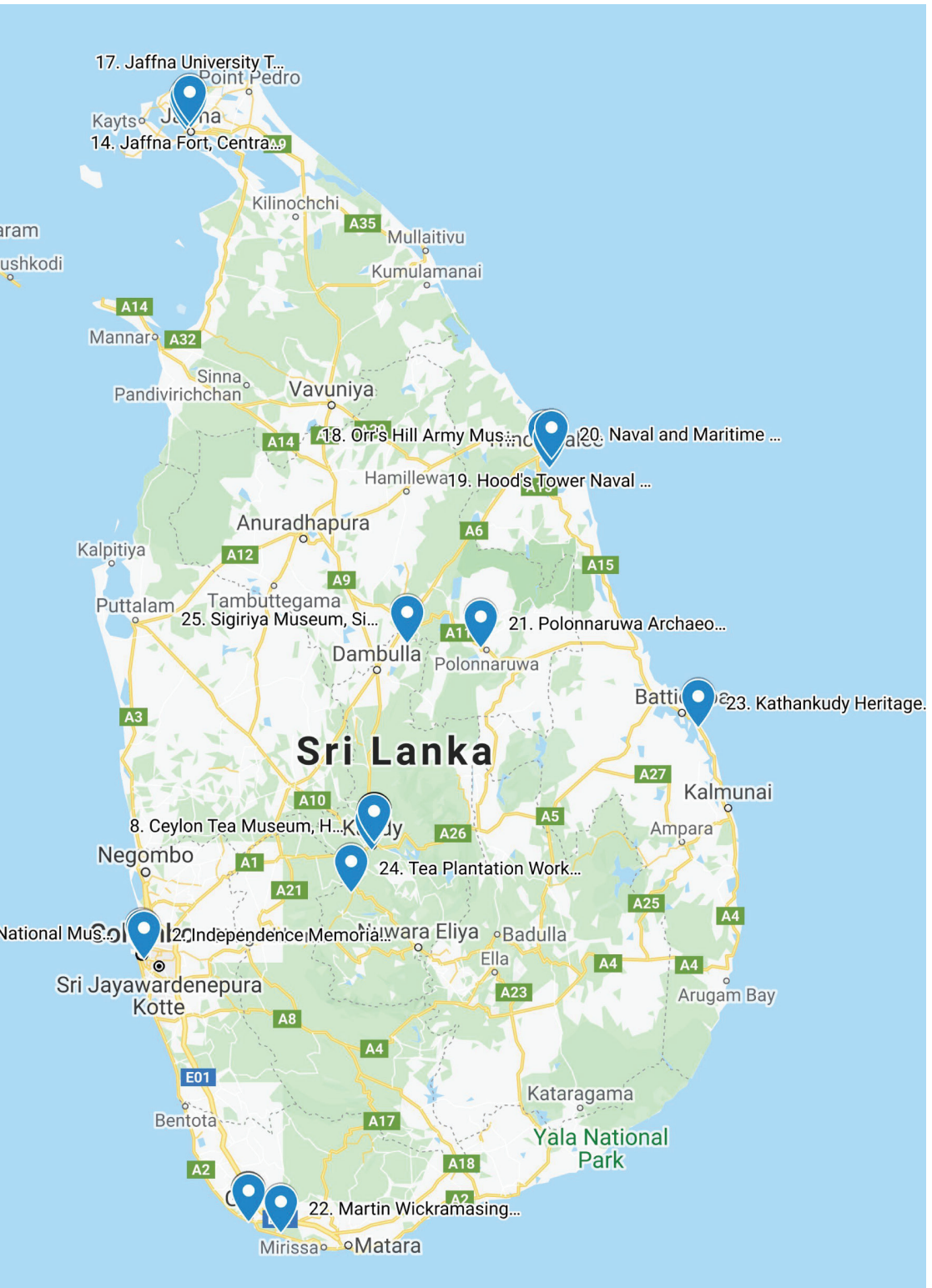
Annex 10: Recommendations submitted to the Office for National Unity and Reconciliation

Concept Note for ONUR prepared by Hasini Haputhanthri

Executive Summary of the Baseline Study conducted in 2017

In 2017, the GIZ Memory Culture Project commissioned me to conduct a baseline survey of museums in Sri Lanka, to ascertain the nature and scope of their contribution to memory and reconciliation in a post-war context.

Some of the crucial observations are,

➢ Sri Lanka has more museums than one would imagine, recording over 100 museums spread all over the island. Museums have a long history dating back to the colonial rule in the 1800s.

➢ Museums carry enormous credibility: People attach immense value and reverence to museums, and believe in the information and narratives museums present.

➢ Most museums record high visitor numbers, (both local and foreign), and draw school groups consistently. They are accessible to rural masses and are available outside Colombo, close to traditional locations of pilgrimage, tourist sites etc.

➢ Museums are central to ideas of history, culture, and national identity, thus making them undeniable, long- term contributors to reconciliation.

➢ The weakest areas are museum pedagogy and narrative design, stemming from an old-school understanding of museums. Despite high visitor numbers, museums suffer from poor audience engagement.

➢ Contribution to memorialization is negligible and problematic. 87% of museums are run by the state sector and communicate a centralized narrative. Only military museums memorialize the recent conflict from an exclusive perspective of the Sri Lankan army and navy. Minority groups remain under-represented.

➢ Relevance to reconciliation is high and contribution remains mixed, with a variety of narratives depicted, from the more exclusionary, biased to more inclusive and alternative narratives.

➢ Three types emerge with both negative and positive implications to memory and reconciliation: military museums, historical dialogue museums and alternative history museums.

What and how can ONUR contribute?

Based on the above assessment, ONUR can promote concepts and practices conducive to a reconciliatory memory culture in museums. However, due to the nature of museum establishment, it may not be possible to directly talk about memorialization, especially modelled after Western museums. In order to address more challenging issues of memory and identity conflict, one may have to take a holistic approach to working with museums, providing overall support to some of the following:

> ➢ supporting museums to improve narrative design and interactivity of displays such as designing audio guides etc. that promote diversity
>
> ➢ improving audience engagement through educational programming such as museum walks, guided tours, simple workshops, and mobile and temporary exhibitions
>
> ➢ strengthening outreach through public events such as film screenings, human libraries, lectures, and discussions related to reconciliation
>
> ➢ motivating staff to remain within museums through job enrichment and capacity development (since the biggest block is staff retention in the state sector)

The overall objective of the intervention can be geared towards making museums people-friendly and relevant, while gently introducing modern concepts of museology, memorialization etc.

It is also helpful to consider slightly different approaches for different sectors involved in museum management:

State sector: Working with national museums to transform them from nationalistic museums to historical dialogue museums, including minority histories and perspectives, improving pedagogy and narrative design, so that they make positive contributions to reconciliation.

Private/civil society sector: Working with private museums to improve pedagogy and community outreach, temporary and mobile exhibitions and community oral history projects etc. Support small scale, new museums on new themes such as memory, modern history, art history etc.

University/school sector: Partnerships with university departments (history depts. of Kelaniya & Jaffna, PGIAR etc) to train curators, historians and museologists through joint workshops on narrative design, pedagogy, memorialization, and related museum practices.

Military: Though the museums run by the forces have a significant negative contribution, ONUR may be able to enter into a dialogue with the forces, to make these more reconciliation oriented than being victory celebrations.

Possible interventions and activities

Short term, low cost, relatively easy interventions

1. "Celebrating Sri Lanka: A walk through a history of multitudes": design of audio guide for school children and adults, re-interpreting the Colombo National Museum collection through the lens of nation building and celebrating diversity

2. Movies at the Museum: a series of film evenings promoting alternative readings of history with debriefing discussions (immediate possibility with Colombo National Museum)

3. Museum Matters: a series of open learning events for historians, archaeologists, curators and educators from all communities with a focus on building inclusive narratives

4. Training Programme for museum educators on reconciliation and memorialization, introducing the mandate of ONUR and concepts of memory, reconciliation, transitional justice etc.

Mid-term, relatively substantial engagements

5. Small grants for temporary and mobile exhibitions based on collections in store (as a follow up to workshop 'curating the past')

6. "Making history come alive": Training programme for history teachers on engaging them to better utilize museums and their collections in teaching the history curriculum

7. Museum innovation and research grants/fellowships supporting local and foreign educators and younger people to work with museums

8. Exposure programme for museum professionals to India: Partition Museum, Remember Bhopal Museum

Long term, ambitious and cost intensive engagements

9. Policy dialogue for inclusive museum practice: i.e., addressing the issue of military museums, lack of support to museums in the North, employing museum staff from minority communities, independence of museums from the state structure

10. Peace Museum, Jaffna: converting the old district secretariat of Jaffna into a memorial museum.

Immediate next steps

1. Dedicated meeting with museum experts followed by internal reflection within ONUR

2. Discussions with heads of the Department of National Museums, Central Cultural Fund, Department of Archaeology

3. Preparation of proposal for cabinet approval etc.

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