


Chapter 11


The Government Museum of Tamil Nadu: A Beacon of Intercultural Understanding and Peace Education

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ABSTRACT

The Government Museum of Tamil Nadu, located in Tiruchirappalli, has evolved from a traditional repository of cultural heritage into a dynamic space for intercultural dialogue and peace education. This chapter explores how the museum uses its diverse collection and educational programs to promote cultural understanding and global harmony. By comparing it with Japanese grassroots peace museums, the chapter highlights the museum's unique approach to fostering intercultural respect and shaping a more inclusive, peaceful future through creativity, oral history, and digital media.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, the role of museums in fostering intercultural understanding and promoting peace education has gained significant attention. Museums, traditionally seen as repositories of art and history, have evolved into dynamic spaces where diverse cultures intersect and dialogue is encouraged. The Government Museum of Tamil Nadu, situated in the historic Rani Mangammal Mahal in Tiruchirappalli, exemplifies this transformative potential. Founded in 1983 and relocated to its current location in 1997, this museum not only preserves the rich cultural heritage of Tamil Nadu but also serves as a beacon for intercultural dialogue and peace education.

This chapter aims to explore how the Government Museum of Tamil Nadu leverages its vast collection of exhibits, ranging from ancient artifacts to interactive media, to promote the values of intercultural understanding and peace. By examining the museum's historical background, key exhibits, and educational initiatives, we will uncover the strategies employed to engage visitors in meaningful dialogue about cultural diversity and global harmony. The chapter will also draw comparative insights from Japanese grassroots peace museums, highlighting the unique approaches taken by the Government Museum of Tamil Nadu in contributing to the broader goals of peace education.

Through this exploration, we will demonstrate the critical role that creativity, oral history, and digital media play in enhancing the museum's impact. By positioning itself as a center for learning and intercultural exchange, the Government Museum of Tamil Nadu not only preserves the past but also actively shapes a more inclusive and peaceful future. This chapter will offer readers a comprehensive understanding of how this institution has become a vital instrument for fostering global communication and intercultural respect.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE GOVERNMENT MUSEUM OF TAMIL NADU

The Government Museum of Tamil Nadu (Sankaranarayana, 1997). (See Fig1), now situated in the historic Rani Mangammal Mahal in Tiruchirappalli, represents one of the state's most significant cultural and historical institutions. Originally established to serve the cultural needs of the Tiruchirappalli region, the museum has evolved into a central repository of Tamil Nadu's rich heritage. Housed in the Rani Mangammal Mahal (see localization in Fig2), a building steeped in history

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