

# **Museumization of Tribal Material and Non-Material Culture: A Detailed Study of the Madhya Pradesh Janjaatiya Sangrahalaya, Bhopal**

**Ayush Kushwaha**

## **Abstract**

*Tribes were the focus of intense ethnographic scrutiny in the colonial period. They were the object of extensive painting and photographic collections and it continues even today. Tribal culture and tribal art museums have been established all over the country. This paper attempts to analyze how the practice of museumizing produces a certain knowledge about tribals by looking at the category 'tribal' as it is displayed within the tribal art museum of Bhopal, namely Madhya Pradesh Janjaatiya Sangrahalaya. This paper also outlines the efforts made by the museum officers to distinguish it from other museums through the steps taken to ensure the participation of tribes in the museum's activities from the very beginning.*

**Keywords:** Tribes, tribal art, museum, museumization, cultural diversity, tribal aesthetic, tribal spiritual world.

## **Introduction**

Designed by Revathi Kamath and inaugurated in 2013 by Pranab Mukherjee, the *M.P. Tribal Museum or Madhya Pradesh Janjaatiya Sangrahalaya* is a state initiative that showcases historical and cultural narratives depicting different facets of tribes inhabiting the state of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. The museum is a rich repository of traditional aesthetics, artworks, cultures, customs, and rituals of indigenous tribes such as the Gond, Bharia, Korku, Sahariya, Bhil, Baiga, and Kol. The large campus is divided into six colorful galleries (cultural diversity, tribal life, tribal aesthetic, tribal spiritual world, Chhattisgarh gallery, and Rakku gallery) showing the diversity of the seven tribes of the state.

The material culture of tribes can be defined as the artefacts which are made and used by them to satisfy their needs while non-material culture includes the norms of cultural behavior in relation to the artefacts in a particular geographical area. S.M. Patnaik defines material culture as “the finished or unfinished (depending

---

Ayush Kushwaha, Research Scholar, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Delhi 110067. Email: shaurya12k@gmail.com