

Museums and Society

By

Dr. SATYA PRAKASH

M.A., Ph.D.

*Director, Archaeology and Museums,
Government of Rajasthan.*



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DEPARTMENT OF MUSEOLOGY

(FACULTY OF FINE ARTS)

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

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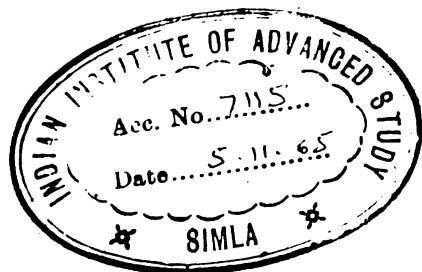
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MUSEUMS AND SOCIETY

By Dr. SATYA PRAKASH

Museum—Its Place in Society

CHAPTER I

Museum is a public institution. It occupies a very important place in democracy, which being a Government by the people, for the people and of the people, naturally, judges its prosperity when it stands for the people, is run by the people and is an institution of the people.

Man's right to knowledge and free use thereof is a key to the success of democracy, Museum, being an agent of education, promotes knowledge and its free use through its exhibits, which generally deal with the tangible objects of man's history and heritage and act as the champions of creative expression in contemporary life.

Our Society is now not simple. It is rather complex in character. The world is shrinking day by day through Science. The shrinking of the world has made neighbour of us all. Each one of us is indebted to the whole world for the beauty and comforts, which surround us. The various parts of the community are now continental in scope. In order to give children the environmental experience, necessary to an elementary understanding of their relationships with and indebtedness to the other, our Social structure demands and compels the school to seek a shortcut to bring the world and its work to the school-room door. Such a shortcut is the museum.

A museum is a sign of civilisation as are schools, libraries and other agencies of knowledge and culture. If properly supported and skillfully arranged, a museum can prove to be a powerful instrument of visual education. A museum has certain special characteristics, which make it unique in the fields of education and recreation. It is a museum and only a museum, which preserves the tangible evidence of man's history, of his creativeness, and of the physical aspects of the world he inhabits.

A museum, to fulfill its function perfectly well as an institution of visual education, first of all, collects and preserves objects. This is done with discrimination and purpose. Each object is identified, recorded and placed in its proper historical and natural sequence. As without objects there is no museum, so is without a museum no organised medium of transmitting, from one generation to the next, the tangible evidence of man's achievements. But a museum that merely collects and conserves is a mere storehouse. So the second charge put upon the museum is to use these collections for the pleasure and enlightenment of the visitor. The museum has, therefore, to make its possessions available in exhibitions and in study collections—to every student, to every man, woman and child, whose curiosity brings him or her into the museum. The worth of an object, it has been said, is measured not only by its beauty and variety but also in proportion to its use.

A museum in democracy not only collects wisely and presents its collections skillfully and tastefully but interprets its material and exhibitions also through publications and in organised educational programmes. If a museum performs with intelligence all these three functions—(a) col-

lecting and preserving material, (b) presenting and using material and (c) interpreting material, it fulfills successfully the purpose for which it stands established. It then attracts, entertains and arouses curiosity, which ultimately leads to questioning. In an ultimate sense, it then promotes learning and serves as an educational institution, set up and kept in motion for helping the members of its community to become happier, wiser and more effective human beings.

A museum grows out of its community. It examines its community life first and then lends its energies to supply to the community some of the materials, which it needs.

The need to point out the difference between a museum and an activity centre is absolutely essential at this stage. A museum deals with objects: without objects there is no museum. A museum is, therefore, concerned with visual material and is an institution of visual education. All museum activities are, naturally, related to and based on and derived from the Museum's collections and exhibitions. This is just as true for a museum catering to the interest of either children or to that of the adults.

An organisation that does not have collecting and exhibiting as one of its functions is not a museum but an activity centre, may it be either for arts, crafts or Nature. One of the first points to be clarified and determined is whether this project is a museum or an activity centre. Since the present thesis relates to the museums and the part they play in democracy, the observations made here are confined to the museum's sole objective in the democratic set-up of a country.

The first consideration in establishing a museum, large or small, either in a town, institution, society or school is that it should have some definite objective or purpose to fulfil and the next is that means should be forthcoming not only to establish it but also to maintain it in a fitting manner to fulfill that purpose.

Some persons are enthusiastic enough to think that a museum is, in itself, so good an institution that they have only to provide for it a building, showcases and a certain number of specimens, no matter exactly what to fill them with and then the thing is done ; whereas the truth is that the work has only then begun. The aim of a museum is to offer to its visitor an opportunity to find out about himself and also to arouse his interest in the world about him and his forefathers or his world neighbours. True it is that no museum or gallery tells the whole story but each one, judiciously planned, tells only a part of it.

For young or old alike, museum exhibits give an understanding of the continuity of human endeavour and relate our everyday life, our trades and professions, to the long history and peoples throughout the world. At the same time, the opportunity to see actual objects, which are the products of man's skill and inventiveness and the visual manifestations of his mental and spiritual beliefs, clarifies concepts and ideas, often left dim and hazy. Carefully planned exhibits help to build an understanding and respect for the achievements of peoples, no matter how long ago they must have lived or how different their lives be from those of our own. Through a development of this respect for and understanding of the past and the strange, it is the hope of all educators that

young people may become the better citizens of tomorrow. Far from being a store-house or even a treasurehouse of the past, the museum of to-day has to offer in this age that vital spur to curiosity and imagination, without which progress, new invention, new thinking and planning are impossible. Obviously then if these things are true, a museum and its collections are the most vital and valuable educational source for any community but it can only serve its purpose and reach its highest goal, if the members of the community are aware of its value.

By using modern methods of display, improved lighting and such other technical means, a museum, no doubt, makes itself very attractive to all segments of population but in a democratic set-up it has to do something more than it and that is to encourage young people to develop their own talents by doing, because the museum, being fundamentally a service institution, is to play the role of furnishing guidance and channelling of pent-up energies and to provide the place for mentally healthful pursuits. It is also the work of museum to interest the public in what the artist creates in the field of fine and decorative arts through the use of museum exhibitions and collections, thereby to develop the aesthetic and creative sense of the masses, for whose benefit the museum stands. A museum is not a place to impart knowledge to visitors by virtue of its exhibition of strange and unheard of objects but rather by its presentation of the familiar and the near familiar also. Learning does not come by just contact, it comes by the re-examination and rearrangement of the known and then very slightly by addition of information and also by presentation of it in an orderly way. Besides this, being a source of information and inspiration, a museum also

increases among the masses, the enjoyment of the world of nature through the use of museum collections of varied types and trips in the field.

The world is changing so rapidly these days in so many ways in politics, family life, science, communications—that it is hard for too many of us to orient ourselves, hard not to find the world a terrifying and almost undistinguishable blur. The museum helps us in the task of bringing coherence out of this wilderness. Museum collections have, therefore, to be as diverse as the interests of humanity. As the derivation of the word ‘Museum’ suggests, a museum is a centre of study and a temple of all the muses. A truly representative museum in democracy, serves such a model. Study and research are its lifeblood and the universality of its rich and historical collections is not judged merely by the total number of its visitors but by the manifold channels of its activities and by the services it renders to the public, for whom it stands established. Such a museum is mostly a composite museum having sections of fine arts, industry, science, natural history, culture, health, history etc. But the establishment of such a big museum is fraught with serious problems like a very big building, vast material for equipping it, an elaborate administrative machinery for running it and so on. These problems are solved if the Government and public walk hand in hand and the response of the public to the museum movement is spontaneous, lavish and lasting and the Government is able to establish small museums forming various units of a big one in various parts of the country with the help of munificent donations made by the public spirited individuals as is done in America. In this case one National Museum in some central place with its

branches in various states has to be established and the select pieces from each area made to form part of a travelling museum. Agricultural museum, Cultural museum, Science museum, Personality museum, Industry museum, Archaeological museum etc. are also established in different regions by the State Governments and also by the public just like aided educational institutions not merely as storehouses of the objects of art, science, industry etc. but as truly representative institutions of these branches of knowledge with a view to imparting education to the community. Such institutions are temples of various Muses, throbbing with life, radiating joy and disseminating knowledge. When and if these stand established as true refineries of tastes and foundaries of ideas, they, naturally, attract the masses and become the favourite resorts of the enlightened and the innocent alike.

All such museums have to be free from financial worries so that these museums might have no other concern but to think of the ways and means of making themselves more and more attractive and to think of serving in the best possible way to the Society, whose products these are and whose well-being they have at heart. In advanced countries like America, a museum has grown into a fine educational institution with its multifarious activities directed to delight the heart and through delight, to instruct and to inspire the public. It is then a part of the education department, which, in an enlightened democracy, is the State's concern. Education, when it is State's concern opens the doors of knowledge to all and leads to the production of right types of citizens. In England both education and health are nationalised with the result that the most important problems of humanity there are

solved by the State and the citizens there are given opportunities of developing their talents in other fields of work themselves. Such a policy is followed by all the democratic countries, for this policy, when put into action, leads to the allround development of society by furnishing to the public right type of guidance and inspiration for the successful channelling of its pent-up energies and also by providing them with some place for mentally healthful pursuits.

It is a matter of great concern for us all that 90% of the museums in the world are principally storehouses of antiquity and oddities of Nature and also dingy structures containing dingy objects with one piled on the top of the other, much like those in an attic or a storage cellar. The Museum in the world is the most neglected and the least supported with its full potentialities least realised although it is the most powerful source of public education. In a democratic country like India, which is a new nation but with large population and also with rich cultural tradition that goes back to several thousands of years, museums have a very important role to play. India has already entered a new era, in which she has to compete economically in a fast moving world of science and technology. As an agricultural nation with its basis burried deep into rural economy and also with an illiteracy of over 75%, India is pledged to raise its living standards by entering into an age of enlightenment and economic independence. In order to become a modern nation by over-coming age-old traditions and set patterns of life, India has to change this archaic devoutly religious agricultural nation into a modern technological society, based upon a sound economic footing but without striking at the root of its rich

and glorious traditions. This change has to come through audio-visual means which, according to educators, is the only means to speed up the process of learning. The museum helps one in achieving this aim through its progressive methods, which include in them three dimensional teaching aids. Such aids only fulfill the basic needs of any undeveloped country. To sum up, museum in democracy exists only for education, by preserving the collections, by displaying the collections and by interpreting the collections. Interpretation, the most important aspect of any museum, is achieved not only through scholarly monographs but also by the publication of popular interpretative literature, graded adult education programmes, all day programmes, and, primarily, through its well thought of and selected exhibits, since the largest number of visitors is, thus, affected.

In a democratic set-up it is desirable that museums be placed under the charge of educators, who should have a broad educational outlook and work in an atmosphere of cordiality and social service. Besides providing the service of a band of literate guides, who have a clear grasp of the importance of exhibits on display in a museum and who are capable of lecturing on the exhibits in an easy style and in the dialects of the visitors, museums in a democratic set-up take steps to utilise their collections in conjunction with supplementary materials, graphs, charts, maps, photographs etc. so that the material on display speaks for itself. In no case is a visitor to the museum in democratic set-up left to his own devices. The attitude of the present day museum authorities to leave the uninitiated visitor to his own limited resources and knowledge in the subject matter of the contents of the museum he visits has not, at all,

proved conducive to the well-being of the community, for which the museum stands established. The visitor, under the circumstances, is not able to create even a semblance of meaning and unity in what he sees inside a museum.

Museums in democracy have to be properly designed, so far as their buildings are concerned. The old structures are not fit to function as educational institutions, for they have little exhibition space, no adequate storage facilities and inadequate offices. There are no auditoriums, no class rooms or lecture rooms in them. There do not exist also inside the museums means of relaxation for visitors. In the event of museum fatigue visitors do not have even benches, chairs, sofa-sets to sit on, thereby getting an opportunity to relax themselves right in front of their favourite pieces of art objects. Cafeterias or snack bars for the public also do not exist in most of the museums in several parts of the world.

A museum in democracy has to fall in line with the worldwide trend towards relating the contents of a museum to the needs of the people in all walks of life and to furnish intellectual, social and cultural opportunities not merely for scholars but also for everyone be he or she rich or poor, educated or illiterate, young or old. The adoption of such an attitude in the establishment and running of a museum is but a necessity, if the democracy and its principles are to be lived. Unless the needs of the ordinary people are stimulated properly, by revealing to them the extent and importance of their culture, by explaining, amplifying and expanding the understanding by people of their present way of living and showing paths of advancement that no words can convey, the very aim of establishing a museum is likely to be defeated. When and if this

is achieved museums, truly, stand the test of democracy and be the most effective means of popular education.

In a welfare state like that of India, museums deserve to be established with this philosophy in view that the welfare of the people of India is to be promoted through them by showing the nation, state or region to the outside world and the outside world to the nation, state or the region respectively. Instead of affording a temporary sensory stimulation and the satisfaction of a passive form of curiosity, a museum in a democratic set-up educates the people in the field of health, science, industry, agriculture etc. through the visual aids usually lodged in museums and seldom encountered in any full fledged teaching institution. Education in the techniques of living is likely to bring the public into the present day world, so as to enable them to live better, healthier and more human lives. Such a noble purpose is served only through country's museums, which create among the public in democracy a general awareness of the world but do not instruct. The work of instruction in the three R's is the work of school, where admission is always restricted in accordance with the number of seats available in class rooms. Class room instruction is denied to the elder people, to whom formal schooling is a rare experience and to whom some modern means of communication like radio are also barred because of illiteracy standing for economic as well as intellectual poverty. It is a common belief that this education is likely to bring about unemployment among the people, who, with a general awareness of the world around them, have been found usually dissatisfied with their own position and status and dream of a better life with greater social prestige and that most farmers become

lost to their own homes and environment by moving into the cities in order to find their fortunes there after having left their fields. But this danger is overcome if with proper education, schools and museums, rural economy is developed on right lines and the value of the farmer as a good producer to the welfare and general economy of the country is pointed out in clear terms and he is urged to remain on the farm and to strive for greater crop production through highly advanced agricultural techniques. In this great task, museums in rural areas with their visual presentations go to contribute a good deal. A net work of such small rural museums works wonders in democracy. This is also achieved through mobile museums, functioning in both trains and motor vans.

Museums in democracy, in short, serve educational purposes and do not merely show off cultural treasures or treasures of Nature. When this attitude is adopted the collections serve as examples in telling a large story. The presentation of cultural-cum-historical-cum-scientific history of India alone ceases to make exhibits as mere objects of luxury and show. The contemporary museum ideals in a highly enlightened democracy tend to fill a large gap in general education and fulfil the basic obligations of museums to the public. It is high time that an exhibit in our museums be installed only for showing or telling a story in a step by step progression, on the basis of our collections and be supplemented by the visual appeal made through them with reconstructions, charts, graphs, maps, photographs, thereby bringing about the total effect to the level of not only stimulation and meaning but also of awareness.

CHAPTER II

Museums—Their Types

The child in every age has belonged to the School, the adolescent to the High School and College, the Scholars—both young and old, to the university but the vast majority of the general adult public has remained neglected, for it has not remained under the control of any recognised educational institution. Their neglect is really inexcusable in democracy. Museums with visual aids should, therefore, see to rectify this situation in a truly democratic set-up of a country.

Museums in most of the countries of the world have devoted and are devoting a disproportionate amount of energy and time to the cultivation of the upper circles. It does not take any statistics to prove that the people, who now frequent museums form a minute fraction of the total population of any one city, town or village. What is becoming of the vast majority of the people? Are they not members of the public? Hasn't the museum a definite duty to fulfil towards them? The answer to the above questions is 'It is here in the field of popular education that the museum of a democratic set-up belongs today.' It is here that the museum must make its own and its great contribution to the total cause of education. A vigorous attempt need be made now to see that the museum as an already established institution with vast resources of material of all kinds and description takes its place beside the library as a bulwark of the movement for popular education. Museum and Library—one, the ex-

ponent of the printed page and the other of the visual object, undoubtedly, provide a stability to this movement.

Museums with their potentiality of reaching millions of our citizens have not only to teach at home, they have also to travel abroad with their portable material, their photographs, their text books and their periodicals. Books, leaflets and journals have to assist and supplement the work of teachers and accompany, explain and amplify the exhibits, which art museums send out, and thus help to make museum expenditure seem worth while.

That education must be active and not passive, and that it must be intimately connected with the life of the people is the need of the day. Thus in order to become a dynamic force museums of today have to alter and to modify their objectives and their internal structures so as to fit the changing world conditions and the advances in social thought. This view point naturally brings the question of their types for being discussed. These types may be divided into two—one on the basis of control and the other on the basis of the material displayed in museums. Presuming that education in democracy is the concern of the Central and the State Governments and that it is nationalised (as we find in England) museums, as instruments of education, have to be under the control of the Central and State Governments. Such institutions act as model institutions at important centres in different important areas of the country and have a composite character so far as their contents are concerned. In the capital of the country and in exceptionally big cities and also in every capital of the state stand established National, State and Regional Museums, not merely to collect and preserve the cultural heritage of the region,

state or nation but also to educate the public. The aim of these institutions is to show the country, state or the region to the outside world and the outside world to the region, state or country in which these stand established.

National Museum :

This museum of a country is generally a composite or a multipurpose museum, holding a mirror upto the achievements of the nation in various fields of life. National collection is supplemented with other collections of the other important countries of the world in the same fields in order to give an idea to a visitor about the nation's achievements on a comparative basis. This acts as a model institution set-up by the federal Government in some central place with a view not to display merely the achievements of the nation but also to educate the public visiting the capital. In order to solve the problem of building, which has to be a very big one in the case of such a museum, this museum may be split up into different sections, each or combination of two forming a museum as a branch of the big national museum.

State Museum :

This is the principal museum of the state in a country. It is generally a multipurpose museum for the understanding of the state in all its phases and also for educating the state people so far as their knowledge about the outside world in those very spheres is concerned. Such a museum displays in it the outstanding types of the material of the importance of State level but in an international setting and on a comparative basis.

Regional Museums :

Areas within the State, distinguished in themselves on the basis of their achievements in one or more fields, have

such museums to present their achievements in various fields to those who go there from outside and also give a knowledge of outside world to the people of those regions. These are run by the State Governments or by private organisations.

Educational Museums :

These museums are not necessarily run by the State Government but by both State and the public. These are also run by Schools, Colleges and Universities and attached to Schools, Colleges and Universities to supply visual aids to education in all these educational institutions.

Local Museums :

In order to recreate the past in the minds of the living, thereby to create feelings of patriotism among the people of the locality for their own area and also to show the locality to the outside world and the outside world to the locality, local museums are started by local bodies, Development Departments and the public in small towns and in a group of villages with a population of atleast 5,000 or so. These are run also in community projects area and in extension blocks for imparting civic education.

These museums have to be planned carefully. These museums in rural areas have such visual material through models and pictures as has a bearing on rural life and are useful to both children and adults in becoming useful citizens. The exhibits are not overloaded with labels.

Specialised Museums :

Such museums of Science, Natural History, History proper, Art, Industry etc. are established either by philanthropic rich men or by the National or State Governments to cater to the tastes of Scholars. These museums

have physical and chemical science material of every type, Botanical, Zoological and Geological material displayed with anthropological and archaeological exhibits to show the relation of Nature with man in a comprehensive setting with proper emphasis on the physical environment of man. Museums of History are not merely store-rooms of the antiquities of the past and are not also to moralise on their basis but to present a brief history of every essential aspect of daily use and also to give a pictorial view either through pictures or through models of the civilisation of the world. Such museums also arrange the setting up of historic house museums, where the old striking monuments, which constitute every nation's glory are preserved with the pertinent material belonging to the monument in their true chronological setting, where it is so possible. Field Museums or site museums are set up as a part of the specialised museum programme with a view to preserving the sanctity of those areas where the material of the past is available either in the form of loose sculptures or antiquities brought to light as a result of excavations.

In order to enliven the interest of the local public in such museums, ample use of models, diagrams, plans and charts is made.

The Museums of Art in democracy display in them specimens of all the fine arts, music, drama, dance, poetry, painting, sculptures and architecture. These specimens are either in the shape of original objects or in that of their models, pictures and paintings. The decorative Arts also have a place in such museums. Classical and traditional arts are displayed side by side with those of the present so as to fulfil the aesthetic, scientific and practical aims of education. The presentation of art material in such a

setting goes a long way in giving a connected story of the growth of society.

In Industry museums, raw product and its application are demonstrated. The various processes of work are explained through models in this museum. There is a Research Centre attached to this museum, which gives harder and harder designs to craftsmen after having had researches on the basis of the materials available in the museum. Suitable literature of various types—general and specialised are brought out by such a museum. Such museums cover the fields of prominent industries in an international setting.

Public Museums :

These museums are the museums of general education and are in the form of sub-museums attached to big museums of regional or state types. These are the museums in Libraries, museums of private collections, Children's museums of various types and social education museums for adults.

Side by side with these are the open air museums attached to Botanical and Zoological gardens etc. known in some countries as trail side museums, which by character are located where circumstances offer a subject to be explained. These are generally established where nature provides an exhibit of earth formation, wild life etc. A trail-side is found along a trail. It may, in the other words, be a Park Museum, Garden Museum etc. Such museums give recognition to the educational values of national parks, gardens etc.

Children's Museums :

Such museums, as a rule, are established as parts of the big multipurpose or composite museums by the State

or National Government but small museums for Children are established by public also in both rural and urban areas.

Though the best type of children's museum is the one that is a part of a large museum, where all the facilities of the large museum, materials, equipment, staff, expert knowledge are at the disposal of the Children's museum, where there is a broader and wider experience gained by the children through their use of the large museum in addition to the exhibitions provided specially for them at their own level in the Children's museum, where proximity to the large museum takes a transition possible from childhood interests to adult interests and where the School visiting service is carried on to a greater degree and more effectively because of the variety of exhibitions offered by the large museum, certain children's museums with such material of visual type deserve establishment as might be touched by the children. Such museums have to be multipurpose ones and also be without labels. All the exhibits in these museums are desired to be in the form of pictures and models.

Children's museums have collections and exhibitions in art (fine and decorative), nature and science with activities in art crafts, nature and Science. The ideal children's museum includes all of these activities under one roof because such a museum only can offer to the child a variety of interests and it has been the experience of those who are in charge of such a museum that Children enjoy the opportunity to participate in both art and science activities. All such museums have in them workshops in art, nature and science, which go to provide active participation on the part of the child. Such workshops are

planned by museum staff and conducted by them in such a way as to encourage the children to develop their own interests and skills individually. Formal teaching in all such museums is to be avoided in order that the usual school room technique may not be employed. A guide service through exhibitions is only to be provided for visiting school classes, according to a well developed plan, the basis of which is a knowledge of the School Curriculum.

If funds and resources for the establishment of the multipurpose types of children's museum do not exist, steps may be taken to establish Agricultural museum for children, General Education museum for children, Didactic Museums (for children of non-school going age) Village industries museums for children, Activity museums for children, Science museums for Children, Toys and dolls museums for Children, Natural History Museums for Children, Health museum for Children and Personality museum for the Children may also be set up in various areas. Exhibits in these museums are to be collected in duplicates. One of these exhibits is to be displayed in the museums and the other kept in reserve to be used in the travelling exhibition arranged in mobile vans for being taken round the State with a view to giving a complete survey of the essential types of knowledge that is required to be possessed by the citizens of a free country.

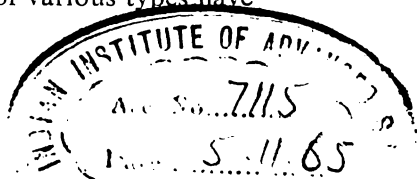
Folk Museums :

Such museums are set up to give an idea of the tribal culture of the country. These institutions are set up by the public to show to the outside world the main traits of their country's folk life. Similar traits of the other tribal culture of the world may also be shown on

a comparative basis. Such cultural traits deserve preservation and presented before the public with a view to presenting a contingent and growth of cultural traits despite the ravages of time.

Travelling Museums:

In the interiors of the country, where people pass their lives quietly by being far from the madding crowds ignoble strife, it is the duty of the democratic Government to send rays of knowledge to them and not to allow them to remain in a state of ignorance. For such uneducated people, the Government in certain civilised countries have started mobile vans with such visual material, as are based on every day knowledge and sent to those areas. Open air museums as adjuncts to national parks and Zoos have also been established. Trail side museums as are common in U. S. A. have also been in suitable places with a view to afford both recreation and education to the community. In such a museum flora and fauna of the area has been displayed either in models or original and trails marked to the spots where these objects are actually found. The trees on the trails and other objects on the way have been labelled properly. Together with the display of such a type of materials, films are shown, stories narrated and songs sung through loudspeakers with a view to broaden the horizens of knowledge of those men and women of the rural areas, who form the bulk of a population in some of the countries of world. The exhibits and films show visitors not only their country but also salient features of some of the progressive countries of the world. Just like the purely Government aided schools and colleges imparting education to boys and girls in various stages, museums of various types have



to be both Government and aided ones. Let the philanthropic public and the national Governments walk hand in hand and accomplish the noble task of raising the level of the general knowledge of the community, to whom they owe a duty in democracy.

CHAPTER III

Museums—Their Organisation

With a museum, as with a good restaurant, it is not only the menu that counts but the organisation also. The museum in a democracy is fundamentally a service institution. It is the museum's role to furnish its visitors guidance and inspiration for the successful channelling of pent up energies and to provide a suitable place for mentally healthful pursuits. A museum is not a place to learn by virtue of its exhibiting strange and unheard of things but rather by its presentation of the familiar and the near familiar also. Learning does not come by just contact; it comes by the re-examination and rearrangement of the known and then very slightly and very slowly, by the gradual addition of information by presenting it in an orderly way. The success of all this depends upon the good organisation of a museum. An exhibition is a short cut to knowledge. It is, in other words, an expression and a play of forces embracing a variety of cultural, economic and political trends; it is, in a way, a barometer indicative of a situation or the profession of a mission; pioneer of a coming evolution. It covers a large section of man's activities and is, for this reason, a meter of the cultural and economic standard of a nation. Its significance is enhanced in the extent and depth, to which it implies selection and peak achievement.

Exhibition means evaluation and the fulfilment of this requirement is the prominent task and the most important obligation of both exhibitors and organisers. In this selection, the visitor finds proof of a fact that what is

displayed represents the standard he is to apply. Impressed by this level of perfection, he carries it in his mind as an everyday criterion. An exhibition is an ideal medium for influencing public, for it is a form of expression used to project ideas by the display of objects and deriving its value from the fact that people learn more easily from concrete illustration than by trying to visualise words. Its function is, therefore, to draw attention to colour, light, motion and sound to create and sustain interest, entertainment, beauty, sentiment, mystery, humour etc. and to tell the story, order, simplicity, unity and progression. The duty of an organiser of a museum in democracy is to organise a museum in such a way that the museum holds the past and the present together, not by imposing the past upon the present but by showing its relation to the present. Such organisations present the new movements as the leading age of change and older works as representing traces of the transporting processes of the other days. Together, they demonstrate the psychic history of the human race. The proper organisation of a museum in democracy provides one with means to keep one's experience of movement and of change coherent and unified. In such a place only certified art, representative of the eternally good, true and beautiful is stored. In its architecture and its methods of installation, the museum adopts to each period and style that it presents. It is shaped by what is in it. It sets the stage for the drama of man's creative imagination. Its articulation helps to release the message within the work of art and to transform the onlooker.

In a properly organised museum, one is able to explore the boundless domain of truth, which is far stranger than

that of fiction, for a museum is a nice means of transport into fascinating realms and no magic carpet can equal it. The purpose of an organiser is to inform and persuade the public, which, in most cases, goes to a museum merely to have a good time there. To reconcile the cross-purposes of organiser and public and to make them serve each other is the problem of the exhibitor, who has therefore, to understand the tastes of the public and regard them with sympathy. The staff of a museum is its life. The quality of performance depends on the quality of the staff—their knowledge of museum techniques; their cooperation; their intelligence; their realisation of their functions as a public servant to give service. Though job and work are directly responsible for the tasks assigned, a flexibility of staff has to be maintained so that the museum operates as a unit with each staff member doing the work required to make the institution useful and effective. The entire staff of a museum, in a democratic set-up, has to be trained to do general functions like decency of school classes, conducting activities for children, adults, running workshops and art schools for both children and adults. The checkers, guides and the attendants, the staff at the information desk and museum shops, who remain directly in touch with the visitors, have to be honest courteous and well behaved. They are to be free from malice, loss of temper, even if provoked by public. The Director and his staff are to be cooperative with each other and also to work in a team spirit keeping in view the good of the institution, so far as it relates to the visitors, visiting it. The officers never distrust their subordinates, who, in turn, are also loyal to them and carry on their suggestions literally. The officers, in short, have to be thorough and

sympathetic administrators, who carry in their minds the entire operation of the museum. The administrative organisation of a museum is to be as simple or elaborate as the size of the building in a democratic set-up, where the very existence of a museum depends upon its service to the visitors. Each platoon from the security point of view is inspected carefully at the beginning of its tour of duty. The guards are kept informed about current events, expected special groups, temporary exhibitions and the like. Areas are under the Head guard, who has the duty of constant supervision and inspection of individual guards and their posts. Thus one man has full responsibility for the entire guard. Relief is arranged for temporary absence. The guard is informed through the Head to be effective but at the same time polite. It has also to be neat and free from obvious oddities. Both the Head and its guard are not only to be firm but possessed of self control. No person, given to sudden anger or other quirks of temperament is to be appointed in any capacity in a museum.

As the museum in a democracy aims at reaching all, it attracts all. In this effort it is of convenience to all, wide in its scope, varied in its activities, hospitable in its manners and eager to follow any lead the humblest enquirer may give. To achieve this objective, each member of the guide service in a museum is experienced in teaching. Each exhibit in the museum is labelled in the language of the locality and also in that of the international one. The language of the label is very simple and free from any technical terms. There is an explanatory card for the gallery or the room also in order to give a brief but meaningful commentary on the objects displayed in the gallery or room.

The organisation of the museum acquires, labels, describes, arranges for show and prepares for lending and study such objects as careful study and experience suggest in the expectation that the staff and objects combined entertain and be ready to try to interest and instruct the public including children and adults. It also shows to artisans of every branch of industry high and acknowledged standards of form and of colour, what the past had accomplished for them to imitate and excel.

The old attitude of museum towards art, archaeology and culture, which has been responsible for the establishment of museums of art, archaeology etc. on a vast scale is the old fashioned and the exploded one in an enlightened democracy, because it is not of the vital and practical interest to the working millions and that it has so long retarded its progress amongst us.

In organising a museum in democracy, an organiser has to collect only such material as each community uses to good advantage in formal and informal training through the eye. This training every member of every community is gaining in some measure every day in working moments of his life. The museum is only to supplement this instruction through its objects. This is possible only when the organisation of a museum in democracy is on sound lines and is suited to the needs of democracy. Besides displaying the material of various types, which is of practical use to the general public and scholars, young and old, the museum is to arrange its shows in such a way that it may entertain and be ready to interest and instruct such people as may have the wish and the time to visit casually the institution's headquarters.

In order to see the museum to fulfil its greatest function it should be the best endeavour of the organisers to bring its treasures into the lives of all the people. This is possible only when the best site is chosen for the museum's situation. The place of the museum must be accessible to the majority of people easily. It would be rather unfortunate from the point of view of the visitors if the situation of the museum is removed in anyway from the centre of the population. In selecting the site for a new museum building it is to be kept in mind that the situation be as near the civic centre as possible or atleast accessible from all parts of the city. If it is, perchance, outside the civic centre, it is to be on the side of probable future development. The plot has also to be large enough to allow for growth as well as to protect the museum from undesirable neighbours. It is also to be of such a character that the expense of building foundations and the maintenance costs, when built, is not excessive. From the organisational point of view there are to be the fewer public entrances. Two or more entrances prove rather confusing both from the point of view of the visitors and also from that of administration.

Monumental staircases are not to be given a place in museums. Every available inch of space in the building is to be used for exhibition purposes. It is better if there are no stairs at all in the building and the building is a single storeyed one. It is entertaining indeed if the exhibition rooms open out from the entrance hall and spread out a carpet of beautiful objects before a visitor to see and enjoy.

In case staircases have to be in a museum building, these are to be 6 to 8 ft. wide with easy steps to mount.

In the interest of public visiting the museum, museum rooms are to be organised in such a way that the rooms get the height necessary for proportion and good light and the walls of the room do not look too high and too dark at the top. A ceiling with a cove has been found to be best adapted for museum purposes. The cove makes a reflecting surface which sends the light directly unto the walls and diminishes the useless space above the hanging line. In the case of top light, the cove ceiling is particularly important, for the dark pocket between the skylight and walls is ugly and wasteful of light. Top light be resorted to for modern paintings alone but if it can be avoided it would be better. Side light is the best for sculptures and pictures when it enters from a height. In the case of objects displayed in show cases a low side light is almost preferable both from the point of view of display and from that of public.

In a democratic set-up when the museum holds a mirror up to the needs of the public and is consequently their favourite resort, organisers have to take precautions against fire, theft and dust, which are the three great enemies of a museum. In order to combat the evil of fire, the doors are made fire-proof and made to open out so that in the case of fire, exits be not impeded. Fire extinguishers are also provided at convenient places.

A museum needs provision of telephone system, bells, hardware, wiring for electric light, automatic burglar signals, electric bells attached to the show cases containing valuables. There is an internal telephone system desirable in a museum building.

In all the museums, in a democratic set-up, taps or drinking fountains are provided at various places inside a

museum. Seats for visitors must also be provided inside and outside the galleries. Rest rooms for both gents and ladies with attached toilets are also desirable in Museums. Lockers are there for attendants and a checkroom for the public near the entrance. There is also a smoke room for the staff and the public. Side by side with these amenities, there is also a cafeteria or a snack bar for the public.

In order to create a highly developed hygienic sense in public, museum has tidy and clean atmosphere pervading all through in it. All the ventilators of the museum are kept tidy and so also every nook and corner of it. That cleanliness is next to godliness is practised strictly in its observance and its demonstration made everywhere in a museum. This goes a long way in producing attractive conditions for the public visit.

CHAPTER—IV

PHILOSOPHY OF MUSEUM EDUCATION

Educational functions within a museum deal with materials stored or displayed in it and so museum educators are faced with a curious situation. The content of the museum has been collected, studied and arranged by people who are primarily interested in the materials themselves. They are either archaeologists, who as explorers found more material of archaeological interest, or the naturalists who discovered more birds, bees or flowers; they are the anthropologists, who have found new evidences of ancient practices or those who found instructive and beautiful specimens of handicrafts. These professional people constitute a comparatively large group in any museum and it is to their indefatigable industry that is due to the completeness of whatever materials the museum may have. It is upon this scientific, cultural or academic ground work that museum education depends. Education has to take these materials and deal with them in timely fashion. Materials be gathered, studied and exhibited for one purpose by one group and these may be used for totally different purposes by other persons and by other groups.

The entire public to use this material form a series of groups of people engaged in pursuing different interests with more or less common idealism and purpose. These public interests, mainly, be classified in four categories. There are home and family interests, which include interests relating to the shelter and housing, food clothing and family members. Then there are

numerous vocations ranging from the technical and professional through the skilled trades to the unskilled occupations. There are, besides these, many a vocations of all kinds from mere recreation to directed travel, the pursuance of hobbies and participation in associations and paternal groups. Finally there are the multiform social contacts and responsibilities, local, national and international, through which man reveals his respect for man.

The expert in museum material has his interest in only the vocational aspect, but the visitors to the museum aim at seeking satisfaction of other and very different interests. To quote a few instances, the homemaker may look at art objects from the stand point of her home, may look for help in home decoration or gardening or building, may seek to learn more about her children, may hope to know more about foods and food products or clothing, may desire greater understanding of genetics, child psychology or human physiology, all to the end that she may become a better wife and mother.

The worker in hides and leather may wish to see animals as the producers of the base products of his trade, and know more of the animals—the ostrich, the pig, the alligator—which he has known only in terms of hide rather than habits. The father may, on the other hand, wish to take his family to a great museum on some holiday to browse among the art of the world or to see areas of nature normally inaccessible; he may, on the other hand, seek to develop one of his own hobbies—possibly furniture building, painting or any of man's recreational uses of leisure time.

Likewise the businessman's club or fraternal organisation may wish to pursue some study whereby its members

can understand more fully and partake more readily of their relations with people of other nations.

The educational service to the visitors must solve the paradox of the hinted interests of the gatherers and arrangers of its materials and run the gamut of the social interests of the community, if it is to be genuinely productive, for the continued health and wealth of the museum is ultimately dependent upon the support of the clientele, so served.

What educational services a museum can render and how can those be resorted to would form the subject matter of the next chapter but here we are concerned with four types of problems which a museum is likely to face in education. These four problems are to serve the needs of the experts *i.e.* the professional workers of the museum and their colleagues to supplement other types of education such as the schools and colleges, to interpret the museum content in terms of contemporary psychological needs of people and to provide worthy recreation and stimulating entertainment for all.

The problem of serving the experts in various branches through the museum exhibits is relatively simple. It consists in making available to scholars the study collections of the museum and the library in giving them opportunities for discussions and reports, in disseminating through publications, or otherwise the culled information and in encouraging the transition of some amateurs into professional workers.

The problem of museum education to supplement regular education imparted through schools and colleges is also relatively simple. It is to analyse the supplementary need and to reorganise the museum content in the light of

the various expository possibilities. Its complications may be those of volume rather than character, in which case it is also necessary to provide mechanisms for such groups as the public educational institutions, special work for teachers and recreational camp and other youth leaders. To interpret museum materials in terms of the contemporary physiological needs of the public is not simple or easy, since neither the needs for the modes of their satisfaction have been established.

To provide recreation or entertainment is not difficult, particularly when it is free and when man's leisure time is on the increase. It is hard, however, to make the recreation worthy of the effort expended upon it, or if effort is not required, sufficiently stimulating to overcome physical inertia or museum education are those of museum exhibition. These lie in similar categories to the problems of learning.

For experts on all levels, exhibition is synoptic, encyclopaedic and so far as possible, complete, the character depending upon the form of material, whether it is of art, natural science, anthropology, history etc. Such a need has little difficulty in satisfaction, requiring merely material, time, patience, space, and relative permanence, problems with which museums have struggled ever since they were first established. Exhibition for supplementing curricula of teaching is variable and any variation can be determined only by the curricula it is designed to meet. Educational institutions in certain areas may have a single curriculum but in some large states where educational systems are variable there may be every variation or persistence. These variations may be guided by a series of educational philosophies ranging from scholastic dogmat-

ism on the one hand to doctrines of pragmatic individualism on the other. In an area of a single curriculum, a museum may find it easy to adapt its materials to its schools, but in a variable area, the museum must meet this variable need. It can do so only if the development of its exhibits has before it at all times the basic principle that the meaning of an exhibit lies in the eyes of the beholder. It is not the builder who builds into the exhibit the meaning that the viewer sees; it is in the past experience of the viewer, in the purpose with which he meets the exhibit in and in the attitude that he has towards it. These all taken together dictate what he sees, or how much, or with what kind of meaning.

Exhibition to interpret current psychological needs rests upon the basic meanings of the museum materials in relation to current problems of living, and the emphasis in exhibition for this purpose must, therefore, lie primarily in the problems rather than within the material field.

The problem of exhibition in providing worthy recreation and stimulating entertainment for all is not too difficult, but as a defined problem it has been neglected. Recreation that requires thoughtful activity is a worthy entertainment and as an end in itself, it has a real place in living. The main directive needed is to remember that all exhibits are not equally interesting to all people. Too often the installer of exhibits feels that interest is an attribute of the exhibit itself and is built into it, where as it is merely a feeling in the viewer which may draw or repel him. Every viewer sees each exhibit in light other than that of the builder. Thus two forms of exhibition seem to emerge, one, that in which materials are arranged in relation to themselves and second that in which the content

is subordinated to an external idea. Both types must be used for educational purposes and both types are necessary within the museum because neither, by itself, can serve all the exhibition and education needs. Museums, large or small, that confine all their exhibition programme to either form, thereby restrict their activities and limit their influence. The timely reorganisations that can be developed in the second form bring about an almost endless series of educational consequences. Special exhibits, arranged in terms of ideas external to the materials such as, 'Intelligence in animals,' 'Garments—from Fibre and Fur to Wearer' and 'Birds in Poetry' are all examples of this second form and are only samples in which learning can proceed through an understanding, where labels and teachers are almost unnecessary. In the first form, the temporary reorganisation of materials can not or need not be carried out physically. There are too many different rearrangements of synoptic materials necessary to meet the varied needs of people to make that possible. What is needed is constructive imagination, sympathetic insight and intellectual honesty in the teacher. As every child is educated with a wonderful birth-right, that of natural wonder and sheer delight in the world about him, it is the duty of parents, teachers and museum workers to keep this beautiful gift alive. For the success of democracy which depends on the quality of its individual members it is the duty of us all to see that our people grow into active, interested, eager, alive individuals with a forceful dynamic awareness in life. It is common knowledge that the moments of great awareness have given us poets, painters, inventors and discoverers and so museums should help the child or adult to keep his natural sensitivity. Knowledge

should never become the end but the beginning of one's growth. The desirable quality of awareness is developed in several ways. First of all, it is achieved by observation, visual perception. A thing is to be looked from all angles, top, bottom, sideways—and then how it changes with the circumstances, hot, dry, wet, young or old, until thoroughly familiar, should be studied.

Secondly, this awareness may be achieved by understanding how things are related. This may be done by seeing causes and effects, by seeing colours and how they can enhance or detract each other and by deciding what colour looks best.

The third step is the formation of personal taste. One should have a taste of his own and not have one as an imitation of others. This helps us in not losing our own imagination and also in keeping our individuality intact.

All museums have one purpose in common and that is of making people aware of themselves and their environment. Museums of various types offer a golden opportunity in providing a real adventure in awareness. Even old and known objects take on new meaning and significance when presented in a dramatic fashion. But the object itself is not enough to excite the imagination. In order to benefit the public properly, one has to get their attention first by instituting in museum such programmes of education as make him to excite his power of imagination thereby making him more keenly aware of the world about him. This would force him to find the key to successful living, which is, in other words, awareness, and which every one in this world wants to possess. This is a faculty which can, fortunately, be acquired through constant use and is best achieved by Museum education. Museum

education, to sum up, is the topical and constructive outcome of the museum collecting, arranging and exhibiting. It honours the museum in its activity, and in turn, is honoured by the museum since richest friends of each serve only to enhance those of the other.

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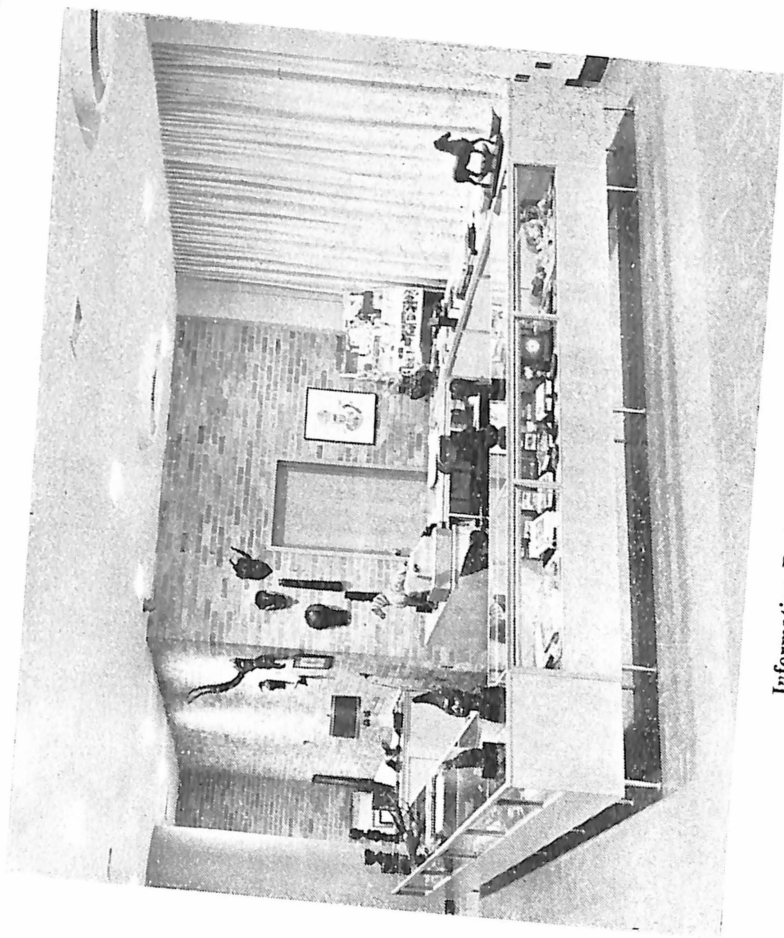
CHAPTER V

Museums—Ways and Means to Attract Visitors

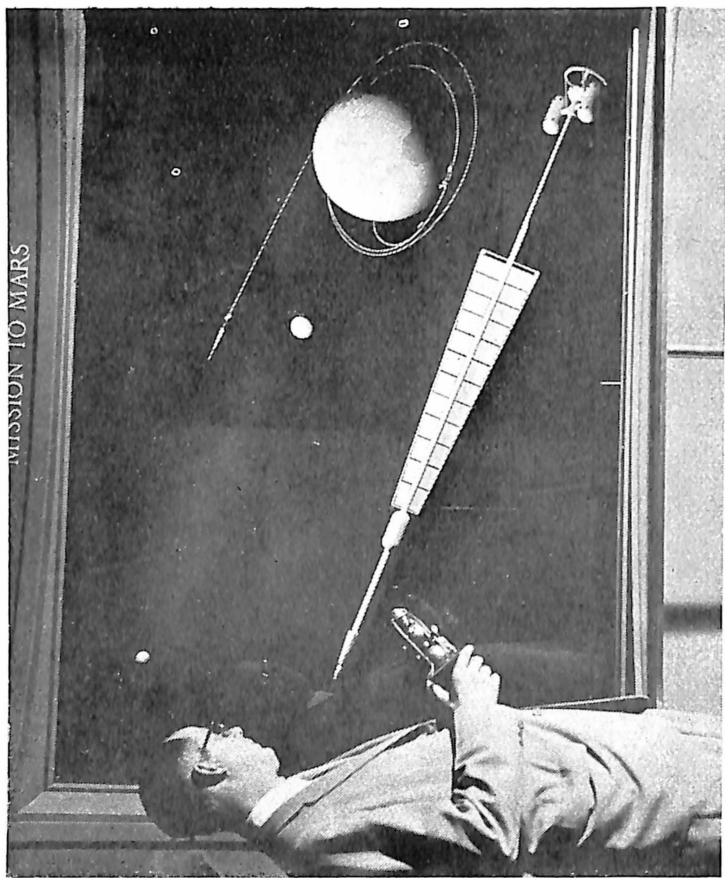
That 'a lesson is not taught unless it is received' is a famous maxim used in judging the success of a teacher in an educational institution. In the same manner a museum fails to fulfil its purpose, if it is not visited and used properly by the community, for whom it stands established. In the democratic set-up a museum itself reaches the public instead of the public going to it of its own accord. This is so done because the public in every such country is not, in most cases, museum-minded. Though publicity amounts to blowing one's own trumpet and is not considered dignified by some people to make the education institutions like those of museums, libraries etc. resort to this method, a museum in democracy owes a duty to the public to keep it informed of its activities by all the means it has at its disposal. In countries like India where percentage of literacy is unfortunately very low, the museums have to use, in the main, pictorial method of publicity. Suitable pictorial slides based on the important and attractive exhibits of the museum of the locality are prepared and shown at cinema houses and pictorial posters displayed at prominent places in the city and also at various places in the museum. The museum also holds popular and interesting concerts at the museum and also gives free film shows at the museum for the public. Short notices and announcements are got inserted in the daily or weekly papers. This helps the interested public in keeping it informed of the day-to-day activities

of the museum. The press-notes include such news to high light the important collections of the museum and also the new acquisitions in the museum. The announcement is also with regard to any show to be given at the Museum, or an exhibition to be arranged in the museum or a prominent personality having visited or about to visit the museum. A more picturesque way of keeping the people abreast of the museum movement is advertisement, which displays an assortment of certain appropriate museum exhibits, in photographic reproduction, with descriptive headings. A few lines also devoted to the history of the museum concerned and its principal features. No efforts and expenses are spared to make these advertisements attractive and lovely. And these are displayed at various places where they may easily catch the eye of the people e.g. railway stations, bus stands, railway carriages, buses, hotels, clubs, air ports, post offices, important crossroads of the city. These advertisements are particularly suggestive of how people can spend their holiday and spare time by paying a visit to the Museum.

Museums have to keep also in them some section in order to interest every type or group of visitors in some form or the other. This is done by arranging special exhibitions for them from time to time so that public of all types have a chance to visit the museum and to be interested in it. From a child of non-school going age to the adult, now retired from service and enjoying his old age pension or gratuity or a totally illiterate male or female of the lower middle class, everyone has something to interest himself or herself in a museum, be it in the form of an exhibit or in that of timely shows—cinema, drama, special exhibition, lecture or a musical or dance concert.



Information Desk and Museum Shop



A Lesson of Planets in a Museum of Natural History.



A Scene from Africa—a Museum Group to Enchant a Common Man



An Outdoor Special Exhibition to Popularise Museums



Evolution of Conveyances—A Theme Directly Connected with the Viewers' Experience.



Field Trips by Museums as part of Educational Programme.

In these days of propaganda and publicity, when even religious institutions resort to all possible means of publicity in order to invite the public within their precincts museums also owe their duty to keep their benefactors informed of the activities they carry on by all the means they have at their disposal. Proper type of publicity has helped business concerns as well and so the publicity well done goes to attract a good many visitors to the Museum and also helps to retain their sympathy and interest. Besides this external publicity, the museums in their precincts are to put up on the notice boards at prominent places a list of events such as lectures, shows, exhibition etc., which are to be held within. These notice boards are to be very neat, dainty and elegant by the use of plastic boards and plastic letters. To provide attraction to the public, these notices may be made to contain in them illustrative depiction of some of the events, wherever it is so possible. In order to provide variety to those who have visited the Museum several times, steps be taken to induce them to visit it again and again by way of introducing new devices each time. Sometimes these notice boards be made of plastics and announcements put on it in plastic letters keeping in view the contrasting nature of colours. All such methods go towards captivating the attention of the public and also making one interested in the museum of one's locality.

A museum, whether of art or of science stands differentiated from a non-museum institution by one characteristic and that characteristic is aesthetics, beauty and its appreciation, an appeal to the eye and proper response to it. This is the common bond uniting all kinds of museums worth the name. Clothed in sunshine

of aesthetic beauty, even an ordinary object in a museum appears lovely and attractive. And its appreciation carries one far on the road to refinement, if made into a habit. By beholding a beautiful object, which is a joy for ever, one gets a happy impression on his heart and this impression excites yearnings and often inspires him with noble thoughts and creative ideas. These creative ideas are at the root of advancement of all arts and sciences and also mark the progress by which a museum exhibit delights the heart and enlightens the mind. In a composite museum, where various sections on various branches of knowledge form part of one and the same museum as galleries or wings in one and the same building with selected exhibits having some definite purpose behind them, a museum becomes a book of knowledge with its galleries or wings forming as many chapters, profusely illustrated. Such a museum affords delight to the serious and the non-serious alike, to the casual visitor as well as to the regular student or a research scholar. Such a museum caters also to as many different tastes as are reflected in the museum through the varied nature of its exhibits.

The objects of one's own hobby in a museum tend to attract more people to the museum because such a planning gives an opportunity to every visitor to get absorbed in the objects of his hobby and be benefitted by it in both pleasure and knowledge.

Visitors to a museum represent all grades of intelligence. Some are literates, other are semi-literates and there are some who can neither read nor write. A museum in democracy has to cater to the needs of all such people. Labels and charts in the language of the area and also in that of the international world, when displayed dilating

upon the exhibits in clear and simple words, go to enhance the utility of the museum. Such an attempt leads to the understanding of the significance of the exhibits and gives a right idea about the exhibits put on display, thereby helping every visitor to appreciate and enjoy the objects displayed. The information conveyed through labels and charts is also supplemented by the expert guidance in the form of official companionship, which is also essential for educating the public.

In order to benefit the third group of visitors, unable to read or write, such models, dioramas and illustrative aids to knowledge are given a place in the museum as tend to widen the horizon of knowledge and also develop the aesthetic sense of the group. The official companion of the museum in all such cases gives a brief and intelligent commentary on such models and visual aids to knowledge in the group's own language in easy and interesting style. Cinema slides are also used for explaining the significance of the exhibits of any of the sections of the museum. Those, who are cinema fans, naturally, feel tempted to see such movies and take both delight and knowledge through them. With the availability of an automatic slides on common objects of public interest and relating to the museum's own exhibits either supplementing them or dealing with them, are prepared by museums in the form of documentaries and the projector fed with them. The slides are strung on a wheel, which rotates electrically and automatically at certain hour each day or at intervals twice or thrice a week at stated hours. In such a show the slide is projected on the frosted glass directly against the light, showing the beautiful coloured pictures. The projecting machine is kept in a corner with no attendant

near by and it goes on showing a slide one after another. This is a good device to invite the public, both young and old to watch the fun and to be interested in the museum of the locality. Invitation is often tempting and serves the purpose for which it is meant. But some people are not satisfied with it alone. They want some mental food, without which they refuse to recognize the worth of a museum. This food is available in the publications of the museum, which include a hand book by a specialist, pamphlets, leaflets, picture postcards, periodicals, bulletins (containing research articles), handy guide books, catalogues, annual reports etc. These productions of a museum give the public something substantial. These are things of a more permanent nature and also in keeping with the dignity of the museum. A handbook, produced by a specialist or a guide lecturer on a specific subject connected with the museum galleries and exhibits, which are beautifully dealt with in both prints and illustrations, reveals to a reader in a moment's reflection what a museum he is going to visit or has visited already, gives the people by way of both fun and knowledge. Pamphlets, sectional guide books, Guides or Handbooks, Catalogues, Periodicals and Bulletins, Map Guides, Folders, Leaflets and Annual Report are all quite a variety of publications of abiding interest, informative, instructive and recreative. These publications range from the smallest to the biggest unit. The list of publications also includes circulars, manifestos, ordinary notices, announcements etc. issued by a museum from time to time. Of these, the picture postcards are of great importance to an average tourist. These are in demand by them because of their value. These serve as tokens of their visit to the Museum. The tourists sign their names, write the address of their friend

or relative; stamp and post them. These postcards convey the happy news to the addressee that the sender enjoyed such and such museums, a glimpse of which may be seen by the addressee also through the picture on the card. But the picture postcards are superior in quality, in texture, in printing, in photography and in reproduction. These postcards give place to both monochrome and colour reproductions. Every museum gives its best in it so far as the subject matter of such picture postcard goes. All subjects do not lend themselves to attractive photography, the museum authorities select the specimens from this point of view. The subjects of illustration are, therefore, chosen very carefully and also photographed equally carefully. Emphasis should be laid on quality and not on quantity. These are priced in such a manner as may be within the reach of every visitor to the museum to possess them, if not all, then atleast a few of them as souvenirs of his or her visit to the museum. But the low price of the card does not affect the excellence of the reproductions in any way.

Leaflets and folders too serve their own purpose. They are mostly informative in character. Illustrated by reproductions of a few well selected specimens as they mostly are, they convey to the visitor a impression of not only the exhibits of a museum but also of the amenities provided by the museum for the public. Some leaflets and folders give plenty of illustrations and leave the rest to the good judgement of the reader himself. Such folders and leaflets have visual appeal in them. Some enumerate in them the advantages accruing from the membership of the museum or from becoming a friend of the museum. These are sometimes so well worded that one is simply

tempted to visit the Museum and to derive benefit from that visit inspite of certain preoccupations. In order to make the people museum-minded support of public is sought by way of their enlistment as members or friends of the museum. In a democratic set-up these folders and leaflets are printed in the language or languages of the masses. These are in simple words, attractive and captivating in tone. Such folders or leaflets have on their front page some very striking illustration from amongst the notable collections of the museum.

Map-Guides

Map guides are essential aids to the study of museum exhibits. Though these are, in a way, folders, they are a little more dignified, more graphic and contain somewhat detailed information about the museum and the approaches to its sections. These guides present in them maps or plans of the museums showing the position of different floors, wings, sections, galleries and their contents with fine line drawings of the most striking exhibits of the museums.

In all such folders, the two outer sides are always full of essential information about the museums they are concerned with and contain also graphic drawings of the various floors also with which the space on the inner side is occupied. The folders like these simple map guides are characterised by care, precision, skill and imagination. Sometimes such guide maps, besides being artistic, are full of information and embody in them facts and figures, interesting and informative data of a general nature that it becomes necessary by a visitor to the museum to treasure it for their sake only. In a democratic set up such informative folders are essential for general public. The

excellence of these folders is judged by the visual appeal that they make to the general public, which, in most cases, is not museum-minded and requires to be educated and turned into useful citizens.

Descriptive or interpretative type of literature on exhibits of a museum is covered by pamphlets in every museum. Such pamphlets deal with certain types of museum exhibits only. They are a sort of casual lectures or papers on particular topics, have bearing on certain selected types of exhibits in the museum concerned. A museum sometimes publishes a number of brochures, booklets, pamphlets or casual papers published. Each of them is separately priced. It is better when these are had in a series and in a uniform format. This enables a collection of ten or twelve papers or brochures to be bound in one volume.

Sectional Guides are meant for understanding the exhibits in a big museum, which has large sections. These are usually cheap ones and are possessed by those who are interested in the exhibits, which these deal with. Separate Guide for each section in a museum is an excellent arrangement. These guides are not generally catalogues and they do not either claim to replace them but they describe simply the salient features of the particular section or sections they deal with by giving place to illustrations of the most important exhibits of those sections, which, necessarily, deserve one's attention and study.

Life being short and engagements being many in this complex world, few there are who have plenty of leisure with them to devote much of their time to seeing everything in a museum. It is, therefore, desirable for a museum to publish small but attractive guides and hand books.

Museums in democracy produce short but beautiful guides or handbooks. Emphasis is laid more on good illustrations than on reading matter, while preparing these books.

For an exhaustive treatment of what a museum has in the form of its exhibits, it is necessary for a museum to publish a catalogue of the exhibits in it. This is complete in itself when it gives place in it to complete details of the exhibits. It is sometimes to be in several volumes, each one dealing with one section. It is essential for a museum to have catalogue, complete in all details. Preparation of a catalogue is an art and must be indulged in with great study and knowledge on the basis of the cumulative efforts of sectional curators. A catalogue complete in all details is not only essential for the safety of the art and science exhibits in a museum but also for giving proper type of information to the experts and research scholars, who, after looking at these exhibits want to check up their knowledge and confirm the same through the visual aids presented in the museum of museums they visit.

In order to provide high type of mental food to scholars, who are, generally, not satisfied with ordinary guide books or handbooks. Museums also issue regular journals either monthly, quarterly or bi-annually. This provides a forum for scholars to meet through pen and ink to dilate upon such topics as relate to the exhibits in the museum, which brings out a periodical or a bulletin named after it. Such bulletins and periodicals are brought out by some museums in both India and abroad. These periodicals contain articles of abiding interest and news regarding the museum activities; fine illustrations, featuring prominently. From the publicity point of view and also from that of making the locality (in which the

museum is situated) know what the achievements of the museum were during the past year, an annual report is also produced by a museum in a short but concise way. Such reports, produced annually at fixed intervals, serve as permanent records, mirroring in them all sorts of activities of the museum. Past year's achievements and failures help a museum to make future plans and also enable the public to know what the institution did and what it aims at doing in future.

Over and above the types of publications dilated upon, it is in the interest of a museum to establish a liasion with the local Radio Broadcasting station. If the broadcasting station is made interested in the museum activities, it broadcasts talks based on museums' contents from time to time and also highlights the new acquisitions of the museums through its announcements. Any special programme undertaken by the museum is also brought to the notice of the Broadcasting station so that the due publicity is given to it.

In foreign countries like America, England etc. this work is taken through television, which tends to produce audio-visual effects.

Running commentaries on the exhibits, dealt with sectionwise, and also suitable stories dealing with the exhibits and prepared in easy language, preferably in that of the masses, form the subject matter of the radio broadcasts, which, besides being entertaining, also enrich the minds of the public with useful and interesting information. The documentary films on museum exhibits are also produced in some countries and shown at the cinemas and talkies just like the documentary films produced on the monuments and culture. Suitable films on museums and

their exhibits are produced and shown in cultural heritage series. Such films may also be produced for the children keeping in view their taste and level of knowledge and placed at the disposal of every school teacher to supplement his or her verbal information to the children on various topics dealt with by him or her. In the interest of the development of tourism in the countries, it is essential to prepare a documentary film of the places of tourist interest and include in it the museums and their striking exhibits and show such films, not only in their own country's cinema halls by way of trailers but also in those of other countries. This is to enable the people, both local and foreign, to be acquainted not only with the places of interest in various areas but also with their cultural heritage.

In democracy, the public can not be kept ignorant for ignorance would be suicidal to its interests. All avenues of affording knowledge to the masses are, therefore, to be made available to them. One such avenue is of the museums also but this avenue is to be made open to them by adopting the ways and means pointed out. Let museologists, journalists, television, radio authorities and cinema producers walk hand in hand in accomplishing this noble and useful task.

CHAPTER VI

Museums—Their Services to the Public

Unlike schools and colleges, museums afford recreation in education and education in recreation to different sections of a community irrespective of any caste, creed, age or aptitude. This is done not only to develop an aesthetic sense in public but also to make its members useful to the society, of which they form a part.

Museums in democracy have to be flexible not only in their material but also in the way in which they make the public know the world. Not only this, they explore avenues of development of their own faculties in a democratic set up. These avenues tend to reveal to the public the world in which it lives, arouse intellectual curiosity and bring all outdoor life within the walls of Museums and open the doors of knowledge to all. These serve as a cross section of the curiosity and hunger of humanity for knowledge. For achieving success in such a venture proper planning of educational programme is an absolute necessity. It is not enough for one to start a number of institutions by placing a few objects from somebody's attic in empty buildings and put some unemployed persons in charge, but we should plan carefully the contents of museums and also the educational application of the material from the visitor's point of view. The tendency to send every worthless article to the museum for display and also to send an unemployed man to work on the staff of a museum needs vehemently opposed. Only such objects as have some bearing on the character and achieve-

ments of the public and only those persons who are imbued with the spirit of social service and have thirst for imparting education to the public should be employed in museum.

The heart of a museum is its collection and so a collection in a museum must necessarily be made with some definite purpose. Even if the collection has been made, it is the duty of the officer incharge to display even a portion of it and keep the rest in the reserve collection either for future display or for scholars' study collection. In order to become a respected and popular institution, an ideal museum aims at its recognition as one of the important agencies devoted to furthering the cultural and educational interests of its community. It must present through its collections an intimate and authentic survey of the origins, growth and extent of the environmental and cultural factors, which characterise the individuality of its community.

As public recognition of the museum as a cultural and educational institution is derived from its day to day activities, the museum plans such activities as serve the different kinds of visitors. As the public is composed of children and adults and the children and adults constitute in them those who go to school and those who do not go to school and the adults constitute those who belong to the common run of society and also those who are runners after specialised knowledge of a certain subject of a group of subjects, the museum is expected to cater to the needs of all these people. Again, the public visiting the museum represents the different interests and likes and dislikes. Though it is difficult for a museum to dance to the tune of all people, it is the endeavour of a museum to present

within its precincts the objects of common use and interest and to devise ways and means of serving the public through them.

The condition precedent upon service to the public is that of creating a hospitable and relaxing environment within a museum so that the visitor to the museum feels encouraged to identify himself with the exhibits, either by recalling some past personal experience, or by associating what is seen with some current activity or interest. An atmosphere of enjoyment and curiosity is desirable with a view to stimulating the visitor to ask further information on the subjects illustrated by the exhibits. Attractively arranged exhibits, accompanied by brief, accurate and factual labels and supplemented by charts, drawings and photographs, contribute to create the desired mood on the part of a visitor. Exhibits are never to be illustrated text books but rather the settings of a stirring experience or an exciting adventure.

But for scholars and students (visiting museum in groups), most of those, who visit museum-exhibit halls, do so during their leisure time. Museum, therefore, serves as a potentially strong social instrument for encouraging the purposeful use of leisure. An ideal museum aims at producing a constructive influence upon adult and juvenile delinquency and upon the social adjustments of the aged. The exhibit halls of a museum is, therefore, to be as inviting and attractive as possible and also add to the visual appeal some means of auditory appeal also. This is achieved through talks, lectures, radio programmes etc. All these programmes need be properly planned. That is to say, these have to be on different levels so that each type of visitor is benefitted by them. There has to be

separate programmes for common people and scholars. Illiterate and semi-illiterate adults and children are provided with such informative talks through illustrated slides as go to widen the mental horizon of their knowledge. In all such talks arrangement is made to show original exhibits to these people and also enable them to handle them also. Life of people led in different countries is also be demonstrated through suitable models, thus making a child feel his place in the international world. Among the activities devoted to direct learning by children these are two general types—those that are developed for dealing with groups, and those that are designed for individuals. The direct programmes for groups deal largely, on school days and during school hours, with schools, and in after school hours and on saturday mornings and also on afternoons. Occasionally with special interests groups. The school groups constitute a large and an almost universal service. Wherever a museum is located, the schools, almost without exception, make use of the contents of the museum usually for direct teaching and learning. Because of the limited staff in all museums and the anticipated great demands upon them, all museums arrange some form of registration of class groups ahead of time so that schedules are prepared and personnel and materials made available at needed times. As is practised in some places in U.S.A., some museums prepare teachers and classes for a visit to the museum so as to make the time spent the greatest benefit. One method tends to prepare the teacher in advance either through a general instruction class, to which the teacher is urged to go, or through a required visit to the museum for a conference with a member of the museum staff prior to the class visit.

In after school hours, the facilities of all the museums are devoted to programmes for non-school groups and for individual children. In group programmes, museums of Science and anthropology provide for museum 'Clubs'. In the museums of art, the group programmes take the form of classes, there the children do individual work under group direction.

The 'Museum Club' is a special feature of museum education activity in U.S.A. It is, as a rule, a small group of children interested in some phase of work in which the museum has material or opportunity, such as a 'Mineralogy clubs', an 'Insect club', a 'photographic club', a 'Bird Club' and so on. This group meets at regular intervals and devotes its time to collecting, studying, classifying and preparing for exhibition the materials in which its members have interest.

The direct forms of learning carried on for individuals is usually for subcuratorial type for the children, who may be encouraged to follow through, with primary interests to learn, honest scientific methods of study and investigate at firsthand the characteristics and properties of real materials so as to enable them to draw personal conclusions. All this of course, is done under the guidance of the members of the museum staff. The course of events with any child is likely to vary, but in general he is led from a general interest or liking to one that is specific and direct. This, in turn, leads to collection outside the museum (in the case of some fields, such as birds, possibly to recorded observation), to guidance within the museum in study and annotation, to classification and frequently, to preparation of materials for personal use, such as herbaria, for exhibition or display. In the museums other

than Children's museums, individual forms of direct learning are desirable no doubt but it would require space and staff for such work. It may be used for the interpretative type of programme, where facilities for space and leadership are available. Such interpretative programmes are also designed for groups and for individuals. Interpretative work with the schools is rather rare these days. It is so, particularly because there are great pressures when children visit the Museums to have the materials treated in direct fashion as a part of the specific school curriculum particularly because few museums are so broad in scope as to provide the extraordinary breadth of material needed for interpretative teaching and partly because direct teaching is easier and teachers are accustomed to it.

In the art museums in Children's sections and in Children Museums, much fine work is carried on with groups. The greater part of this work is devoted to crafts and craft techniques although some museums have a weekly 'story hour' for the pleasure and interest of the little children. So far as adults are concerned, there are many opportunities for them in both group and individual work in ceramics, in photography, in jewel-cutting and polishing, in home crafts, such as weaving, canning, rug-hooking, work in leather or parchment and the like. In a multitude of activities of special interest to boys and girls, such as model aeroplane building, making of radios or other electric equipments, casting, polishing, painting and drawing and the infinite variety of products resulting, children are also encouraged to attempt lettering by printing them with their own hands in the form of labels and posters.

The technique used by museums to carry their group programmes are many, varied and ingenious. Most of

the methods used, of course, constitute exposition and questioning, with gallery talks carried on by lecturers. In U.S.A. it is quite usual to find children gathered together in classrooms or auditoriums, when they enter the museum in groups for preliminary discussion of what they are likely to see and do. It is less usual to have a similar period for discussion and summary at the close of the visit. Many techniques are based on the length of time, a child is likely to be in the Museum and the breadth of purpose that he or his leader has. In larger cities and in larger museums in U.S.A., it is customary for pupils to visit museum for either half or a whole day, whereas in the smaller museums, an hour is generally the time allowed for classes. Field trips in spring or in a good weather in any season tend to provide good opportunities to public for Nature observation. These trip programmes or day camp programmes (by way of an outing) are undertaken under the guidance of a museum staff in vacations during the year, when the common schools are not in session. Such trips are also organised for the adults also. In all such cases the visitor pays his own way for the trip but it is the duty of the museum arranging such trips to employ a cheap means of conveyance, where only the barest minimum fare has to be paid and the proposition does not become burdensome for an average visitor to a museum.

Such trips are in the form of Nature observation and field trips to farms and other places for mere observation and also for art watching, collecting and preserving insects and other treasure hunting or exploration. In almost all these trips, children and adults are taken by a guide to the trails and shown things of common interest.

While the Children and adults are out on such trips, certain healthy entertainments are also indulged in. This makes them learn the habit of working together and also to be friendly with each other.

Art and crafts workshops help children and adults a good deal in learning the art and craft of their own choice and to fit in the frame work of the society. These tend to make them useful members of the society. These activities are introduced easily in those institutions, which have good industrial material to display.

Certain museums in U.S.A. have done much to stimulate more of independent activity on the part of Children. Many devices have been prepared by the educationists to act as stimuli to activity and lead children to seek solutions to problems or to seek answers to questions, in the pursuit of which it is hoped that they learn how to question and answer for themselves. Some of these devices are called 'games' but the game element is largely a challenge to one's self rather than rivalry of someone else and the learning consists in completing the question, matching the part of the puzzle to another part, as in a jigsaw puzzle, filling in a form by seeking the answer in given exhibits, replacing missing parts, removing surplus factors and the like. Such devices on low levels occasionally become mere sensory activities. When the subtleties increase with the ability of the children to understand and reach to them, they become highly educative and on the highest levels resemble research.

Efforts are made to stimulate such activities by rewards and recognitions. In one instance, a local newspaper is made to offer substantial prizes for completion of various units, in another museum holds recognition days, in

another the names of the children are published from time to time in a local bulletin and in some museums it takes shape of an annual temporary exhibit of the product of the work of individual children and individual adults.

Instances can be multiplied to show the types of services which museums can render to the public but the main motive behind all these services is that museums in democracy have to work for the masses, for whom they stand established. In all the activities, there has to be one common ideal to account for the indefatigable work of the staff, the interest of the sponsors, the cooperation of the parents, the recognition of the value of museum work by the community and the active participations of hundreds of thousands of children and adults; namely 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make Ye free'.

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