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EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF MUSEUM IN INDIA

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Abstract

Museums are the custodians of cultural and natural heritage. These are informal centres of education. In the beginning the museum focuses on the collection of objects but now a days museum focus on their collection and their detail also. Without knowledge museum value is meaningless. Museum organises different educational programmes for all age group. In this paper the author summarises different educational role of museum.

Keywords

Museum, Education, Programmes, Disabled Person, Cultural heritage

I. Introduction

As we know that “ Museum is a non profit making permanent institution in the service of society and of its development and open to the public which acquires, conserves, communicates and exhibits for the purpose of study, education and enjoyment material evidence of man and his environment”. This definition was accepted by international council of museum held in 1974.

In the past, the responsibility of Museum officials was limited to acquisition, conservation, research and display. Museum responsibilities have changed in modern era, it provide different facilities and roles. Today the visitor not only look at the object but also learn from them and pass them to the succeeding generation. That's why it is very important that the museum staff should be educated. Without proper knowledge and information or text the objects in museums are useless. People only saw the objects but cannot benefitted from them. In the past the museums are object oriented but now a days it is education oriented. Education may be defined as the process of experience, generally called learning which brings desirable change in human behaviour.

According to Eilean Hooper Green Hill (1988) stated museum in the context of education, as it is an institution that can offer an educational experience across a wide range of variables and in relation to a wide range of institutions and organizations. The meaning of museum education is that museums provide a platform for learning situation in which the visitors experience learning.

II Changing role of museums

In the beginning the museums were scholarship based. It was not opened for general public, only scholars and members of royal families were entered into it. But it was the turning point that after the American war of independence (1776) and French revolution declaration of human and civil rights, the museums are now opened for general public also and education was put as one of the major function of museum.

III Museum education

Education is one of the most important function of museum. It is defined as the process of experience generally called learning which brings in desirable changes in human behaviour with respect to knowledge understanding skill and attitude. The educational role of museum is as old as modern museum but only since world war II. According to Eilean Hooper Greenhill (1988) considered museum in the context of education, as an institution that can offer an educational experience across a wide range of variables and in relation to a wide range of institution and organizations.

Museum education means museum provide learning situation in which the visitor experience learning through the objects. In museum education elements are necessary for promoting learning. Museum provide edutainment. There are various means which constitute the educational activities in a museum. These are as follows:

III.1 Through exhibition

The fundamental duty of every museum staffs to arrange the objects with proper text and labels. Exhibition is the vital part of any museum. Exhibiting the objects in such a way that the visitos are automatically gained information and education. Proper Text, labels in both big and small exhibition is necessary. In exhibition the information should be short, meaningful and to the point. In the display, the objects, surrounding and the lighting should be arranged in wonderful manner. To make the exhibition more effective pictures, photographs, drawing, chart, models and other subsidiary materials can be used.

III.2 Education through objects

Museum object plays an important part in education. The objects stored in the museums are the part of cultural and natural heritage. Objects can make unique contribution in learning and understanding directly from the object provide first hand experience to the learners. Infact the sensory experiences form the basis of museum education.

III.3 Museum in school education

Museum provide learning situation is quite different from school education. Museum provide free choice learning situation but assessment and other types of exams are not there. Museum provide open communication system to the visitors of all groups.

III.4 Discovery room

The concept of discovery room in museum is also helpful in edutainment. These informal area provide childrens a direct hand on experience, examine specimens and participate in several educative activities. In discovery room children children explore and become familiar with a wide range of objects at their own place in a related atmosphere.

III.5 Museum provide different outreach programmes

Loan kits

Museum provide loan kit, it is a special designed box which contain information of specific themes such as shells, fossils, food chain, solar system etc. Generally the loan kit box contain copies of original objects, charts, models, colour plates and teacher guide. Spreading knowledge is the main function of loan kits.

Loan kits for rural people

School in villages do not get a chance to visit museums. It is a fact that in most of the countries like India, few Schools based on urban areas are provided with the facilities to get loan kit service. About 70% of the populations are living in the villages. Most of the village schools do not get an opportunity to visit a museum. Such rural schools should be provided with loan kit services.

Field Trips

Field trip is also another area of Education. Mostly museum organizes different field trip like Natural History museums, concerned with environmental education should organize such field trips in order to develop in depth understanding and love for nature, ecology, wildlife, flora and fauna, conservation and biodiversity etc. Every museum organizes such type of field trips to enhance the quality of education.

Summer classes

The museums in collaboration with schools and NGO's can hold summer classes in painting, crafts, modeling or on environment exploration. These programmes not only developed the skill and talent of the students, but also make youngsters aware of environmental and cultural issues and the way they can maintain in contributing conservation efforts. Summer classes are very important in museums.

Short term training courses

Museum organizes many short term training courses on display, conservation, museology. For these training courses many new teachers may be arranged. Short term training courses are very helpful in education.

Educational programmes for disabled people

The disabled people around the world are involved in all spheres of social life and use its achievements. Museum can help the physically challenged in understanding and appreciating the cultural heritage housed in them. Museum organises different educational programmes for disabled person. It is known that in modern society museums act as cultural, scientific and educational centres, they develop and adapt best educational programmes for disabled person. Museums should have a special room where they can show a limited number of objects, which will enable the mentally challenged visitors. For disabled person educational programmes like audio- tours, tailored tours, museum and art therapy were applied. Disabled person can receive training with the use of replicas and enlarged photographs, audio-visual media, preferably in local languages will be effective use as it combines the two sensory impressions for all the physically challenged, except the visually impaired and to a certain extent deaf.

Ramps and lift should be provide to make visit of disabled more successful. Exhibits should be displayed in such a way as to provide more space to take a wheel chair and the door ways should be easily negotiable. To manage deaf and dumb disability, the service of a specifically trained instructors in this language of sign and symbols is a must. Gallery of touch should be organised for the visually impaired visitors, where replica of selected objects can be displayed along with "Braille labels", so that they can be provided an opportunity to

understand and differentiate form and shapes and identify the objects. Special Kit boxes on the models of specimens and antiquities will be very useful to the physically challenged and especially to the visually impaired, who can get a clear concept of a big animal, a bird, a tree or any other things. Museum organizes different programmes in collaboration with other organization and NGO'S, for the development and exposure of hidden talents, like competition on drawing, painting, clay modeling etc. In those programmes, normal children should also be invited, so that the physically challenged children will get chance to meet the normal children. Museums can send models and photos on loan to the institutions dealing with the physically challenged to provide them opportunity to touch and learn. A short term training course in art and its appreciation can be organized by the museum for the teachers working in the institution connected to physically challenged. A specific day can be set apart by the museums especially for the physically challenged. The educational role of the museum will be incomplete if it does not think and work out schemes for the physically challenged community.

Educational activities through electronic technologies

Now a days electronic media are very common and useful. A number of electronic technologies are in used in museum educational programmes. Daily film shows and slide projections, museums around the world are increasingly using modern electronic equipments and techniques in their exhibitions and interpretation. For example, the sequential lighting with commentaries and guide phones are used to depict the story of "Evolution of Earth". Similarly the 'Theory of origin of Earth' is also explained to the visitors with the help of sequential lighting and commentary. For communicating various ecological concepts animation techniques are used. In museums thematic and conceptual displays are better communicated by the use of electronic media. Computer programmes, games and graphics are being increasingly used in museums to get the concept on theme of the exhibit across to the visitor. These types of exhibits are the source of edutainment. The Bioscience 'Computer Room' of the National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi, has a series of personal computers (PC's) for interactive and participatory experience of visits to understand the function of DNA, the process of photosynthesis, working of eye, muscles, skeleton systems etc. Visitors especially school children, find this facility of fascinating learning experince. These techniques are very useful in education.

III.7 Education through publication and research

Research and publication are the main source of education in museums. Museum can transmit its research to general public through publication. The scholars and general public. There are three kinds of publications namely. 1.The outcome of the serious researches conducted on the subjects and published in the form of journals, catalogues, brochures, monographs or books. 2. Publications in the form of reports, guidebooks, introductory leaflets, etc. to familiarize the people with the museum and its activities. 3. Special publications on the occasion of new gallery, special exhibitions, anniversary to popularize the museum within the community. There are many other type of publication which are as follows :-**III.7. 1. News Bulletin:-**In News Bulletin there is the information about the museum activities.It covers important lectures, current activities, notices of special exhibition, lectures, concerts etc.

III.7.2 Handbooks:- In handbooks there is the information about special gallery with special collection and also their detail knowledge.

III.7.3. Picture-Books:- These are the collections of photographs of the masterpieces in a museum with their brief descriptions under a colourful background. Similarly folders, leaflets, guide maps, briad sheets, picture post-cards and transparencies are various sources of education

III.7 **4. Basic Science Articles:-** Popular basic science articles for school educations should be published. The education in a museum should be based upon research, which applies specially to museum exhibits. The publication should have social communication and educational values. Apart from providing the fundamentals of knowledge in the specific fields, the museum conserves, preserves and provides the basic material for research in practically all the academic disciplines. Museums are the best place for carried out good research work. Since the Curators have a direct access to the original source material.

4.CONCLUSION

Museum education is one of the important function of museums. In the starting museum function was limited but now a days museum covers a lots of function. In the starting people only saw the museums, the museums are object oriented. But now a days museums are education oriented. Museum organizes different educational programmes for every agegroup people. These programmes are very helpful in gaining education. Museums are informal centre of education. In this article the author summarises different educational programmes and sources of education in museums.

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