

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **ROLE OF MUSEUM EDUCATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL LEARNING IN INDIA**

#### **Introduction**

The original meaning of the word museum was ‘a place of contemplation, a philosophical institution, or a temple of Muses’ (Talboys 1996). In historical perspective, the origin of museums is founded as the intellectual approach of the Renaissance (14<sup>th</sup>- 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD) (Roy 2006). The first Museum Act of 1845 was established by the British Parliament while the museums began to appear from early 17<sup>th</sup> Century AD. Museums at Salford, Warrington, Liverpool etc. were the earliest examples of this Act. The Act was repealed later. As there was phenomenal growth in creation of great museums throughout the world, India as a developing nation was making its way for museum development. Origin and development of museum movement in India is near about two hundred years old and Sir William Jones and Dr. Nathaniel Wallich were considered as the pioneers of the museum movement in India since 1784 (Roy 2006). Towards the end of the British rule, India had shown the development of archaeological museums (Roy 2006). In the post – independent period, Government of India adopted a new policy where the museum has been treated as a centre of education with special reference to visual education (Roy 2006). In present scenario India as a fast growing economy has numerous museums and learning centres which take the initiative to make its people aware of their rich past and its unique culture & heritage. Today there are almost 833 museums in India (INTACH 2013 report- NDMA 2017) belonging to almost 54 categories (NDMA 2017) pertaining to themes of Science and Technology, Health, Agriculture, Geology, Natural history, Art, Archaeology and Anthropology etc.

Archaeological collection occupies the major part of majority of museum collections worldwide. These collections enable the museums to act as vital

resource centre to disseminate the knowledge and understanding about the past and culture to the society. Archaeological heritage as we know is the inherited past material culture which our forefathers left behind to make us realize their lifestyles and their messages that are to be learnt and understood in order to create a balance between a glorious past and a brighter future. Developing countries have had their own civilizations and they have contributed much to man's knowledge which the young should know as the history and accept the challenge to emulate it (UNESCO 1973). Archaeological objects contain a context of association when unearthed, which is communicated when they are stored or displayed in a museum. Archaeology embraces many other academic disciplines and sources in attempting to understand past cultures. These range from biology through geology to architecture (Grant et al. 2008).

Archaeology underwent accelerated growth after 1900, so that today virtually every country in the world operates some form of state- financed protection of ancient monuments, as well as supporting research into the subject in public universities and museums (Greene 2003). The concept of building museums near archaeological sites and ancient monuments is recorded by Hargreaves (1936) – “it has been the policy of the Government of India to keep the small and movable antiquities, recovered from the ancient sites, in close association with the remains to which they belong, so that they may be studied amid their natural surroundings and not lose focus by being transported”. A site is a defined, open area that is the location of a place or event of historical or social significance containing physical remains of interest (Talboys 1996). A separate Museum Branch in Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was created in 1946 by Sir Mortimer Wheeler. After the independence, there was a spurt in the growth of site museums and at present there are 45 site museums under the control of ASI (Raj T 2015). To get the actual number of total archaeological collections, kept at various pockets of India, under the custody of innumerable types of stake holders is a rigorous task. But one can track the collection in the national museums though they are mixed collection; site museums of Archaeological Survey of India; museums of state departments; and

University Museums and small department museums located within universities in various parts of the country.

In the past few years, museums have become actively engaged as organizations of promoting heritage and cultural diversity of India. There are studies being conducted on educational benefits and effectiveness of programs that relate to school visits or young visitors, who visit the museums, and related heritage centres which complement the knowledge gained prior to their visits. The informal teaching - learning process that happens inside the museum is an instrument of active participation and long term cognitive development for young generations who are ultimately the custodians of our heritage. Majority of the multipurpose museums in India started realizing the potential of archaeological collections and started communicating effectively through those collections. Over the years, archaeological site museums in India have changed considerably as well. Earlier site museums were only used for storing and displaying of objects but now these museums have become a place of edutainment which comprises both educational and entertainment activities. Examples of archaeological museums at Agra, Thanesar, Ropar, Lothal, Chennai etc. can be put forth who had been engaged with involving various student organisations (and NGOs) to conduct educational tours and activities at their premises.

Every country has formal institutions of learning, but learning in a museum is altogether a different experience. Museums widen the periphery of the formal education and offer different ways of learning, enjoying and discussing (Boylan/ICOM 2004). Museums add special values to the formal school and college education system, as part of the informal sector of education. Scholars like Nigam (1982) opine that, the foremost function of a modern museum is, therefore to utilise the objects of the past as tools to generate knowledge and thereby enlighten the minds of the public. Agrawala (1973) was of the opinion that museum has to radiate knowledge, light and values of a cultured life. Museum's role in the present scenario is to educate the masses but not to duplicate school or university teaching thereby maintaining their sanctity as a non formal institution

of learning. In preserving, conserving and keeping artefacts in dedicated places, museums act as a means of storing national, cultural and collective memories, which can then be passed from generation to generation (Talboys 1996). It is to be remembered that the museum is a culture disseminating national entity (Agrawala 1973). Most museum work tends to be at the active end of the scale and is, therefore, likely to make more of an impact than text based classroom work (Talboys 1996). Museums contain, or are, the real thing and although the written word may feature during any visit it is the artefact that dominates. Museums are excellent centres of informal education and provide a visual aid as well as pool of information that cannot be filled in books (Olofsson 1979). Museums are undeniably centres for learning. These unique aspects are the added advantages of any museum display or program, and involvement in a participatory exhibit or program enhances this experience much further. A well prepared visit is fully integrated with classroom work and skills, and allows pupils to participate before, during and after (Talboys 1996). It must also be clearly understood that museum education is different from the theoretical instructions given in schools and colleges as in a museum; it is the object which speak to the visitors (Nigam 1982). Edutainment is a better term that may be used in the context of museum programs imparted to various kinds of visitors.

School is a formal institution of education that revolves around the textbooks and its fascinating contents. Children go through lecture series, work book activities, project submissions, and now a day's smart class activity to fulfil their urge to be called as a scholar. Education provided in schools being formal mode of teaching-learning phenomena has classroom pattern and syllabus criteria to dwell upon, also initiates this process of learning but makes heritage and culture a 2-D experience only. Children sometimes feel that the textbook and internet is the ultimate source of knowledge beyond which the education cannot be explored. The formal education literature has suggested for decades that students would learn more if they were able to be involved in meaningful physical activity (Hein 1998). Although the school education puts a lot of efforts in the process of making children aware of the facts and facets of archaeology as it is taught as a part of

teaching history but if one looks at the sector of higher education, there are only few universities that teach archaeology as a taught course.

### **Major Objectives of the current research**

1. To examine the importance of archaeology as a discipline in the field of museum and museum education focusing India. Estimating museums' presentation of archaeological heritage and its current utilization as a source of education was studied.
2. To construct effective learning experiences suiting to the collection of selected museums in India. This will help to involve and make the visitors acquainted with the actual collection through interactive methods that are employed to attract different segments of visitors towards museums with archaeological collections.
3. The present study aims to highlight the existing programs and tapping potential of archaeological collection in various museums of national and regional stature in India that are open to the concept of educating visitors through their collections. Although, if there are no regular active programs, the best possible use of collection for the learning purpose has been explored and suggested.
4. To highlight that museums offer young learners experience desirable for their development. The methods involved must have the potential to involve multiple senses in a discovery learning-format, as the school children or youth from institutions of formal learning often don't get the opportunity to experience an archaeological excavation, and how a museum acquired its collection or displayed the same. This research work focuses on the presentation of the collections in such a way that relevance of archaeology gets enhanced in minds of children through museum. The research tools and methods comprise of the practical approach using self-designed activities.

5. To gather primary data for the aforesaid objectives, the methodology of using basic tools of research such as survey forms, observation of workshops and questionnaires were used. Practical sessions for school children were conducted in order to involve children in multisensory learning process. Worksheets and workshops have been specially designed to focus on archaeological collection of different institutions. Also conducted heritage site tours and museum visits as a connecting link to generate effective outcomes. This qualitative learning database emphasises on present scenario of museums in India as a component of education and their impact on curriculum supplement to archaeology.
6. To study the activities that may aid in enhancing the experience of archaeological learning. These can be both planned and unplanned activity and may even be conducted by non-government organisation for the participants.
7. Few comparisons with museums and archaeological sites from international context that offer programs on archaeology will also be discussed in order to add an additional support to the Indian context. Archaeological sites in United Kingdom, namely Sutton Hoo and Roman Bath, have been active in conducting programs on *in situ* sites that attract variety of visitors and effectively disseminate the knowledge about people of the past and their lifestyle.

## **Outline of thesis**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction – Museum as a Resource Centre for Archaeological Learning**

An up-to date museum prefers to make the visit of the school group a truly educational experience, not merely a holiday from classroom routine (Burcaw 1983). Museums in India are not much into catering to all variety of audiences

throughout the year, they rather focus on specific events or on activities during holidays. The strategies that were applied were for the myriad audience catering phenomena, either through activities developed, modifying existing approaches of display, get the community with collection or marketing strategies that contain the crux of exhibition. This chapter of the present research is more into using these strategies and applying them for generating wider audiences and also cater the young learners in order to provide those enhanced learning experiences. The linkages that are then formed or speculated can be proved by set of valid remarks and authentic approaches. Education phenomenon is as unpredictable as the human nature, one cannot decide a single method of dissemination of knowledge, so one have to be open to every little bit of information or idea that one can collect to apply it in practice as effective method. This chapter includes the description and scope of work and highlights the unique aspect of archaeology as a subject that can be learnt through collection in museums of India as well.

## **Chapter 2: Research tools and Data Collection**

First part of this chapter will focus on the process of developing tools for research by observing the primary and secondary sources from various museums. They are as follows:

- Resources evaluation: How the available resources (data, money, manpower) in a particular museum can be effectively used for developing educational programs/ worksheets to communicate/promote archaeology as a subject.
- Pattern of Museum Visits: Brief on data of types of visits to museum by school children such as casual, pre-planned in relation to curriculum requirements and knowledge of teachers assisting the children, active participation of both in programmes offered by museums, was collected and studied.
- Surveys & Questionnaires: Survey and interviews of school children, their teachers and museum staff (educators) that were done after seeing the feedback

forms and other available information in the museums itself. Accordingly the survey sheets and activity sheets were developed for case studies.

- Review of Museum publications and other printed and digital material records: Annual reports of museums also act as significant source of secondary data and similarly other museum publications or literature provided to children by museums. Publications, its content value and utility for imparting education related to curriculum of school (basically on guidelines of NCERT or central board in India) were carefully surveyed to develop effective activities based to supplement curriculum. Publications online and literature available for education through museums to school children related to their curriculum and purpose of study (Humanities i.e. social science) in India (for senior secondary onwards) were carefully surveyed and studied.

Data of diverse collection of museums both, government & private, the literature surveys and personal observations, was collected for research.

Apart from national, state and local level museums, there are many individual organizations that conduct open endeavour for popularizing archaeological heritage through medium of museums and its collections, for various age groups. The second part of this chapter discusses about few of the popular organisations namely, The Sharma Center for Heritage Education (Chennai), Heritage Lab (Chandigarh), Rereeti (Bangalore), Nizamuddin Urban Renewal Initiative (New Delhi), Heritage Trust (Vadodara), ITIHAAS (New Delhi) etc. Organizations such as INTACH and Sahapedia (Delhi based) conduct heritage walks at various heritage sites and also in the museums within Delhi and outside. These organizations also conduct workshops inside the premises of National Museum, New Delhi. INTACH is active in other regions and published significant books on heritage education (including archaeology). Sahapedia is an open resource which acts as an online (digital) database of tangible and intangible heritage including archaeologically significant sites and collections.



This chapter will emphasize on need of policy drafting regarding educational role of cultural organisations for nation.

### **Chapter 3: Empirical Case studies**

Based on the data collection, literature survey, the research tools were designed. Accordingly museums at various levels of administration (national, regional) were chosen for empirical studies. The present chapter will discuss the practical activities conducted by researcher as a resource person on the basis of available resources and type of audience, in selected museums. The activities were conducted in museums, on site, in non – government setup and other school or government agencies.

**National Level** case studies will include the following museums,

- ❖ **National Museum, New Delhi** has a permanent gallery on Harappa and other archaeological galleries and conduct series of programs to engage children with museum exhibits. It has hands on session, gallery walks and activity sessions apart from special lectures and movie shows.
- ❖ **Allahabad Museum** conducts various summer vacation programs, children week programs, regular screening of documentaries, special lectures, and workshops or programs that directly relate to galleries in the museum. They have concept of Heritage corners that is popular in schools.
- ❖ **National Science centre** at Delhi conducts science drama, popular lectures, quiz shows, debates, science fair etc. at city, state, national level and gives opportunities to make children (especially schools) to participate and visit an informal institution of learning. They have specially designed galleries that have portions of heritage education. They also have a Museobus as well that was recorded during this study.

## **Regional Level**

- ❖ **Archaeological Site Museum visits of children at – (a) Lothal and (b) Dholavira.** These museums near the partly reconstructed and preserved sites conduct programs related to past civilizations of India and interpreting the site so as to make children understand their significance in Indian archaeology.
- ❖ **Department Museum of Archaeology-** The Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, has frequent visits of school children where students can come for a planned visit and have a look at galleries, artefacts and documentaries as per education requirement.
- ❖ **Punjab State War Heroes' Memorial and Museum, Amritsar** has a collection beginning from earliest civilization and history of India then connecting to Sikh heritage. As a part of educational summer program, an activity was conducted of seal replica making, to make children aware of the earliest people and their material culture.
- ❖ **Activity conducted at Navlakhi Vav, Vadodara** – An activity focusing on water conservation connecting heritage like stepwells was conducted as a part of program organized by Heritage Trust, Vadodara.
- ❖ **Activity conducted in non- government set up – Gurugram-** In a non government, fair called Hichki Mela, open to all activities related to prehistory, world civilizations and Indus valley pottery and seals, was organized. This resulted in creating awareness as well as a kind of observation to gather information of interests of children in informal set up.

## **Chapter 4: Overview of Archaeological Collection in Museums of India**

The chapter focuses on a brief compilation of statistical data on museums of India (that were personally visited as a researcher) to experience, observe and understand the archaeological collection's galleries starting from Pre-historic, Proto-historic and early historic, sculpture and other archaeological collection. Description about the Archaeological Site museums in India and their effectiveness through camps, site visits, seminars and publication etc. will be discussed.

Archaeological museums which conduct drawing or poster making competitions or music and theatrical performances to encourage youth to join hands in learning about archaeological findings and their importance were recorded. University departmental museums that provide information on regional and national level about archaeological findings/ sources were recorded and will be discussed in this chapter. Museums at national level such as in Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad or Chennai, and museums and sites in states of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh (Sarnath), Punjab (Amritsar), Goa, Gujarat such as at Amreli, Watson Museum (Rajkot), Kachchh (Bhuj), Jamnagar, Junagadh etc., that has rich archaeological collection and organizes visits for school children (on demand) were visited for data collection and study.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

This chapter will cover the data that is concluded as the outcome/worksheets that were collected from museums and participants of various activities. Practical application of the tools developed and their outcomes is summarised. Also illustrations (photos of museum workshops/ programs conducted by them), samples of questionnaire or interview sheets (for staff) and worksheets and other aids (for students- loan kit, replicas, photographs, mobile van) that were accomplished related to a particular collection in the museum will be summarised. This chapter will include the –

- findings of the study
- suggestions to improve the situation of museum education in Indian museums.

It will further include the summary of comments and remarks of the case studies of museums, interviews of educators & staff involved in communicating archaeology as learning discipline. This chapter will discuss the opportunities that evolve in planning an effective knowledge exchange program between museums and formal learning organisations. Chapter will also provide necessity and significance of modifying existing cultural policies so as to inculcate a sense of knowledge enhancement and professional boost for museums. This study tends to seek exploration of innovative programs and human resource development by the museums focusing the field of archaeology.

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## **STATEMENT – I**

**(Statement showing the particulars, on which the work is based, the discovery of new facts and of new relationships between facts observed by others and how the work tends to help the general advancement of knowledge.)**

The thesis outlines various aspects of museum education focusing archaeological materials of museums of India. It was observed that there are few museums that have dedicated education departments to cater and disseminate knowledge among youth, especially children. This study aims to estimate the interdisciplinary relationship between museums and schools in order to benefit educational cooperation and boost the professional growth for the popularisation of the subject of archaeology. The suggestions may result in expansion of opportunities and enhancing quality of programs offered by the museums.

### **Following are the major findings of the work:**

1. There are cultural policies in India that determine various roles of organisations, but museum's potential as a cultural organisation to spread knowledge has not been tapped well. In order to give museum a significant status as an institution of learning, an adequate policy is need of hour. This research is in correlation with the existing cultural policies however preparation of educational policies for museum education needs special attention of government.
2. To facilitate archaeology as a source of museum education tool at national level; innovative models need to be implemented by the museums so as to complement the school curriculum, and the schools need to add the element of museum education as a supplementary element to their curriculum schedule.

3. One of the major objectives of the research work was to study the effect of object oriented teaching learning process; which was found true and significant in museum education patterns.
4. The study is also a systematic effort to determine the outcomes of hands on experiences through workshops in order to explore the impact for future progress in the field of archaeological learning in India.
5. It was also found that children lack awareness about archaeology at school level. Using museum as a significant source to educate about facets of archaeology was studied to show the enhanced level of understanding. At the school level, the importance and role of heritage needs to be emphasised along with all aspects related to the past and its importance in the present context of modern societies and the conflicts. The idea of appreciating the past to understand the present is much important than merely making the students aware about archaeology.
6. Effectiveness of the study that might aid in future planning of museum programs focusing on archaeological collections may lead to valuable opportunities for both museums and formal learning institutes to establish a system of knowledge exchange and experience sharing.

## **STATEMENT – II**

**(Statement indicating the sources of information and the extent to which the thesis is based on the works of others and the portion of the thesis claimed as original.)**

As Murray (1904) rightly said that ‘to study archaeology without a museum is like studying art without a gallery, or anatomy without a subject’. Archaeology is essentially a specialized field of knowledge that needs to be explored beyond texts. Every object connected to archaeology has a different story to tell about its origin and existence. The visual impact of any artefact appeals the eye, enhances

the learning and inculcates the understanding about the facets of archaeology. Many scholars emphasised the benefits of object oriented learning experiences, the opportunity to see, touch and interact with objects in first hand which leave profound effect on young audiences in many different ways (Clarke, 2002; Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1994; Nigam: 1982; Talboys: 1996; Ambrose & Paine 2012). These studies led to further research to know the actual impact of hands on learning, or discovery learning in museums world wide as well as in India. Researcher collected the first hand data from various museums, conducted educational activities for making the archaeological collections significant source of learning in the selected museums. This practical input in the thesis is claimed as the original contribution by the researcher. Since museums add special values to the formal school and college education system, the current research was aimed to study, understand, and conduct practical sessions so as to estimate the significance of educational activities in museums.

The literary sources from museums, schools, libraries and archives by making-up small teaching packages, portable exhibitions, 'kits', has often been reported during museum conferences (Olofsson 1979). Many museums in India are creating kits to embark upon this idea as well. Such strategies that are popular in global context, are how far effective and practically done in Indian context, were also studied during the course of research. If museums are to claim the prestigious title of "educational institutions", they must study their collections in depth and interpret them, not merely show what they have collected (Burcaw 1983). Thus after study, observation and personal visits, and conducting practical sessions led to deeper insights about the innovations and potentials of museum education with respect to archaeology as a field of knowledge. Museums in India are engaged in conducting educational activities based on the administrative setups and availability of sources. The research is culmination of putting archaeology on forefront and creating an understanding of making its collections rich source of informal education from school level itself. In this process, previous studies based on various museum education strategies, and archaeological sources available in country, were also studied.



**The following is the list of books and articles which formed the basis for the formulation of concepts used in the thesis.**

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