

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As discussed in the preceding chapters, the present study “PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF MUSEUM IN VADODARA CITY” focused on the need to consider public as the most important force which have a direct impact on museums. This study was primarily a descriptive study based on survey method done on a definite number of people (1503) of particular areas at a particular time span. A questionnaire having 73 questions was distributed to residents of mainly — Subhanpura, Gotri, Nizampura, Sama, Fatehgunj, Channi, Kareligh and some other areas of Baroda city. ‘Cluster random sampling method’ of sampling was selected for study since it was the best way to sample and cover a diverse and wide spread population of Vadodara City. The questionnaire included both open-ended and close-ended questions. The collected data was organised, analysed and interpreted to fulfil the objectives and goals of study. Questionnaire, computer (Microsoft Office Excel 2007) and literature study were the tools used in this survey. Ratings were done in 5-point scale.

In the first chapter, the various theories of perception in psychology and marketing were discussed. It included scientific accounts of perception, categories, level of complexity, the principles, factors affecting perception, role of perception in psychology and marketing, methods to gather such information and its application and importance in museums. In marketing, perception of customers is studied to identify and satisfy their wants, needs through human exchange processes and create customer interest in their products. Through various methods of advertisements they try to attract attention of their target audience. In

psychology, perception of people is studied to know about the factors and stimuli which affect their mental processes and behaviour. Thus, museums should also conduct survey and research to know which section of society they are best placed to serve and develop, plan and organise their events accordingly.

The second chapter included demographic profile of the respondents i.e. their gender, age, marital status, number of members in the family, educational qualification, languages known, occupation, earning members, and family income (annually), the analysis and interpretation of the general perception of people about museum and their ideas about how museums serve our society. 929 out of 1500 (61.81%) in our sample were male and 574(38.19%) were female. Most of them were in the age group of 30 to 49. 91.82% were married and rest were single. Most of them were having a family of four or more. 48.77% completed their graduation and 47.04% of them were post-graduates which show that the sample of study comprised of well-educated people. More than 62% people were having knowledge of at least three languages. More than 55% were service holders, 22.09% were house makers, 17.23% were business persons and the rest were either students or retired persons. Majority were having single earning members in their family whose family income was between 5 to 10 lakhs. This shows that the sample studied consisted mostly of middle class families.

The study also revealed their trust on the information presented by museum, their preference for library, media or museum to get information. Their viewpoints were compared with their demographic profiles. Majority of the people think that museum is a storehouse of

immense knowledge which helps to connect our past with present by procuring, caring, studying and displaying exhibits of lasting interest and value in an organised manner. It provides us with known and unknown facts and proves from past. Majority of the people said that it is a place of historical collection which provides us with enormous facts. Very few people consider it to be a place where they can enjoy with their family and friends. Thus, museums should plan such programmes and activities to lure these people to visit museum where they can have fun and participate in various interesting activities of their interest. Some think it to be a place for tourist attraction which showcases our culture and heritage. They feel that the museums need to preserve these evidences in museums as they will help our children to visualise their past and gain knowledge about their identity, origin, values and past civilisations. Museums should also organise more of interactive exhibits where people can handle and explore exhibits along with the audio- visuals on their own as we say that we remember a thing better when we use more than one senses that is seeing, hearing and touching. They want programmes where they can actively participate and enjoy with their family and friends.

Most of the respondents think that the information presented by museum is trustworthy due to transparent research by staffs and presentation of unbiased facts. Majority preferred museum over media for getting any authentic information as they think that media sometimes present manipulated, biased information. For updated information on present happenings they would prefer media. This shows the trust and respect of people in the research work and information presented by museums.

For gaining detailed, specialised knowledge about a subject majority preferred library over museums. Some (27%) would like to seek the help of both the institutions for the same as they think 'museums give practical knowledge, while in library we get detailed knowledge/information while reading', 'both are helpful for learning', 'as both are of different footings for learning', 'both have their own importance', 'one is huge source of information other the same with different modes', 'books provide us information, museum preserves remains of the same', 'library is related to different fields, museum related to specific topic', 'from library we get information about museums, from museum we get actual interpretation of facts', 'library gives detailed knowledge & museum gives actual data.'

In chapter three, details of analysis and interpretation of respondent's museum visiting pattern, their preferences and interests were included. A detailed study of museum visiting pattern of people annually, museum visits abroad, the members in their group, the number of members in their group, time spent in a museum, reasons for not visiting museum, sources of information about museums, use of internet for getting knowledge about museums, the expected features in museum website, preference of things in museum for gaining knowledge, deciding person in family, factors that influence museum visit, influence of their children, preference of activities during their museum visit were done. The study also included preferences and interests of people, leisure hour activities, their preferences in seeing exhibitions on current and future topics, their interest and things which motivate them to visit museums again, things they feel proud of, importance of museums in the city of Baroda. Museums should present stories and events of our land, our people and

nations to unite our past, present and future. They should try to develop a common identity amongst people our society. They can give information and reflect national consciousness, represent national unity and offer programmes for the production of citizenship to construct collective identities. India is a nation of diversity in culture, customs, races and religions. The present socio-political scenario makes it utmost important for our museums to serve in the direction of building national identity amongst people and for themselves.

Majority of people still now consider museums to be a source of immense knowledge and feel proud that their city is having more than one museum but wish to have some more as these museums help to know the culture and historical background of this place and other countries. People of Baroda are proud to have museums in their city as they are very much interested in different areas of arts, education, style and culture. They wish to have more such museums in their city. They should identify their brand values. The museum organisation staffs should be divided into groups to market their mission, their exhibits and objects related to our culture and heritage, the themes of their events and presentations, their imagery, the languages of communication, the facilities provided to visitors and the values should be written throughout. Museums should engage the staff and volunteers and help them to adopt the brand of MUSEUM. They can also engage partners and stakeholders. When we think national we can be national.

People want museums to arrange for online facility to book for museum tours in their website. Museums should develop website to give information about the museum and its mission, exhibits and galleries

along with the photographs of interesting ones, how to plan your tour like group tour, hours of operation, nearby attractions, current and upcoming exhibitions, permanent exhibitions, travelling exhibitions, upcoming events, pre-booking of tickets, membership facilities, education programs, resources available, online stores or shops etc.

Normally family and children are major factors to influence people's decision to visit a museum. Request by family, children especially for their school projects motivate them to visit a museum. Museums should cater to the children's need properly while planning for a display. The language used, design of display, interactive elements and amenities provided should be appropriate. They can plan for events which will cater to engage the developing minds of the young ones effectively.

The museum staffs can use bright colours, simplified version of the information provided to adults. They can even discuss with teachers and parents the activities by which the children learn most effectively and can pilot test their ideas before implementing them in their programmes. Teachers can be encouraged to work in collaboration with the museum and act as a supporter of museum programmes within the school. In return they can be given incentives like free passes for them and their families to museum exhibitions, invitations to special events and exhibitions. This will inspire other local schools to participate and marketing of the museum will be more cost effective.

Each child participating in museum tours or school visit to museum can be given passes or vouchers. This will motivate the students to visit museum along with their friends and family and to enjoy their leisure activities. Transport facility can be provided to school children from

school to museum sites. Organisations to support transport costs for schools specially disadvantaged schools can be contacted.

A training programme of 3-5 days for teachers can be organised before the visit of school children to learn about the education service and development of curriculum resources in the museum. They will also get an idea how museum visit can fit into their classroom learning process using informal learning activities. Similar training programmes can be organised for local college and university teachers to incorporate museum visits in their curriculum. Two or more museums can work together to provide interesting education packages for students like mini-experiments offering work experience, young volunteering opportunities, taking part in creative workshops etc.

Some of the people even feel that it is boring to visit museums as they are not allowed to do photography, use mobiles and remain quiet during their visit. Some people told that it is good to have museums in their city as they are places of tourist attraction and sources of incoming foreign currency in their country. Museums should encourage local authority to work together for tourism partnerships and taking leadership roles. Museum should transform from boring quite places to fun places where people can explore and learn and make their trip a memorable experience. A participatory culture in museum can inspire members to believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another.

Many people do not like to visit same museums again, at least not within one year. Thus, museums should keep on adding new exhibits at regular intervals or take exhibits as loans from other museums for temporary

exhibition. The programmes should also aid to enhance the national importance of museums and encourage people to think it to be place of civic pride next to learning resource.

In chapter four, expectations and opinions of the people about different aspects of the museum and their ratings were presented. It included general expectations of museum exhibits, the exhibits they would you propose for display, the programs they are interested in, the activities they would like to do, expectations regarding the mode of information provided, languages expected for labelling, ratings of the educational and administrative staffs, their expectations from the staff of a museum, view on special provision for women, interest in e-mail notices of events, exhibitions and museum programmes.

The general expectation of people is to have an experienced, trained and knowledgeable guide to accompany them during their museum visit to respond to their queries and help them to comprehend the information provided by museums better. They expect to have at least bilingual or trilingual labels in the museum for easy understanding of the information provided to them.

Along with self-explanatory labels, people expect to have few more things in museum which include attractive brochures, pamphlets, present and future related exhibits, plays, drama and programmes related to school curriculum in the interests of public, working models, more exhibits based on science and technology, computerised displays, museum tours, talk shows, art and craft making as leisure activities, video introduction to museum, map showing the location of the galleries and important exhibits and more sitting arrangements and paid food services

for a relaxed and comfortable museum visit. Museums can create cultural awareness, exhibitions on specific themes and topics along with models, attractive pamphlets.

Museums can have a list of schools in the Baroda city and can contact those schools for museum visit. If they do not visit the staffs can find out why they are not using the local museums as a part of their school activities. The reasons may be due to cost, transport problems, pressures of curriculum, little history of out of school trips or poor marketing by the museums. Once the staffs are aware of the reason(s), they can discuss ways of working with the school authority and teachers accordingly to solve the issues which will lead to their museum visit. Museum can organise their activities relevant to the school curriculum well in advance and can have awareness campaigns in different schools to make them aware of the upcoming events. They can also use the school internal mailing system for updating them with the programmes, if the school authority allows.

Museums can organise activities like handling objects, jigsaw puzzles, family events where they can participate and handle objects. Flexible timings, extended visiting hours can help service holders to visit museum at a time suitable for them. Museums should plan cost-effective ways to support visitors to museums and galleries like providing experienced trained guide, personally relevant information, edutainment programmes to enrich visitor experiences, take away digital souvenirs, booklets and attractive pamphlets, provide innovative approaches and technology in museum events to encourage museum visits. Museums through its exhibits and displays should echo the classical root of civic pride

projecting the value and influence of our culture and past civilisations on learning, discovery and society throughout the ages.

The analysis and interpretation of the data gives inputs to the museums on the findings of the above discussed areas and provides museum with suggestions on how to develop, promote and plan their activities to satisfy the experiences of museum visitors. The study also provides information on the above mentioned areas which the museums can utilise to build their national identity, to develop a feeling of civic pride in the minds of common people, to serve the society as an immense source of knowledge in an informal way along with adopting and acquiring resources to serve as a place for social activities, fun and enjoyment.

Till a few years back museums were limited to the acquisition, care, storage and display of the objects. But with the modernization around the world and changing society this scenario has changed to a great extent. People's expectations needs, demands, their ideas about museum in general have changed. To cater to these changes museum authorities should take efforts to fulfil the expectations of people and provide the necessary facilities in the museum which will help to change their perception about museums and inspire them to visit again and again.
