Chapter-III

Problems regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solutions
Box. 3.1. Chapters Brief

3.1. Financial Problems (137)

3.1.1. Reasons behind the Financial Crisis (138)
   - Administrative Problems (138)
   - Non-utilization and return of the Government Grants (139)
   - No Government Patronage (139)
   - Poor Image (140)
   - Museums' Rules and Regulations (140)
   - Poor number of Visitors (140)

3.1.2. Suggestions for Raising Fund and Earning Revenue (141)
   - Exploiting Information Resource (141)
   - Requesting for Grants and Sponsorship (145)
   - Scheduling Museum's Duration (146)

3.2. Poor Information and Human Resources (147)

3.2.1. Reasons behind Poor Information and Human Resources (147)
   - Insufficiency of Museum Staff and Experts (147)
   - Poor Conception of Museum Functioning and Visitors' Hospitality (148)
   - Not being able to Appoint Desired Staff and Experts (148)
   - Lack of Enthusiasm and Communication Skill (148)
   - Incomplete Documentation (149)
   - In-sufficient Information (149)
   - No Information Audit (149)

3.2.2. Suggestion for alternative Human Resource & Information Management (150)
   - Contractual/honorary appointment of expert/researcher/retired persons (150)
   - Information Management (150)
   - Opportunity of Internship (150)
   - Inviting Projects, Research Works (151)
   - Providing Training to Existing Staff (151)
3.3. Infrastructure and Technological Problems (152)

3.3.1. Reasons behind Infrastructure and Technological Problems (152)
- Poor Condition of Museum Building (152)
- Space Problem (152)
- Unable to afford Latest Technology (153)
- Poor Power Supply (153)
- Lack of Experts (153)
- Technological Illiteracy (153)
- Security Problem (153)

3.3.2. Suggestions for arrangement of Infrastructure and Technology (154)
- Only selected Objects on Display (154)
- Creating free space of training, different shows, cultural programmes and other activities (154)
- Manual Information Recording (154)
- Manual Access to Information (155)
- Use of Low Cost Technology (155)
- Establishing Contracts with Universities, Colleges, Software Training Institutes & other museums (155)

3.4. Image Building (156)

3.4.1. Reasons behind the Poor Image of Museums (156)
- Indifferent Society towards museum and vis-à-vis (156)
- Neglect of Visitors' Demands (157)
- Poor Mass-awareness (157)
- Stereotype Exhibition (157)

3.4.2. Suggestion for Earning Good Image (158)
- Maintaining Good Public Relations (158)
- Visitors' Research (158)
- Exhibit Research (158)
- Developing Users' friendly activities (159)
- Modernizing Exhibition (160)
- Mass Communication (160)
- Serve Education (160)

Case Study. 7: Bishnupur Acharya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan, Bishnupur, West Bengal. (161)

Case Study. 8. Archaeological Museum, Pune, Maharastra (163)

Case Study. 9: Assam State Museum, Guwahati, Assam (165)
3. Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

Problems are the part of administration, but solving problems is the task of management. There are numerous problems, which each and every museums of India are facing every day. Few cases it is minor, whereas in maximum cases few problems are found very serious for running a museum and alarming museum in its successful survivability. At the time of research in different museums throughout India many problems are raised regarding the development of the Information Service. On further research many solutions are found. It is assumed that these solutions can help Indian museums in solving the arising problems while introducing the Information Service. These problems along with its probable solutions are briefed as follows:

3.1. Financial Problems

Finance is the major concern for every museum whether funded by government directly, run by trusty, receives aids from various sources or any private museums. All these museums in India are suffering from financial problems from very minor to maximum level. Though direct government funded museums are getting full financial support either from Central or State Government for running administration, giving employees benefits, purchasing objects, maintaining collection and arrangement of security etc., but they also need to show proper project planning for getting new grants. Museums, which are not funded by the government directly, need to produce proper working plans and proposals to the funding authority for grants. This requires time, competent skills and dedicated efforts. It is found that more than 90% Indian museums are suffering from financial crisis. This is, therefore, a big problem area for developing the Information Service in Indian museums. Here various reasons are given that are responsible for this crisis situation and some suggestions are also mentioned that may help museums to overcome this situation:
3.1.1. Reasons behind the Financial Crisis.

- **Administrative Problems**

Administration of maximum museums from rural level to metro-cities is not adequately structured to handle and disseminate information as per requirement. Many museums do not have their own Directors and Curators for a long period. Without the administrative heads, grants are not sanctioned for new projects. As a result, these museums are not able to think for new service like new modes of dissemination of information. For example, Rabindra Bhawan—the Biographic and Personalia Museum on Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan, West Bengal. No Curator and Assistant Curator are in this museum since last five years (till February, 2005). The museum is situated in the busy tourist spot of West Bengal and large number of tourist visits the museum but they are not getting answers of their query, required information and photographs readily. From this museum, the Nobel Prize and many other important objects of Rabindranath Tagore were stolen that noticed in March 2004.

Many museums are presently looking by the Honorary Directors and Curators as an additional responsibility along with his duty in other places. Many of them are not interested to show any effort for getting grants in his tenure. For example, Mahatma Phule Vastu Sangrahalya in Pune, Maharashtra. Here Mr. N. N. Medadkar, an Engineer is looking after this museum as a Curator for two years (as per year 2001).

In addition to the above-mentioned situations, many museum authorities do not like to apply for grants for dissemination of information because of their poor staff strength and lack of any experts. Because without them museums can not plan and work. For example, the Archaeological Museum, Mandore in Rajasthan. Though the Curator is interested in taking initiative to document information about its collection and disseminate them through suitable media to the target visitors but he is helpless because he only has two assistants.
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

Non-utilization and return of the Government Grants

Besides the earlier mentioned situations, it is also true that authorities of few well-reputed museums could not able to utilize the allocated fund and the entire amount is returned to the government. As a result getting fund again from the same source and purpose become difficult for these museums.

It is also found that many authorities could not produce the details of the utilization of funds for the said purpose and therefore, loose confidence of the authority. Thus, they are not getting further grants for next projects and many new authorities are facing problems in getting funds because of their previous background. For example, the Archaeological Museum, Pune in Maharashtra.

No Government Patronage

Museums that are not directly under any government, need to wait for a long period for receiving grants from their Trusty or any other funding sources. Their administrative activities, payment of staff are depending on this infrequent fund. For example, the Bishnupur Acharya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan at Bishnupur in West Bengal gets fund in long duration from its Trusty, the Bangiya Sahitya Parisad, Kolkata and thus suffering from huge financial crisis.

This valuable museum has huge number of precious objects and situated in the heart of the busiest tourist spot of West Bengal. The museum has huge opportunity to inform visiting tourists about the history of local monuments, artistic terracotta temples and the traditional and ethnic Baluchari textile. But the museum is not in a position to appoint more staff to deal with and serve large number of tourists due to the financial crisis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box: 3.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasons behind the Financial Crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Administrative Problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Non-utilization and return of the Government Grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ No Government Patronage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Poor Image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Museums rules and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Poor number of Visitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

- **Poor Image**

Many old museums have large number of precious collection. But people residing near those museums do not know about this. This eloquence of society is because of non-communicative nature of museums. In addition, museums are not serving in accordance with the visitors' interest and their modes of information dissemination are not tactical as per present day acceptance of average people. As a result the age-old image of museum as a house of wonder is remain unchanged. Museums could not able to prove itself as a house of enormous information, learning and entertainment in addition to preserve and exhibit wonders and not able to be a part of society for the use and knowledge of coming generation. This barrier isolates museums from other entertainment and educational institutes and not able to earn revenue from its different services.

- **Museums' Rules and Regulations**

While researching it is found that many museums cannot charge for entry ticket or enhance the rate of Ticket to increase its revenue earning. In case of Government museums of Madhya Pradesh before January 2002 no provision was there to charge for entry into museums. Many University and College museums do not have right to charge for entry ticket. For example, Madhav Chandra Goswami Museum of the Guwahati University.

- **Poor number of Visitors**

Moreover, the number of visitors is very less in maximum museums in India. Out of 100 Indian museums that are visited for the purpose of research, only 43 museums were leading, popular and big. Here the average number of visitors per day is estimated about 280 (approx.). In the rest 57 museums, average number of visitors is calculated about 16 (approx.) only, per day. All this average is calculated on the basis of the yearly average number of visitors of these hundred museums. Thus, revenue earning from the visitors of the second category of museums is also very less or can be said as negligible.
3.1.2. Suggestions for Raising Fund and Earning Revenue

Museums itself can overcome all the above mentioned drawbacks with their generous efforts, hardworking and enthusiasm. Government of India and respective State Government provides grants time to time for various reasons. Museums can receive this grants showing their competitiveness, genuine interest and positive attitude. Other than governments, museum can also earn revenue from publics by making good Public Relations with target visitors and institutions by giving them good and effective services. Here few suggestions are given regarding information resources of any museum that can be exploited for earning revenue and increasing fund:

© Exploiting Information Resource

Museum is the ocean of information and that can be easily exploited for earning revenue. Here are following prospective information resources that can earn revenue:

- **Selling replicas, handicrafts and mementos**
  Each object in museums carries information about its history, importance, use, users, scientific importance, artist, craftsmanship, intrinsic beauty etc. More informative objects have much demand among buyers. Selling replicas of such type of objects like handicrafts, sculpture and monuments etc. museums can earn revenue.

- **Selling museum publications—leaflets, brochures, guidebooks, picture post-cards, posters, albums etc.**
  These publications are very much popular and demanding to visitors. All these objects carry important information. Selling such informative publications museums can earn revenue and also can disseminate lots of information regarding any particular objects or about museum's services or museum as a whole to the buyers and readers.
Charging ticket for different shows, temporary exhibitions

Museums can inform about its different theme of exhibitions through different shows, organising inside the gallery or in its auditorium. Temporary exhibitions are also a good media for dissemination of information. Museum can charge very nominal amount for all such type of shows and exhibitions separately and can earn revenue.

Paid guided tour and multimedia-presentation

Appointment of permanent guide lecturers is expensive and many museums could not afford it. Such museums can give chance to private guides by giving them training on all the related aspects and can charge separately for this guide service from visitors.

Now, few museums are already developed and few are developing multimedia presentation on the entire museum exhibits and activities. This type of presentation can give at a glance look on the entire museum. For example, the Visitors’ Centre at Chilika, Orissa. Visitors generally come for a limited time and therefore, knowing every exhibits of a museum in that short period of time is an impossible task for them. Multimedia presentation can give them an opportunity to know all the collection within a very short period of time and can replace the job of guide lecturers. Museums can charge very nominal price for this show and can save huge investment on guide lecturers as well as can earn revenue.

Paid training programmes

Many museums arrange training programmes on traditional painting, embroidery, dance and many special themes in a year. Museums should inform properly about this facility to target people, so that large number of people get informed about this and participate in training programmes. Museums can charge nominally for the course fee from them.
Chapter: 3 Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

◆ **Paid special information**

Many researchers, writers, designers, artists, students and many others need special information and photographs from museums. Museums need time and man power to provide this information. Thus, museum can charge for this special Information Service.

◆ **Organizing Indian classical programmes, events and celebrating traditional festivals**

Every Indian likes to enjoy these items very much especially during winter, holidays and vacations. To catch the sentiment of large number of local people and tourists, museums can arrange colourful classical programmes on music, folks, traditional instruments, martial arts, recitation, and on various performing arts etc. by inviting artists from remote corners. Museum can also celebrate festivals like Holi, Rakshabandhan, and other seasonal festivals, giving traditional flavour by exhibiting related objects, painting, musical instruments and with classical music. This type of programmes can earn good revenue, if large number of people come to see such programmes.

◆ **Giving auditorium on rent for different programmes**

Many museums have their own auditorium. Museums can give this auditorium on rent when they do not have their own programme to perform there. This is also a very good source for earning revenue.

◆ **Library membership**

Museum Library contains variety of books and documents that are very much useful to students, researchers, writers, artists, designers and many others. Many of them use this library regularly. Museum can increase their library member by informing target readers properly. Informed persons will take membership and museum can earn revenue from the membership fee, photocopy charges, scanning and Internet facility.
Chapter 3: Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

♦ Paid photography and provision for film shooting

Many tourists and researchers want to take photographs of exhibits. Now the use of Handycam (movie camera) is increasing day by day. Museum can give opportunity to visitors for still and video photography paying nominal fee.

Many museums are housed in the beautiful heritage buildings having good ambience, where many film directors want to shoot for advertisements, Tele-films and even for feature films. Museums can charge for all such purposes and can earn good revenue. In addition museum can also advertise for inviting directors to shoot inside the museum by arranging all the facilities necessary for film shooting. Through this approach museums not only can earn revenue and image but also can advertise itself.

♦ Exploiting museum’s copyright on supplied information, research articles and photography

Many people want to publish books, thesis, write articles and for that they need many information from museums. Museum can give them access to information regarding collections, publication, provide photographs and can permit users to take information from its Website. For each case museum can charge copyright fee for using museum’s information by securing its authority on its all sorts of information as copyright. For example, if a person wants to publish photograph of museum object(s) then he has to mention the source and pay a nominal fee, unless the museum can take legal action for violating the copyright act.

♦ Organizing contest

It is a good media for earning revenue. Museum can arrange contests on relevant and interesting topics and items like quizzing on history, science, performing arts, paintings and drawing etc. in school and college level and can earn revenue from applications and entry fee. Museums can request for advertisement from corporate sectors and can request grants from governments for these purposes.
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

♦ Providing multi-cuisine cafeteria

People visit museum in their holidays or in special occasions. While their outing they take food from different restaurants paying huge bill. Every such people like traditional food specially those, which are not generally cooked at home.

Museums in their cafeteria can give opportunity to visitors to taste the multi-cuisine of regional, traditional and ethnic foods in reasonable price and can earn good revenue. Museums can give their cafeteria on lease to any catering company for serving traditional, ethnic and regional foods and can earn revenue from rent or profit share basis.

✉ Requesting for grants and sponsorship

While organizing events, services, renovation or opening of new galleries, temporary exhibitions, seminars, symposiums etc. museum needs lump-sum money. Museums can request assistance for these purposes from following sources:

◆ From Government

Many Ministries of State and Central Government like Ministry of Culture, Tourism, Information and Broadcasting etc. provide grants. Museums need to apply with good proposals or projects and also need to maintain regular contact to pursue for the grants.
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

Corporate Houses

Now reputed Corporate Houses are showing their genuine interest in maintaining Social and Community Relations as their Public Relation activity. These Corporate Houses can sponsor galleries and can give good monetary assistance to museums.

For example Samsung in National Science Centre, New Delhi and Philips in Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai are sponsoring galleries.

International Bodies

Many Foreign Country Relief organizations are present throughout the world that provides grants for social purposes. Museum as a social institution working for preservation of Heritage and Culture can apply for grants with proper projects. For example UNESCO provides grants for repairing heritage buildings.

Scheduling museum’s duration

During the research work it is found that local people visit museum in holidays mainly. School students visit in first half and tourists comes either first half and in afternoon. General demand of museum visit is generally fall after 4 p.m., which is the official closing time of all Indian museums. To facilitate every category of visitors museums can extend visiting hours up to 8 p.m. to give opportunity to many visitors to visit in afternoons. For example, the Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum in Pune, Maharashtra, the museum is kept open for the public from 8.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. so that large number of visitors can come in their suitable time.

Extended museum hours also help museums to organize cultural shows at evenings. For example, the Bharat Loke Kala Mandal in Udaipur organizes traditional cultural programmes in every evening during winter that is the pick tourist-season in Udaipur, Rajasthan and large number of tourists enjoys these traditional shows.
3.2. Poor Information and Human Resources

At the time of research in various Indian museums it is found that information regarding objects present in these museums is not sufficient. In many cases large number of objects are not yet documented. Insufficiency of staff is the great barrier in managing and serving information. Thus museums are not in a position to publish information booklets and serve information to the enquirer.

3.2.1. Reasons behind Poor Information and Human Resources

Prior to decide anything for implementing Information Service, museums need to analyse the reasons behind this problem and need to find out the solutions to overcome this situation. During the research in number of museums in India following reasons are found that are believed to be responsible for this problem:

- **Insufficiency of Museum Staff and Experts**
  
  Maximum museums do not have adequate trained staff and experts; as a result research work on objects is not undergoing. In many cases present limited trained staff cannot look after entire collection. It is found that many staff of Archaeology is not expert on art and therefore, many information regarding art objects are not yet explored. Again, many multipurpose museums do not have experts of all the relevant fields related to its object content. Many manuscripts are not yet translated because of the unavailability of such translators like Parsian, Prakrit and Brahmi language known people.

  It is also found that more than 95% museums in India do not have Museologists to look after every museum functioning. As a result scientific documentation, proper information management and satisfying people by disseminating information according to their needs are unthinkable in those museums. Adequate number of Computer experts are also absent in maximum museums that delaying the information recording process in computer and its quick and easy retrieval system for the use of museum itself and by different visitors.
Chapter: 3  Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

**Poor Conception of Museum Functioning and Visitors’ Hospitality**
While doing fields research it is found that maximum authorities do not know what are the responsibilities of museums towards users and society. They never look after the visitors’ demands. Till today information regarding objects are provided according to museum’s point of view and not in accordance with the visitors’ interest. Mainly technical information is providing in labels that could not touch the emotion of visitors.

**Not being able to Appoint Desired Staff and Experts**
It is true that many museums are not in a position to appoint more staff / experts for running all the jobs smoothly because of constant financial crisis. In providing information properly museums need lots of human resource for collection of information regarding museum’s objects, its proper management, security, information dissemination, looking after visitors' satisfaction, as well as for earning good image of museums.

**Lack of Enthusiasm and Communication Skill**
It is also found that present museum staff do not have that level of enthusiasm by which they can do more work, research for information, study elaborately and willing to deliver information to users.

In India people speak in number of languages, which are broadly categorized in sixty-four major languages. Other than the people speak in these languages many foreigners visits museums in Indian in every year. Many of them do not understand English. As a result receptionist, guide lecturers and the staff responsible for information dissemination faced many problems in convincing these national and international tourists and delegates. It is also found that many staff hesitate to communicate with people who speak other than his / her own mother language, because of his / her inability in speaking that language.
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

© Incomplete Documentation

After the survey in over hundred museums throughout India it is found that in more than 70% museums documentation of entire objects is not completed. Only about 8% museums have done computerized documentation and many museums have recently initiated. Moreover, few museums do not have Accession Register and even no proper record regarding the entire collection and thus implementation of Information Service is difficult in these museums at present.

© In-sufficient Information

It is found that museums where documentation is completed in many cases information regarding objects is not sufficient. Though the present information is sufficient for official use but not for researchers or any laymen who are interested to know about the bibliographical reference, using methods, cultivation details of useful plants, mythology behind sculptures, incarnated forms and history etc., which are not usually maintained in present information record systems. Here more research and emphasis is required to collect and store associated information.

© No Information Audit

Information audit is the process of estimation of the quantity of information present in museum and its further requirement on the basis of official and visitors' demand. Thus, it is very much essential for ascertaining the stock of information present in museum about its objects, probable queries regarding exhibits, deficit in information resource and nature of demand that have already placed by the visitors. But no such system of assessment is present in museums of India. As a result museum authorities do not have any clear idea of the usability of their information resource and the expected demand.

Box: 3.4.

Reasons behind Poor Information and Human Resources

- Insufficiency of museum staff and experts
- Poor conception of museum functioning and visitors' hospitality
- Not being able to appoint desirable experts
- Lack of Enthusiasm and Communication Skill
- Incomplete Documentation
- In-sufficient Information
- No Information Audit
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

3.2.2. Suggestions for alternative Human Resource and Information Management

Analysing the above problems it is assumed that if museums can able to undertake following actions then these problems can be minimised and museum can be able to implement Information Service for its successful survivability and can assist users and general people:

© Contractual / honorary appointment of experts / researchers / retired persons
Both Central and State Governments are reducing their funding to museums and discouraging appointment of more staff. As a result appointment of permanent staff is not possible at present in many museums. To run museum in accordance with the present demand of society, museum authorities can appoint contractual or honorary person(s) for specific projects. Museum can invite scholars for doing research to explore information regarding objects of specific period, offering remuneration for a fixed period and can complete their pending work with less time and investment. For example a museum can appoint experienced retired persons / researchers, persons on deputation basis, honorary or contract basis for the computerized and photographic documentation of the entire museum objects. Once the documentation process is completed then this additional staff will no more require and permanent museum staff can look after the documentation of newly acquired objects.

© Information Management

In many museums it is found that though having adequate information resource, good staff and infrastructure, the museum till not able to deliver information because of improper management of information. It is therefore, essential to maintain proper information management starting from collection of objects, record keeping, security of information, and easy information retrieval system17.

17 Details are given in the Chapter-4, “Information Management in Museum”.

150
Opportunity of Internship
In addition to the contractual and honorary appointment of experts, museums can offer internship facility for few months to the students of Museology, Computer Science, History, Public Relations, Management and Natural History giving consolidated scholarship. Students can acquire professional experience from this internship in museum. Through this effort museums can make a team for completing desired job under the supervision of an expert.

Inviting Projects, Research Works
Students of Post-Graduation level as well as for professional degree/diploma level need to do an individual project work. These students faced many difficulties in convincing different organisation where they want to do project work. Museums can offer projects by convincing respective authorities of Museology, Computer Science, History, Public Relations, Management and Natural History disciplines for sending students to do projects in museums. Museum can place small projects like writing leaflets, brochures on gallery, bibliography of certain objects, programming on information retrieval and various quiz items on display etc. Through this approach museums can do a lot with the help of emerging talents and can be benefited mutually.

Providing Training to Existing Staff
It is found that many existing staff is not trained in museum functioning and computer applications. Every big museum like Indian Museum Kolkata and National Museum in New Delhi run in-service training courses in museum functioning in every year. Small museums can send their staff to get training in museum work. Similarly staff can be sent for taking training in computer applications, so that they can do jobs faster and can disseminate information through computers. Communication inside the museum is a serious problem. To solve this museums can send its receptionists, guide lecturers, and staff responsible for information dissemination to take training in speaking Hindi, English, one regional and in any foreign language.
3.3. Infrastructure and Technological Problems

While discussing with many museum authorities, it is found that many of them do not like to introduce modern technologies because of poor infrastructure of their museums and technology-maintenance problems. Space problems, poor condition of objects and museum building, security problems etc. are also creating barriers for serving information to enquirer.

3.3.1. Reasons behind Infrastructure and Technological Problems

Analysing the present condition of infrastructure, various reasons are found that are believed to be responsible for this situation. Museums need to understand these problems so that they can come out from this situation and can implement technology to serve people. Reasons are given as follows.

© Poor Condition of Museum Building

Many museums are housed in more than hundred years old building and are suffering from problems of old construction, humid rooms, water leakage problem and poor-roofing. These museums require immediate and regular maintenance. But continuous financial crisis restricts the authorities in doing so. As a result the authorities are hesitating to install electronics systems and latest information technology like computers, audio-visual system in such atmosphere till the repair and renovation of the museum building and existing display. In spite of these factors many museums have already purchased computers, facsimile and photocopy machines but are facing maintenance problems.

© Space problem

Many museums are housed in a corner of big organisations and have space problems for displaying huge number of objects properly, giving space for visitors' orientation, organising any programme, information management, public relations and also for other official purposes. It restricts museum to interact with visitors properly.
Chapter 3 Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

Unable to afford Latest Technology
Purchase of computer, audio-track system, television sets, over-head-projector etc. is very much expensive and many museums in India cannot afford it. Many semi-urban and rural museums do not want to take any risk in introducing Information Technology in museum because of huge expense on maintenance and security arrangement.

Poor Power Supply
Other than metro-cities more or less every museum is suffering from irregular power supply. In such situations these museums do not want to implement Information Technology for office purpose and for disseminating information to visitors.

Lack of Experts
Lack of experts is the serious problem in implementing Information Technology especially in semi-urban and rural museums.

Technological Illiteracy
In India till today more than 70% visitors are not yet literate in computer and do not have knowledge in using different information technologies. As a result many electronic implements are getting damage due to ill handling. Thus to watch over all such electronic implements and help visitors for smooth operation museums need additional staff, which becomes burden to many museums.

Security Problem
Security is a major concern of every museum, especially semi-urban and rural museums. As a result authorities do not want to take any risk regarding introducing expensive Information Technology for serving visitors.

Box 3.6.
Reasons behind Infrastructure and Technological Problems
- Poor Condition of Museum Building
- Space problem
- Unable to afford Latest Technology
- Poor Power Supply
- Lack of Experts
- Technological Illiteracy
- Security Problem
3.3.2. Suggestions for arrangement of Infrastructure and Technology

Use of latest Information technology is till out of reach because of poor infrastructure in many small, rural, semi-urban and few urban museums. These museums can manage their information resources, arrange and improve infrastructure through following ways:

- **Only Selected Objects on Display**

  Visitors cannot grasp huge number of objects and its information at a time. It is very much difficult to attract and draw attention of visitors on each and every important exhibit in a museum. It is advisable that museums should display selected objects with wide gaps, which is essential to provide a relaxation time to visitors to perceive new thing with new enthusiasm. Museums should change these objects once or twice a year and should intimate target visitors to generate their interest in visiting the museum again. Through such display visitors can get limited information rather than being stagnant in the Information Traffic Jam.

- **Creating free space for training, different shows, cultural programmes and other activities**

  By displaying limited and important objects, wide space can be generated. Here museums can arrange programmes, training courses and other activities like contests, lectures etc. for visitors’ orientation. This is now very much essential along with the exhibition of objects.

- **Manual Information Recording**

  Information can be stored manually by museum staff in Accession Register, Accession Card, Index Card, Catalogue, Monographs, guide books, leaflets, brochure and as popular publications. Authority should keep duplicate and if possible triplicate copy of all the major storing items for security purpose. Only the copy of documents should be served to the enquirer, whenever necessary. No way the original documents should provide to any enquirer.
Chapter 3

Problems Regarding Development of
Information Service and its Probable Solution

1. Manual Access to Information

Museums where implementation of Information Technology is not possible, information can be served manually there. Many Indian visitors cannot operate electronic systems and computers. For them museums can provide record books, publications and library facility as well as can provide information orally provided they have prior permission or have come through proper channel.

2. Use of Low Cost Technology

Everyday the cost of Information Technology is decreasing. Computers are now available in less than half price then that was available in three years back. In such condition museum can purchase a computer for record keeping, and central audio system for informing all the visitors at a time. In addition if possible one 21" television set with low cost Video Compact Disk Player can be purchased to demonstrate visitors. Museums should try to impress reporters to give media coverage on leading newspapers to reach its target visitors without any advertisement cost.

3. Establishing contracts with universities, colleges, software training institutes & other museums

Museums willing to store information in soft copies or in Compact Disks and use computers, can request to the big museums, government or private software training institutes, departments of Computer Science of any college or University. This institution can help museum in this regard by sending students/experts and giving technological support on contract basis.
Chapter: 3  

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and Us Probable Solution

3.4. Image Building

Since prolong period of time museums fail to earn good image as a useful educative, entertaining and informative centre in society. Thus, whatever museums should decide to serve for visitors and common people, it requires to convince its effectiveness to target people. To attract visitors' attention towards the various public related activities, museums have to make its positive image in today's society. It is because many big museums are doing many things for general people and visitors but they did not get considerable visitors.

3.4.1. Reasons behind the Poor Image of Museums

Large section of general people believe that museums are the place for seeing wonders, fragments of monuments, broken sculptures, dead specimens, manuscripts etc. They could not imagine that they could get huge knowledge from these exhibits. The reasons behind this negative image of museums in society are found as follows:

- Indifferent Society towards museum and vis-à-vis

Schools can utilize museums as extended classroom because of the opportunity of teaching in front of real evidences that is not possible in schools. But adequate initiatives are not taken from both the schools' and museums' side. As a result habit of museum visit is not yet developed among school students. Other than schools, museum visit is not incorporated in the syllabus of teachers' training courses under the universities and therefore, teachers also not habituated in taking their students into various museums to show them the real objects that they are studying in their books.

Again museums never contact with different non-government organisations, orphans, institutes of handicaps etc. to invite their children into museums to give them chance to know about country's heritage. Over 80% museums in India do not have any tie-up with city tourists' services to bring tourists into museums.
Chapter: 3 Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

© Neglect of Visitors’ Demands
Museums never consider the expectations of visitors, how they can make objects more interactive to every people even to laymen. Display of objects is made so that people can see it but no effort has taken to inform all-important aspects of exhibits to visitors.

For example Many manuscripts hold many events, myths, social and cultural information but these are remain untold to visitors and remain as show piece only. If translation of few important portions of these manuscripts is highlighted then many visitors can get the chance of knowing valuable history of our culture and heritage.

© Poor Mass-awareness
When an institute reminds its target people regularly then a positive image about that institute grows in people’s mind and they develop conviction regarding the visit and use the service. Museums do a lot but due to poor mass awareness it cannot reach to common people.

© Stereotype exhibition
Museums in India are crowded with huge number of objects. As a result individual exhibit is loosing its importance in the crowd of important exhibits and the exhibition is also loosing its attractiveness among visitors. Museums have placed all the objects together with labels that tells only the technical information like name, period, size, material composition etc. This information is not attractive to general visitors. To attract people, museums need to present the history and importance of that objects in such a way that is much acceptable, attractive and entertaining to visitors.
3.4.2. Suggestions for Earning Good Image

Image can not be built by doing lots of work but it needs to earn by satisfying the users. Here following scopes are given below that are believed to be effective in earning positive image of museum as a true informative, entertaining and educative institution in the service of society.

© Maintaining Good Public Relations
Museums should depute few staff to look after and run a Public Relations department. It will help museums in understanding the communities needs, users' demands, help employees in better working, informing target visitors about museums and its activities etc.. At present many museums are taking initiative to develop Public Relations Department and to flourish public relations activities to understand public better and to survive successfully in competitive society.

Public relations people can look after the publishing of the publicity materials for communicating with general people and target institutions and can tailor information according to people's demand. The department has the potentiality to earn good image of museum in society.

© Visitors' Research
Museums should engage its staff in visitors' survey in order to understand its target people. It is also required to know the visitors' demand and choice in a way that resembles industrial product development. Museums are part of a leisure market in which visitors may choose between ranges of entertainment. Museums are accountable to those who fund them and must prove their ability to attract and hang on to their visitors. The research is also needed to raise funds from new sources. Opinion polls can be organized outside the museum to know how far people are informed about the activities of museums. Like this exit pole can also be conducted on visitors just after their exit from gallery / museum.
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

Graph: 3.1. The graph shows that in the Archaeological Museum, Pune, the number of visitors decreases uniformly since the year 1996 to the date of survey. It is found that museum decreases its activity and publicity during this period and indicates that museum's activity is directly proportional to the number of visitors in the museum.

**Exhibit Research**

Museums should undertake exhibit research in order to find out every probable information query sector. It is also necessary to determine the exact position of the exhibit in the gallery, from where it can draw maximum attention of viewers. It is also need to find out the media that is efficient in communicating target visitors.

For example, a sculpture needs an audiovisual media to tell in details about its iconography, mythology, history, technology etc.

**Developing Users' friendly activities**

Museums should serve such activities through which provided information can help visitors and users in their education, daily life, in professional field and in knowledge building. Such useful information is only capable of attracting people and to give museum a reputation of public service institution.

Box: 3.9.

Suggestions for Increasing Museum visitors

- Maintaining Good Public Relations
- Visitors' Research
- Exhibit Research
- Developing Users' friendly activities
- Modernizing Exhibition
- Mass Communication
- Serve Education
Chapter: 3 Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

Modernizing Exhibition

The permanent exhibition requires careful design, as it has to serve the purpose of both the curator and visitors over a time. The restructuring of the permanent exhibitions should be a three-fold project, like—

1. Renovation of the exhibition is required at regular interval with the incorporation of fresh elements in order to convey a more instructive message.

2. Installation of a new interactive exhibition sector that combines real and re-created objects and depicts some of the most important aspects. It should combine specially designed presentations and also incorporates audio-visual and sensory effects. Museum should undergo in periodic change in its display and activity by following an unprecedented organizational flexibility.

3. In addition to permanent display museums should provide theme based temporary exhibition that can attract large number of visitors.

Mass Communication

Museum should approach to mass media like, Television, Radio and Newspaper houses for releasing daily / weekly / monthly news to highlight the activities of museum. Museum should advertise itself in the busiest locations of the city e.g. adjacent to main roads, market places, near school areas, office of the traveling agencies, hotels etc. where large number of people can view the posters / banners of museum. Museum should maintain electronic database, which are accessible to every interested person either within the museum or in the Internet.

Serve Education

Museum should give emphasis on educational projects during vacation period, targeting school students. Information regarding time, venue, target people and other important aspects should be properly disseminated among the target visitors.
Case Study: 7

Bishnupur Acharya Jogesh Chandra Purakriti Bhawan
Bishnupur, District Bankura, West Bengal

Date of Study: 09.11.2001*  Type of Museum: Archaeology Museum
Source of Information: Chittaranjan Das Gupta, Curator.

Objects Content: Art and Archaeology objects ranging from pre-historic period to this day including microlithic and monolithic cells, pottteries, stone and terracotta sculptures, stone epigraphs, bronzes, early medieval Indian coins, scroll paintings of Bankura etc. In addition the museum has several thousands medieval manuscripts in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Bengali etc. and folk-art objects collected from different parts of West Bengal.

Museum's Visitors: Number of tourists throughout the country as well as many foreigners from different parts of the World come here. They visit the museum as an additional place of interest along with the surrounding monuments and terracotta temples. Many school and college students as well as researchers come here for different purposes. Local people sometimes attain film shows and talk shows, shown in the museum time to time.

Museum's Strength: The museum is located at the popular tourist spot of West Bengal. Bishnupur City is surrounded by many historical sites and monuments that represents many historical periods of West Bengal. In addition, near the museum, famous ancient terracotta temples are situated. The museum is also located at the epicentre of Bengal’s famous Baluchari Textile and Dokra Art. As a result large number of tourists comes here and the museum gets them as visitors. Thus, the museum other than good resource also has good opportunity to serve its visitors.

Research proof is given in the 'Research Proof' section of the Appendix I, page number 316.
Information Dissemination: Museum provides free guide service to interested visitors and school groups. Sometimes the museum arranges talk shows and film shows in its gathering hall.

Museum’s Weakness: There are only three staffs in the museum. One is the Curator, one is office staff and one is an assistant. In this situation it is very difficult for the museum to do any additional museum job or to take attention toward visitors. Financially, the museum is suffering from huge crisis because the museum receives grant in two to three years and most of it goes to meet the dues of payment of museum staffs, repairing and maintenance of the building.

Problems: The museum is mainly suffering from financial crisis, huge shortage of manpower and lack of any desire to do something attractive and useful for visitors.

Forward Planning: The museum has huge opportunity to inform visitors about the history, local treasures, Baluchari and Dokra Art etc. But no planning has been done till today for informing more to national and international tourists and assist them to make their visit most memorable and successful.

Suggestions to the Museum: The museum can do many things for informing and entertaining visitors or national and international tourists and can earn revenue, which is very much essential today to survive properly. These are:

1. Museum can provide guide service to the tourists, by contractual appointment of guides, while visiting in the surrounding historical monuments, because there is no guide, who can give authentic information to tourists.

2. Museum can show films inside the museum everyday, on the local monuments, terracotta temple and its history, Baluchari textile, Dokra art, terracotta objects, which are the native textile and art of this region. These programmes will definitely attract and inform visiting tourists.

3. The museum can also sale local art objects and can earn revenue.
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of
Information Service and its Probable Solution

Case Study: 8

Archeology Museum, Deccan College, Post Graduate and Research Institute, Pune, Maharashtra

Date of Study: 30.05.2001*  Source of Information: Mr. P. P. Dandwate, Curator
Type of Museum: Archaeology Museum  Website: www.deccancollege.edu

Objects Content: Sculptures, potteries, inscriptions, Indian coins, Indian scripts, ethno-archaeological objects, burials, ancient tools etc.

Information Dissemination: Information is mainly provided through labels but Curator himself or any other staff guide school groups on prior appointment. Museum organizes seminars, lectures, and orientation course for history teachers and also provides assistance to researchers.

Museum’s Strength: The museum is rich in collection. It has huge number of rare objects. All the eleven galleries of the museum exhibit different fields of Archaeology. The museum is situated in the Deccan College Campus, which is a very common place for students as well as general people. It is housed in a large building surrounded by a magnificent garden that provides a beautiful ambience.

Problems: The museum at present suffering from huge financial crisis and lack of efficient staff. There is only five staff (till June 2001) in the museum looking after administrative jobs as well as taking visitors' care. Many galleries remained closed in most of the time of a year, which disheartens many visitors to come this museum again.

Museum’s Visitors: Only few schools send their students along with their history teachers to visit this museum. Other than school students some researchers and few persons come to visit for specific purposes. In the year 1999-2000 only 2100 visitors came in the museum. Though no entry fee is charged at present but till the number of visitor is very few.

* Proof of the research work is given in the 'Research Proof' section of the Appendix II
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

**Museum’s Weakness:** Though having huge collection, museum fails to attract local people and tourists. In last three-year the authority could not arrange any exhibition or provide any service to visitors. No effort has been taken from the museum's side for its publicity and public relations. Detachment of museum from common people reduces the number of visitors in the museum a great extend. **Only four visitors are found on the date of survey in the museum.** Poor number of staff hampering museum functioning, dissemination of information and visitors relation very much. Till date there is no proper Accession Register in the museum that is creating difficulties in getting information about the exhibits of the museum. The museum has three major weaknesses—Financial Crisis, Popularity/Image Crisis, Poor Human Resource

**Forward Planning:**
1. The museum is trying to appoint sufficient number of efficient staff for immediate care of its collection and proper functioning of the museum.
2. Sending proposal to the Government to sanction grants immediately for better survival of the museum.
3. Improve display of the museum and introduce lucrative services for visitors.

**Suggestion:**
The museum need to take three serious steps to improve its present situation and to make it most user friendly:
1. Have to increase fund through proper project planning.
2. Need to complete its documentation of all the objects immediately.
3. Need to use all possible media to inform common people and target institutions like schools, colleges, traveling agencies, tourism department etc. about its content, importance etc.
4. The museum immediately needs to arrange programme to attract visitors.
Case Study: 9

Assam State Museum, Guwahati

Date of Study: 16.12.2003*  Type of Museum: Multipurpose Museum
Source of Information: Mr. Jiten Shyam, Asst. Curator, Directorate of Museums, Assam

Objects Content: Portraits of freedom fighters, paintings, folk art and crafts of Assam and neighbouring states, ethnographic objects, manuscripts, arms, epigraphs, natural history objects, sculptures, paper pulp statues, terracotta objects, coins, stone age tools etc.

Information Dissemination: The museum has no proper planning to inform local people and target institutions like schools, colleges and department of tourism, regarding its objects and various activities that are organized by the museum time to time. The museum does not give any advertisement in different media for dissemination of information.

The museum generally provides information through labels and through different visual aids. To interested visitors and special visitors who come on prior appointment and want to know something in details, the museum staff provides guide service. The museum has a library containing huge number of books that can be referred by visitors on request and special permission. Membership facility is also available for reading purpose only. Besides this, temporary exhibitions, seminars and lectures are also organized time to time. Sometimes, the museum communicates with other museums regarding its activities through direct mails.

Museum’s Strength: The museum is located at the heart of Guwahati City and rich in valuable objects. Financially, the museum is in good position as the Assam Government provides sufficient finance. A good number of experienced staff is also present in this museum.

* Proof of the research work is given in the 'Research Proof' section of the Appendix II, page number 317
Chapter: 3

Problems Regarding Development of Information Service and its Probable Solution

Museum's Visitors:
A considerable number of visitors come to this museum. Political unrest and militants' activity greatly reduced the number of visitors in the museum. Sometimes school groups come to visit the museum. Researchers come frequently in this museum for their work.

Problems: Though the museum has a very good collection, financially in good position and also has good human resource, till the museum is not able to serve and inform properly and could not able to generate interest among common people regarding museum. Now, the museum is facing following problems:

1. Lack of work culture
2. Poor conception of subject content
3. Image Crisis
4. Poor maintenance of objects
5. Poor knowledge of Museology
6. Poor communication with people

Forward Planning: At present the museum is giving emphasis on renovation of galleries to make the galleries more attractive and informative to visitors.

Suggestion: 1. The museum after completing renovation should complete documentation of all its objects both manually and in computer.
2. The museum should take initiative to develop educational activities and other visitors oriented programmes, film shows etc.
3. As a State Museum, it has the responsibility to provide services and programmes regarding various aspects of Assam for the knowledge of tourists and local people to generate mass awareness.
4. The museum should utilize all the possible media to inform local people, target visitors and target institutions so that they regularly visit and use museum for the purpose of education, getting knowledge and entertainment.