CHAPTER – 4

PROGRAMME WITHIN THE MUSEUMS FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED

Museums of all types try to present within their fold the world of visual images. Education in museums these days is no longer limited to looking passively at the labels or a simple guided tour for schools or a workshop at the remote corner of the museum building. Educational programmes by which a museum primarily disseminates its knowledge to the visitors makes education the absolute central function of the museums. Though acquisition and preservation of objects pertaining to natural and cultural heritage as well as research form one of the fundamental functions of museums but the information acquired from the objects are of no value unless communicated to the visitors. This process of communication is an educational activity.

The task of interpretation needs to be done in such a way that one would not consider this as merely another kind of reference book presenting factual information in vivid and pleasing form. Since the target group in this research are the underprivileged masses it is very important to give a lot of thought before interpreting the museum objects to them. The museum collections are obviously not there to prove the existence of a house of magic to be a house of wonder or Jadughar as it is still called by the majority of lay men.

The best to educate the common visitors in a museum has been through the collections. The museum can display its materials keeping in mind the educational role in its own way. Certain museums may organize an artistic display concentrating on the considerations of the visitors or it may even go for evocative display. Education through display requires a lot of thought especially one has to consider the visitors who might be unlettered or partially lettered. Exhibitions should not only be correct and comprehensive but should also appeal to the mind, the emotions and the senses of the visitors. A majority of visitors in the museums of West Bengal are from the rural areas and they visit the museums only during some special occasion.
or fairs. Many a times it is seen that they brush past the objects, unable to read or comprehend the labels. Thus, the collections remain mute and unless to them.

Museums need to keep in mind the requirement of all kinds of visitors. So in order to make the collections comprehensive they need to be supplemented using audio-visual aids such as photographs, sketches, recorded songs or even interactive devices such as touch screen kiosks. In case visitors are unlettered and need guidance in operating the devices like touch screen kiosks, museum personal like the gallery attendants or the guide lecturers are required to be ready to offer their assistance.

The general museum visitors require to be given a pre-visit or post visit talk. Visitors enter a museum with a lot of curiosities. Many of them have a very vague idea as to what to expect inside. In case the exhibits are beyond their comprehension they generally avoid them. To prevent them from avoiding the objects a pre-visit talk, briefing them regarding the museum collections can prove to be extremely beneficial for them. A talk which is well presented keeping in mind the aptitude and ability of the visitors can work wonders. Museum survey must be made to evaluate the requirements of the target group.

The next popular form of museum educational programme is the guided tour generally conducted by the guide lecturers. There may be popular lecturers and gallery talks on fixed timings of the day. Every effort must be made to make the public aware of such programmes by publishing in newspapers or by means of posters and festoons placed at strategic points. Museums need to contact schools especially the rural ones in order to get children to come to see the museums. Children from corporation school who form a part of the under privileged visitors need to be brought to the museums. These children rarely get to see museums so every effort must be made to make these children actively involved with the museum collection. Birla Industrial and Technological Museum regularly organizes educational programmes for such children on special days such as the Environment day or the National Science Day. Such programmes can be made even more interesting by accompanying them with a film show or slide show especially in art and archaeology or folk museums or the forms of museums other than science museums where there is generally absence of interactive or participating exhibits.
Such popular lectures are organized for the schools and educational institutions as well as the general public. Sometimes Non Governmental organizations also bring with them the underprivileged people. Such groups include adults along with the children. In such cases the adults too need to be encouraged to participate in the popular lectures by a questions answer session.

Though the science museums generally have exhibits that are interactive or participatory but art and archaeology museums too must make science efforts not to lag behind in this era. During popular lecturers duplicates of the museum collection can be given to the visitors to handle. Such objects excite visitors especially children who love to touch and handle every object they come across due to their natural inquisitiveness. Adults too find such handling fascinating. Duplicates of seals of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, different toys, papier mache models of sculptures all serve as potent tools to bring about consciousness about the culture which is centuries old and so rich. Even an unlettered visitor who has had no formal education and devoid of any ideas about Indus Valley Civilization can get a clear idea about it. Visitors may also be given jigsaw puzzles to put together. If a person is unlettered it is easy for him or her to understand the working of the jigsaw puzzles. Children are very happy to solve such puzzles.

Puppets are an interesting mode of imparting education in a museum, for children and adults alike. Puppet shows accompanied by songs were one of the traditional modes of imparting education. The Kath-putalais (string puppets) of Rajasthan have for ages been used to entertain people by making the puppets enact the heroic deeds of the Rajput kings and warriors. In West Bengal too the puppet show known as putul nach depict stories form the epics or serpent goddess Manasa Devi. The advantage with puppets in that they are known even to the rural masses. Therefore, they can be used to bring to enliven stories of ancient kings, our freedom fighters or great thinkers depicted in museums. Such show, if conceived intelligently can increase the interest of visitors about the museum collections.

Another form of interesting method of education can be shadowgraphy and origami. Shadowgraphy involves the use of the shadow of the hand in a dark room into different shapes. On the other hand, origami is the Japanese technique of making
figures by folding pieces of paper. Shadowgraphy can be used to depict different
types of animals and their habits in case of natural history museums. Shadowgraphy
can also prove to be very helpful in depicting episodes in History and lives of great
men and women. In the Kolkata Museum there is an entire programme on
shadowgraphy narrating the history of the British Rule. The programme includes
episodes on the Indigo Revolt, the Bengal Renaissance and end with the birth of
Rabindranath Tagore. This is indeed a fascinating programme which proves to be
delightful for even the unlettered visitors.

The Story - Hour programme is a special type of programme for the children of age
group 4 to 9. Children in general are attracted to stories. They might come from
different families as well as from not so well to do families but stories hold eternal
appeal for children. If the case of underprivileged children is taken then they can be
told a story related to the collections of the museum. For instance on visiting a
gallery on Buddha the Children can be told the story of Buddha’s life. After the
story finishes the children may be asked simple questions on the main topic of the
story.

The concept of drama with topics ranging from history, geography, zoology to
topics on health, pollution is an educational programme which can be undertaken by
any museum. The science drama competition organized by BITM as well as the
different District Science Centres cover many topics ranging from drug abuse to
pollution and from sanitation to vaccination. The District Science Centres get a good
amount of underprivileged children from the neighbouring areas. By this drama
competition the children can learn about the significance of important social issues.
The visitors especially children may be asked to participate in such dramas. This
because children love to pretend to assume the role of other people and pretend
being someone else.

Participatory exhibits are very popular in science but in this case art and archaeology
museums are lacking. An effort may be made in this case in the display of musical
instruments in an museum. However, if the visitors only get to see certain musical
instruments displayed with their labels it is not enough to hold their interest because
they would not know how a musical instrument functions. Such mute displays repel
the unlettered visitors even more. Instead, if recorded or digitalized version of the music of the instrument is played the visitors would be able to comprehend better. Further if small replicas of some of the instruments can be kept for the visitors to play it would cause immense delight for them. The museum of Lalit Kala Academy has an organ placed at one end of the gallery for the visitors to play. Photographs of eminent personalities playing the instruments might be displayed with the instruments displayed. The simple rural folk, many of whom hardly get to see any kind of instrument in their village or go to music concerts can find the information on musical instruments very useful to get an idea.

Workshops which involve coming into contact with craftsmen who manufacture folk art objects can prove to be a boon for many. A number of elements of the folk art of West Bengal are fast falling into disuse owing to the use of factory made goods of the industrial age. Folk art museums can organize such workshops for the public where craftsmen can show the manufacture of their handicrafts. These may include scroll painters or patuas, sara makers, people making dolls and toys. Gurusaday Museum, Joka, frequently arranges for such workshops based on the collections. On the birthday of Gurusaday Dutt there is an alpana (floor design with rice paste) organized for the women of the neighbourhood rural area. Many of the rural woman might have immense talent in drawing the alpana which is slowly dying out from the society. These days ladies use stickers of alpana on religious and festive occasions. The beauty and satisfaction of drawing the alpana by the use of traditional rice paste is generally not practiced by urban or even suburban ladies. The workshops on alpana are a two-way benefit process. The people living in towns and cities become more familiar with this traditional art of Bengal which is our pride. The ladies who draw the alpana come from rural back many of whom are not used to exposure to people. As a result their immense talent goes unnoticed most often. On participating in such competitions or workshops and winning prizes boosts their self – confidence and self – worth. The Victoria Memorial Hall Museum though not a folk museum, yet it has arranged programmes on folk songs by Bauls on the topic Bauls and Sufi Music : Our Folk Heritage.
Workshops may also be organized on masks, *sara* and scroll patas may also be used by folk art museums. Visitors may be encouraged to take part in the making of patas or masks in presence of the actual manufacturers. The patuas may be asked to display their patas accompanied by songs. The topics these days generally comprise of current issues along with traditional mythological topics to increase the popularity. Later they may be asked to discuss the making of patas to the visitors and also showing them how to make patas. The visitors may also be given an opportunity to participate in the making the patas thereby getting acquainted with the indigenous materials used traditionally. These days even the rural people who make patas use chemical glue and colours. the traditional vegetable dyes made from indigo, lamp black, chalk, fullers earth etc. the process of colour manufacturing gives the visitors a chance to know about the traditional eco-friendly colours.

Masks help to convey ideas, values and concepts easily. Therefore they can prove to very interesting devices for the common museum visitor the use of the different types of mask in Bengal for dance performances such as Chhau and *Gambhira* can prove to be enlightening. Performances with the masks on by artists can be arranged by museums showing their actual use.

Traditional toys and dolls are being replaced by mechanical ones such as Barbie, robots of different kinds, aeroplane as well as superheroes like Superman, Batman and Spiderman. The countless folk toys that were once sold at local fairs and markets are rarely seen. Bengal has a rich tradition of folk dolls and toys such the mummy dolls, the *ahladi* dolls as well as the Ghurni dolls (named after the place Ghurni in Nadia district, where they are manufactured. However, these days such toys and dolls are only found in some museums displaying objects of folk art or sometimes at handicraft fairs. Children of rural or semi-urban areas who do not belong to the so called well to do families generally do not have the opportunity to play with toys whether traditional or modern. They grow up playing with sticks and stones, bricks, and clay pellets. They are enchanted by toys of any type. They would feel privileged if they can touch or feel toys or even make them themselves.
Clay toys are not very durable and tend to break if roughly handled. Some toys of fibre glass or plaster cast can be provided to children to touch and feel. Children like to engage in creative activities. Hence, if toy making activities are arranged by museums in remote and rural community centers or school buildings, then it would serve the purpose of education and involvement. Rural children have less opportunity to experience the joy of toy making out of clay and paper. So a clay potter or toy maker may be invited to a museum of the distant and remote centers to teach children the art of toy making from clay or paper as the need may be.

Though modern technology has brought urban and rural children close but their conceptions have remained different till date. The rural children are simple minded, perplexed and dazed at everything and crave for knowledge. Clay toy making and doll making classes may also be attended by parents of the children.

Dioramas of different ethnic groups as well as different ecological zones of the world can be used to educate museum visitors about these ethnic groups and zones. The dioramas in the Ethnological Gallery help to give an idea about the lifestyle, dress, habitat, food as well as agricultural implements. There may be workshops on how to make the tribal implements or there may also be programmes on live performances of tribal dance and music in the museum premises where the visitors too can be encouraged to participate.

Education through museums also helps to increase knowledge about natural resources. Plants yielding oil, fibre, resins, edible roots etc. can be used to enhance the knowledge of the visitors. Again the different kinds of rocks and minerals give an idea about their utility. Many of the visitors who are unable to have formal education on Geography in childhood can satisfy his or her quest for knowledge in this manner. Agricultural museums too can help in increasing knowledge about soil chemistry and crops. The museum inside the premises of the Ramakrishna Mission School at Narendrapur has a museum that has facilities for soil testing and a nursery to observe different plants. The students of the school work at the museum as a part of their curriculum and also give valuable advice regarding plants and fertilizers to the local rural population. Similarly the Jute Museum situated at Regent Park Tollygunge has articles of jut and raw jute fibres on display. This museum opens the
world of the “Golden Fibre” as the jute plant is popularly called to the visitors. The museum offers technical know how to the jute cultivators about better cultivation of the crop those who are unemployed too come here to learn about jute in search of an alternative profession as an entrepreneur of jute products. They too are helped by the museum personnel to get a clear idea about the marketing prospects of jute products.

Museums on great personalities such as Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, Prasanta Chandra Mahalanabis, Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose can give an idea of their values and ideals. In this age of dwindling human values such museums can use their collection very fruitfully to convey value education. Further the articles personally used by these great men give a clear idea about the age in which they lived. Frequent popular lectures can be arranged for the general public. They should be such that they are simple and lucid and appeal to the unlettered and lettered alike. Children may be encouraged to dress up like these personalities in “go as you like”.

The museums concerned with health and hygiene can be of great service to the society by means of their educational programmes. The Toilet Museum at New Delhi give valuable insight into the development of toilets from their initial stage till the modern day. It employs life size models of scavengers to show the evil of open defecation as well as manual removal of human faeces.

Since for the underprivileged visitors, scholarly educational programmes such as the symposiums, seminars or lectures might prove to be boring it is necessary that they be imparted education by means of activities that involves seeing, touching and participating.

These days with the advent of technology museums have a number of means for imparting education. Short films and documentaries on museum collections or subject related to them appeal to the otherwise unlettered disinterested visitor. Documentaries on the lives of great men can give an idea about their lives. These can be used fruitfully in biographical museums.
Son-et-Lumiere is an educational programme based on a show of based on light and sound to tell a story. The show gets its name from the French words sonne (sound) and lumiere (light). The shows generally narrate stories on the history of a place or certain specific significant episodes in the life of important personalities. The Victoria Memorial Hall Museum has this facility.

Sit and draw competitions based on the museum collections organized for the children belonging to the slums and orphanages provide them with pleasure along with development of their creative instincts

Technologies such as immersive visualization, virtual reality, and multiscreen projections can be used by the bigger museums for imparting educational programmes, as they often have adequate funds at their disposal. Smaller museums located in rural or semi urban areas cannot afford such hugely expensive equipment but they need to put to use all that is there at their disposal. These days almost every museum has at least one computer. Anyone can prepare an attractive power point presentation on the museum objects for dissemination of knowledge.

Planetarium which comes under the domain of museum like institutions. They can arrange for shows on heavenly bodies that help laymen develop an interest about astronomy. In India the common public are most of the time wonderstruck by the functioning of the Universe and at times even scared of cosmic phenomenon such as the lunar or solar eclipse. As a result simple rural folk take these cosmic incidents as the wrath of gods. Upto this day even a number of the so called elite class do not cook or have food during the eclipses. Any left over cooked food is thrown away during the eclipse. So one cannot really blame the rural folks. The Birla Planetarium arranges daily shows on heavenly bodies at fixed times in English, Bengali and Hindi. Rural folk who might not be able to comprehend English have the choice to visit during the vernacular discourses. Special sky watch programmes are arranged during important cosmic phenomena such as eclipses or when one of the planets of the solar systems comes near the earth. BITM too has a miniature inflated planetarium within its gallery. It also arranges for sky watching programmes.
The museums on Natural History can successfully give an idea about various aspects of environment and its preservation. In order to impart environmental education the use of film shows, small and large scale models, charts etc. may be employed. Large scale models of small insects, the cell are all very useful to successfully educate about objects which are difficult to study owing to their small size. The National Museum of Natural History New Delhi has large scale models of the different systems of the human body. They beautifully focus on the functioning of the human body. The licence museums in West Bengal are also successfully undertaking such projects.

The National Museum of Natural History Bhopal regularly organize programmes on environmental education for the children residing in the slums. Such programmes aer held on every Wednesday and here the children are encouraged to draw their ideas about pollution of water, air and forests. In West Bengal Victoria Memorial Hall Museum arranges for programmes on environmental awareness on World Environment Day and Earth Day. Here the children from the orphanages are invited and after a guided tour of the museum are made to sit for a sit and draws contest on a theme based on environmental awareness.

Animatronics is the use of mechatronics to create machines which seem animate rather than robotics. Animatronics creations include animals (including dinosaurs), plants and even mythical creatures. Animatronics is used in situations where a creature does not exist, or the action is too risky or costly to use real actors or animals, or the action could never be obtained with a living person or animal. The figures are powered either by hydraulics or pneumatics (compressed air) or electrical means. Such models can be used by big museums to give the idea of the creatures that lived on this earth thousands of yeas ago. The rural folk who have hardly any or no idea of dinosaurs get a clear idea about these animals.

Virtual Reality is an expensive yet potent technological inventions that can be employed by bigger museums for educating their visitors both lettered as well as unlettered. Virtual Reality is a computer simulated image or environment that can stimulate physical presence in places in the real world or imaginary worlds. In the
Kolkata Municipal Museum visitors can become a part of the celebrations that took place on the 15th of August 1947 on the eve of the Independence Day Celebrations.

Talking Heads is yet another technology that can be used by the museums to attract the audience. In this type of exhibit generally the bust of one or more prominent personality are placed in the gallery. Whenever a button is pressed by the visitor these busts themselves talk to the visitor about themselves. Such an exhibit would no doubt be very beneficial in educating the unlettered underprivileged people. If possible vernacular versions of the talk can be made available for the underprivileged people who generally cannot follow English. The Kolkata Museum has a talking head on Jobe Charnock that talks about how he landed in Kolkata and spent his life among the local folks. The same museum also has an entire life-size model of Rabindranath Tagore that sings the song ‘Tobu mone rekho’. The Parliament Museum in New Delhi too has a life size model of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru too gives the speech that was originally given by Nehru on the eve of Independence of India.

The above modes of imparting education are quite expensive and cannot generally employed by rural museums due to paucity of funds. However, they can be used by bigger museums for educating the underprivileged visitors. In case of the smaller or rural museums it can be said that these days almost every museum whether rural or urban has at least one computer. Almost anyone can prepare a PowerPoint presentation or a short film for the public. The duty of museums is to educate the common public especially the lesser privileged ones as they have very little chance to visit museums. If the objects in the collection of the museums remain dry and mute to the majority of visitors then that purpose is not served, Thus, both big as well as the smaller museums in the rural areas earnestly require to fulfill their share of responsibility.

The science museums such as BITM has arranged for programmes on biodiversity in collaboration with West Bengal Pollution Control Board and Department of Environment, Government of West Bengal. These were followed by similar programmes in the different District Science Centres such as Digha, Purulia, Burdwan etc. Most of these programmes have witnessed a huge turnout of the local
underprivileged children along with their teachers. In these programmes the children had to identify the animals and birds by their calls only. Painting and clay modeling competition on the theme of the programmes proved to be attractive to the underprivileged children.

The Science museums also have Public Demonstration Lectures (PDL) which are for the public in general and can be followed by everyone whether lettered or unlettered. The programmes on popular science are also very popular among the underprivileged.

However the latest trend in the educational programmes at the Science Centres show that among all the topics, when it comes to preference, the programmes on biodiversity, pollution and environmental awareness score over the popular science principles. This is probably due to the fact that these topics concern the visitors in their everyday life and as a result easy to follow even for the unlettered visitors. At times visitors know more than the demonstrator as they work amidst nature, in fields in the open air.

The programmes have also proved to be extremely popular for the local rural children. There have been instances when a child has attended a science demonstration and come back along with the parents who also attended these programmes. The ward was probably a first generation literate in his or her family who found the Science demonstration interesting and as a result was naturally interested in showing it to the family. In this manner a few adult local residents have come with their wards and the demonstrations acted as an instrument of non-formal education for them as they too are at times unlettered.

The concept of Discovery Room helps children to explore objects along with recreation which attributes to learning. Here they are free to handle and examine objects and specimens and participate in a number of activities such as handling discovery boxes which contain a variety of carefully selected articles which help children to understand scientific facts. There are question cards in these boxes which help children to probe for the answers. Such discovery rooms fascinate children from all backgrounds especially those belonging to the rural schools where the scope for learning by interaction is practically absent.
A live corner having live animals, birds and aquarium keeps the children excited and spell bound. They become familiar with the anatomy of these animals by touching and feeling them. This supplements their knowledge of nature study. After watching the animals children may be given worksheets on animals to solve. They may include match the paws or tails with the pictures of animals or spotting the mistakes in the diagrams on animals. Making models of animals from clay or plastecene may be encouraged. ‘Touch-me’ exhibits and biological models may be added to the collection for better understanding on the part of the children.

In case of art and archaeology museums adults too can be included in participating in participatory activities. Textiles which fascinate women can be shown by the use of photographs and films to give a clear idea about their drape and design to make viewing more exciting. If possible visitor may be given a piece of rural visitors perhaps have never had a chance to see expensive textiles like Baluchari or Muslin. They can get an idea in the above mentioned manner.

The depiction of different types of transports right from the dawn of civilization till the modern day in transport museums give the vivid picture of traditional means of transport which are not very common nowadays. The display of either real or models of modes of transport such as the palanquin, the bullock cart side by side with the modern day cars can enrich the visitors and provide valuable knowledge about the rural society. Rail museums can be set up in some cities to make people aware of railway system in the past and its progress to the present state of rail transport. A sizeable number of people of west Bengal belonging to the lowest strata of the in terms of their socio-economic condition travel by rail in case of going far away. Yet many of them have the least idea how the evolution of railways has taken place over the years. There may be people such as the domestic helps or the vendors bringing supplies such as rice, fruit or vegetables everyday from the rural areas or the suburbs to the towns and cities. However, they rarely stop to think about how the train which used coal engines in the past are now using diesel or electric engines. Probably their everyday chores and travel by train has set in a sort of monotony that prevents them from any kind of curiosities. However, if the rail museums are set up in conjunction with a few important stations or at least a small room consisting of models of the earlier trains along with the articles used by railways such as the
bells, clocks, different types of signaling systems can provide for valuable information to people while they make their everyday journey.

Models, charts, diagrams, sketches, maps photographs are generally taken to be the supplementary visual aids which are placed along with object to give additional information. However, they can be the only source of providing information in case of adequate objects or total absence of any actual artifacts. The photos, charts, sketches in case of biographical or personalia museums. In such museums there might not be adequate number of articles of personal use by the great personality, which may be sued to there are a number of museums dedicated to the same person. For instance there are a number of museums on Gandhiji all over India namely Sabarmati (Gujarat), Barrackpore (West Bengal), New Delhi, Wardha (Maharashtra). Each of these museums depicts his life and times. Being biographical museums they generally have a few articles of his personal use such as his clothes, footwear, lantern spectacles etc. However, such articles are inadequate especially when the number of museums is numerous. So these museums are established based mainly on photographs and other archival materials such as original letters, sketches, paintings, murals, small scale models etc. The Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya Barrackpore has nearly thousand photographs, original letter written by and to him, recordings of the voices of different national leaders and Swadeshi songs. A very interesting thing that greets a visitor while entering the museum is the mural gallery. The chief attraction of this gallery is an eighty feet continuous mural on the wall of the gallery. The importance of this mural lies in the facts that it contains the entire life of Gandhiji and his movements. Painted by Prof Dhirendranath Brahma this mural gives an idea about Gandhiji even to an unlettered visitor in a very attractive and colourful manner. Besides this mural, in this gallery Gandhiji’s bust made of bronze, small scale models of the cottages in which Gandhiji lived at the Sabarmati Ashram and Sewagram Ashram and a plaster cast model of Gandhi column have been displayed.

There is a portrait gallery in this museum consisting of oil paintings of thirty six of the national leaders who were either Gandhiji’s immediate predecessors of his contemporaries and associates, some of whose lives and thinking influenced Gandhiji. Further many of these stalwarts brought immense glory to India and were
instrumental in bringing about the great Indian Renaissance. Thus, it shows how models, paintings, photographs can be a powerful means of visitor education. These are in fact more interesting compared to labels as they give the actual idea of different personalities and incidents. Similarly science museums can use charts and pictures depicting good habits of children, cleanliness and hygiene, good manners, consciousness regarding the environment, conservation of natural resources like fossil fuels and water.

Similarly models and photographs also come in handy in depicting history and archaeology. In case of depicting great personalities like Asoka or Akbar or the great pyramids and Sphinx of Egypt or the Great Bath at Mohenjo-Daro the photographs sketches and small scale models come in handy. Museums can construct small scale models of the Great Bath of Mohenjo-Daro along with a sketch of the floor plan can enliven history before the eyes of the visitors. Similarly while preparing a display on Emperor Asoka, a small scale model of one of his Rock Edicts or the Lion Capital can be made which gives the visitors a clear idea about how the actual object looked. Visitors who have never had a chance to venture outside their hometown or village and have probably never even had a chance to study about Asoka in formal school can benefit immensely from such displays the small scale model of the Sphinx of Egypt along with the pyramids in the Egyptian Gallery attract a number of visitors both lettered as well as unlettered. Among the lettered visitors a large number of visitors have never visited Egypt and read about the Sphinx in history or story books accompanied by photographs or pictures of Sphinx. The rural visitors are in an even sorry state of affairs as most of them do not have an idea about where Egypt is or what is the Sphinx. Some of their children might have read about Egypt in the history books but have probably no further idea. If the small scale models of the Sphinx are shown along with pyramids accompanied by the popular lectures by the guide lecturers during the gallery talks then visitors would be enthralled to know something as wonderful as Sphinx. They would also learn about its significance in the fields of heritage as it is one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

There may arise a very pertinent question regarding the fact whether the majority of people in India including West Bengal who belong to the section below the poverty level really require such education. They have to undergo a lot of struggle in their
daily life to attain the basic necessities such as food, shelter, sanitation etc and for whom visiting museums from their far off remote area might involve loss of a day’s work and wages along with a lot of expense involving traveling. However, it needs to be remembered that a vast majority of people in India are deprived from having formal education. Merely satisfying bodily hunger does not lead to a fruitful life. An old saying goes ‘man does not live by bread alone’ which implies that a person however poor required intellectually stimulating activities for full fledged development of personality. Such intellectual stimulation does not necessarily have to be obtained from formal alone. These days even the government is stressing on the requirement of non formal education for all sections of the people.