CHAPTER – 5

PROGRAMMES OUTSIDE THE PURVIEW OF THE MUSEUM

Museum education is not restricted within the boundaries of the museum building. Museums need to extend the scope of their educational activities beyond the barrier of their walls if they have to be functionally active in the true sense. The responsibility of museums today vests on education and catering to the educational requirements of the people who are otherwise unable to visit the museum in person owing to their residence being in the remote rural or suburban areas or due to lack economic capacity to travel.

In the opinion of Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine (1993), “the liveliest museums are not content to wait for people to come and visit them: they take their services out into the community.

Such educational are not limited to merely forming an adjunct to the school curriculum but they include ways and means to reach out to the community at large. The programmes beyond the boundaries of the museum include both extended services as well as out reach programmes. The extended programmes include taking the museum and its contents to the masses who reside in the remote areas and unable to visit the museums in person. The out reach programmes include those programmes that are not directly related the museum’s content but they are helpful in making people aware of the functions of museums thereby making them museum minded.

In order to draw up a successfully educational policy beyond its four walls the museum needs to work in three levels in West Bengal:

1) School Level
2) Community Level
3) Social Level

In all the three levels the target group comprises the people living in urban, suburban and rural ones belonging mainly to the economic section below the poverty level.
Among the extended services of the museum one may include the school loan kits, temporary exhibitions, the museo-bus, home-use folio etc.

Museums require establishing their links with the schools, especially those situated in the suburban or remote rural areas. These schools have children who are generally not very exposed only to their immediate environment just beyond their homes and school. They rarely get a chance to visit museums because of distance and the expenditure involved. Further there are not enough museums in the suburban or rural areas of West Bengal and if they do exist, they are languishing due to apathy and lack of funds. As a result they fail to attract even the people in their immediate neighbourhood. So the children of the neighbourhood too are deprived from visiting these museums.

The school loan kit comes in handy in such cases. The museums as well as the schools require connecting with one another. Then the loan kit consisting of duplicate materials from the museum collection are put in a box and sent to the schools. Such materials may be multidisciplinary including History, Geography, Environment etc. pertaining to the school syllabus of children. They are exhibited in the schools for all the students to see. The feedback of students may be taken from the students and they may be asked to draw, paint or make clay models of some of the exhibits according to their choice. Such activities have far reaching implications on their learning thereby enriching them.

Miniature models of Indus Valley Civilization, mounted specimens of animals, birds and insects, models of parts of the body in the loan kit enchant school children. The models of animals, insects etc. help to develop the scientific temperament working models which are easy to operate with minimum accessories may also be sent to the schools to impart technical and scientific knowledge.

Children from the rural areas rarely get a chance to visit the museums and even if they do they have to see the collections of the entire museum at one go. The leaves them confused and fatigued. As a result they fail to co-relate to the exhibits and interpret them. Hence they just follow their group blindly without showing any interest in seeing the objects properly. The school loan kit helps to overcome this problem by providing the kit for a certain period of time, for instance three weeks or
so that the children get enough time to see the objects and also interact with them. In this way they can make the best use of the museum in their learning process. If the schools do not have the infrastructure to install the kit then museums must make every possible effort to provide for them. For instance the schools in rural or partially rural areas may not have electricity. So museums require carrying generator along with them or talking to the school for arranging the same where probably the museum pays for the charge.

Different kinds of ready to do worksheets based on the exhibits of the loan kits may be given to the children to solve. There might be the following types of worksheets that may be given to the children to solve. For instance worksheets involving matching the pictures of paw marks on one side and the pictures of the animals on the other side or having the diagrams or photographs of beaks of birds on one side and picture or photographs of birds on the other. There may also be pictures which are mismatched for instance a duck having the body of a porcupine, the whale having the head of an elephant or a cow having claws and a striped body of the tiger. The audience may be asked to identify the total number of animals in the picture by means of their heads and bodies. Similarly, the audience may be asked questions on Buddha or Asoka in case the display has objects pertaining to them. If there are duplicates of the seals of Indus Valley Civilization then the audience may be asked to identify the types of seals or draw the different categories of seals.

Travelling or portable or circulating exhibitions are organized to spread knowledge and enjoyment to remote places. Going from place to place they furnish community service as well as intellectual and cultural exchange. These exhibitions can enrich remote-area museums or such organization which is going to take shape as a small museum, by donating fabricated exhibits of valuable and rare museum specimens. Travelling exhibitions can be dismantled, then transported to another place and then given its former shape.

Since the loan kits can carry limited number of objects museums arrange for museum on wheels or museo bus or mobile vans to meet the requirement of the people of the rural areas, who are deprived of the privileges to visit the museums frequently. However, this service can only be carried out by the bigger museums
with adequate funds, manpower and other infrastructure. The museo – bus visits schools, local fairs, cultural centers and public meeting places. For the people who are unable to visit the museums due to distance or expense, the museo-bus presents wonders of nature and civilization. Once they peep into such museum objects, their curiosity being awakened, the objects can ultimately help to develop permanent interest.

In the museo – bus the space is restricted and so utilization of maximum space is absolutely necessary. For that, modern buses adopt double – decker system. It is divided into two parts, upper and lower. Again each part of the showcase is divided in the middle horizontally. Both the upper and the lower parts are used for exhibition and storage. The visitors who look from outside can view the lower part of the bus as exhibition, their eye level being at the same height. The upper part is used as storage which is above their eye level. Outward showcases are covered with top-hinged doors. Opposite is the case with visitors who enter the bus for viewing. To them half of the upper part is exhibition case and the lower half store box.

Museo-bus exhibitions may be thematic or they may present varied types of objects. Trained instructors operate the unit. Objects are simple so that can be carried by road without being damaged. To make the exhibitions effective, the exhibits are made tri-dimensional, small in size, animated and wherever possible participatory. Exhibits are so arranged in the showcases as to break monotony.

The Indian Museum had made a commendable effort with the museo bus but unfortunately the bus is now defunct. The museum on wheels was commissioned on 16th of May, 1987 and designed to carry the message of museum to the doorstep of rural India under the extra rural mass education programme of the Museum. The mobile exhibition on the theme of man’s creation and nature’s manifestation provides a glimpse of the rich and varied collection of the Indian Museum, the oldest institution of its kind of Asia. The exhibition presented through twenty dioramas arranged in two tiers of the Museo bus reflects some artistic marvels created by our ancient forefathers as well as a flora, fauna and fossils.
The Great Bath at Mohenjadaro, Kalibangan an ancient city of the Indus Valley Civilization, edict of Emperor Asoka at Dhauli that be speaks of transplantation, carved medallions from Bharhut in Madhya Pradesh, unfolding of ancient centre through archaeological excavation at Arikkamedu in Tamil Nadu, the Central Pillar of Diwani Khas at Fatehpur Sikri, the Mughal Court Paintings, a series of India gold coins, inscribed records of socio-economic importance and sculpture from various ages of our history representing the life scenes of Buddha, archaeological excavation at Arikkamedu in Tamil Nadu, the Central Pillar of Diwani Khas at Fatehpur Sikri, the Mughal Court Paintings, a series of India gold coins, inscribed records of socio-economic importance and sculpture from various ages of our history representing the life scenes of Buddha, women in Indian art, the bronze images of gods and animals include the objects on show. The fabric art of Indian female folk, the colourful masks of Bengal, the simple wood carvings of the Naga communities were displayed here.

A panoramic view of high altitude birds, fossilized remains of plants, flowers and animals as well as specimens of medicinal herbs and nature’s freak presented in the diorama offered a feast to the eyes and thoughts for the enquiring mind. The exhibits displayed were fabricated in fibre glass and plaster cast models with a few original museum objects. The presentation created awareness amongst the rural masses about the rich cultural heritage spanning over five thousand years and the natural traditions of our glorious past.

Children as well as adults are amazed by the mobile museum. Most of them probably have never been to a museum or even to a zoo. Museo – bus brings them closer to the world of reality and the natural ecosystem. Some of the people have probably never seen a mask in real life. Such children can be fascinated by masks displayed in the museo bus.

On the community and social level the museo bus can play a very significant role in educating the rural folks who are deprived of formal education. Thus, the mobile exhibitions are provocative and unprecedented for the rural people who have very little scope of enjoyment and entertainment within their means. So if a museo – bus is stationed at a public place then the local people are thrilled to encumber all
hindrances and conciliate the museum on wheels at any cost. It is a diversion linking leisure with learning and is thus accepted heartily by them.

The Birla Industrial and Technological museum together with its satellite units in other districts of West Bengal as well as other states like Bihar and Orissa operates eight Mobile Science Exhibition units based on Laws of Motion, Fun Science, Energy, Heat and Temperature, Global Changes, Emerging Technology, Mathematics and so on. Such exhibitions fascinated children and adults like.

Toy making workshops may be arranged by folk museums as outreach programmes for rural children as they are more at ease with the toys in the midst of nature. The children may be provided with clay or plastecene and after letting them handle various kinds of indigenous toys, be asked to prepare their own toys under the supervision of a toy – maker.

Among other programmes that can be devised for the rural folk are puppet shows, mimicry, mime which are not very expensive and require only a few appendages to be installed. Puppet shows may be organized at residential colonies, community centers, rural schools or parks and places which are strategically located.

Street theatre with accompaniment of puppets would be enthralling for the rural folk especially the children. Puppeteers would have to be approached by the concerned museums and relevant themes are to be given to them. Themes dealing with problems related to everyday life, need for health, hygiene, sanitation, education, global warming and conservation vaccination against diseases are generally stressed upon so that they appeal to the public from the rural or suburban areas. Children can be taught to make puppets using common items such as sticks, socks etc.

The museums in India including West Bengal need to keep in mind their target group who belong to the grass root level of the society. They have to struggle for their living each and every day of their lives. Hence very complicated themes would repel them. The themes need to be simple, concerning every day life and in the local vernacular. Easy literature such as pamphlets or folders may be provided to the partially literate or school going children.
The museums have to make an effort by officiating links between puppeteers, puppet makers and the rural or heads of Panchayats regarding the place of performance, number of days the persons concerned would reside in that place, the number of shows they would have to perform, financial decisions etc. Bigger museums that have mobile vans can think of the least expensive strategy, maintain a low budget and achieve more.

Museums may take fabrications of their objects to local fairs. Scientific objects like the magnifying glasses, powerful magnets, binoculars, microscope, telescope etc. may be exhibited at Science fairs organized by the museums themselves in towns, rural areas as well as the city where all kinds of people will gather to watch the exhibits. There are underprivileged folks even in the cities who will readily enjoy such exhibitions. Museum personnel need to be present at the venue to answer the questions of the public who might have vague conceptions.

A museum may carry on adult education programmes with science and natural history collections, accessible to the rural population. They might include instruction in many practical subjects useful in daily living. Their possibilities are broad and they may be carried out by large museums as part of their out reach programmes. This is because these days even the governments are stressing education to be for lifetime. Such education can only be in the form of non – formal ways which can be very well taken care of by museums.

As part of the rural educational programmes more and more museums need to be established in suburban and rural areas that would offer the villagers the elementary knowledge on biology, chemistry, agricultural implements cultivation methods, livestock management in the form of outreach programmes.

Outreach programmes in the form of literacy programmes may also be undertaken by the museums in collaboration with non – governmental organizations. One such effort was made by the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya at Barrackpore in West Bengal in the form of Balwadi. This is now defunct. It was an action – research programme undertaken by the museum for education and cultural development of children belonging to families which are economically and culturally under privileged. Children between two to three years of age were included in this programme and
educated up to six years of age. This programme is an attempt to realize Gandhiji’s
dream of upliftment of the people belonging to the grass root level of the society.

Another programme undertaken by the same museum was that of self employment
of women who were school or college drop outs owing to financial constraints. This
programme too is unfortunately defunct at present. The programme undertook the
task of teaching the under privileged women to make beautiful objects such as
crotchet bags, artificial flowers and other decorative items. The museum arranged
for these items to be sold and keeping just a token amount gave the earnings to the
women who had manufactured the goods.

The Ananda Niketan Kirtishala, Nabasana, Howrah is a rural museum which houses
a small but good collection of terracotta figurines, potteries, temple – plaques, coins,
sculptures and objects of folk art and craft collected from various parts of West
Bengal. The authorities of the museum are undertaking several projects that pertain
to community development. An exhibition of Water Sanitation Support Organization
was organized to raise awareness among the people of the area about the
significance of conservation of water and the role of proper sanitation in the life of
the people.

Though the Ananda Niketan Kirtishala is primarily a museum on art and
archaeology, they have organized functions on the occasion of the birthday of Holy
Mother Sharada Devi to highlight the mission of Swam Vivekananda which was
service to the common people through the spread of education and awareness. The
theme of the function was ‘Swamijir Drishtite Sheba o Shiksha’

Some of the other activities of the Ananda Niketan Kirtishala are as follows:

**The outdoor medical unit on allopathy and homeopathy.**

**Centre for the physically and mentally challenged children.**

**Rural sanitation programme** to make people aware about the role of a healthy life
by following proper modes of sanitation.
Water and soil testing laboratory to help the rural people who were engaged in cultivation.

Improved Chula or use of traditional Indian ovens with proper precautionary measures for lesser health hazards.

Chalaman Bahini or the local group of volunteers for social causes

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana or the self help groups for self sufficiency.

Green House Technology

Gene Bank for better yield of flower by experiments with the genes and creating a floral bank for the preservation of floral plants with better genes. Anyone who wishes to undertake large scale production of flowers for the purpose of commercial output can consult the scientists here.

Centre for the production of herbal dye from flowers. This dye called abir is used to smear on each other during Doljatra the festival to mark the coming of spring.

Vidyamandir or the Primary and Higher Secondary school run by the museum.

Chhatrabas or hostel of the school for local children belonging to the general cast as well as scheduled casts and tribes.

Rural Library having a good collection of books.

Anganwadi worker training centre for the local underprivileged ladies who wish to be employed for self sufficiency.

Jana Shiksha Samsthan which is a vocational training centre for forty- four types of awareness generating programmes.

The Community Polytechnic to teach the local students about technology.

Extension Centre for teaching the local underprivileged people especially the ladies about tailoring, knitting of wool, weaving.
Short term vocational training centre for teaching a course on computer application.

There was a time when the Gurusaday Museum Joka carried on programmes on community development in past. They included:-

1) **The Central Institution of Bratachari Education** for imparting mass education of character building and citizenship training through the medium of traditional folk – lore

2) **Shilpayatan or craft center**

3) **Chitrabari (house for painting)**

4) **Junior Basic School**

5) **A Residential High School known as “Bratachari Vidyashrama”**

6) **A Health Centre**

7) **Social (Adult Education Centre)**

8) **A Multipurpose Co-operative Society.**

9) **Agricultural farming and fisheries etc.**

However, much of this is now defunct.

A wonderful example of what a museum can do with sincere efforts is furnished by Magan Sangrahalaya situated at Wardha in Maharashtra. This museum plays a very significant role in developing Gandhian concept of social development throughout the Maharashtra state by applying the Gandhian approach to rural development. This was the only museum on Gandhian ideals inaugurated by Gandhiji himself on 30th December 1938. The museum is named after Maganlal Gandhi his close associate and a rural scientist who had been the right hand of Gandhiji.
In 1952, Dr. Devendra Kumar, a young Oil Technologist joined the museum as a scientist and undertook the onus of providing momentum to the noble cause of helping those below the poverty line by empowering them with the tool of science and technology.

The main objective of Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti is to bring to the forefront the indigenous skills of the village artisans, stemming from the accumulated traditional knowledge and facilitate its interaction with the recent knowledge of science and technology to innovate technologies that could be converted into sustainable business opportunities at the grass root level. The other objectives are research, development and dissemination of khadi and village industries, agriculture, dairy etc. along with the display and demonstration of their production process.

At present the museum or Sangrahalaya has the following wings:

**The Village Industries wing:** The museum showcases thirty two rural industries including food processing Agricultural tools for small farmers, honey from wild rock – bees. Non – violent leather (goods from fallen hides), pottery, hand – made paper, oil from edible and non – edible seeds. It also exhibits industries based on palm, bamboo, lac, grasses, jute, wood, metal, glass, stone, mud, horn, cow dung and cow wine.

**The Khadi wing:** The Khadi wing showcases forty different kinds of Charkha dating back to the year 1930. The Charkhas displayed in the exhibition range from the hand, pedal to solar driven charkha. It also displays the changing form of charkha from *Sudarshan* (wheel) to *Kissan* (box) to *Ambar* Charkha and presently the E- Charkha. The display wing holds sections on Khadi, Natural Dye, Silk, Raw Silk, Wool and Jute mixed Khadi.

**Mahatma Gandhi wing:** This wing displays the belongings and the gifts received by Mahatma Gandhi. Some of the rare articles of Mahatma Gandhi exhibited here include Gandhiji’s hair, the smallest spinning wheel (charkha) used by him, self signed statue of Mahatma Gandhi (the only statue of its kind in the world) and the stone on which Gandhiji made the first handmade paper.
Rural Technology wing: that presents eighteen rural based low – cost simple technologies that can be adopted by the rural households. It exhibits energy conserving technologies, low cost mud housing, improved agriculture tools, agro – processing tool and water purification and conservation technology. This Sangrahalaya also makes effort in developing rural industrialization through various Gandhian thought based activities beside the in – house display techniques.

Organic Food Shop: The organization run Prakrutik Ahar Kendra at Sewagram that sells organic grains, cereals, pulses, natural sugar, honey and food articles. All the organic food is procured from organic farmers associated with Magan Sangrahalaya. The outlet provides hot organic meals made from organic season vegetables, coarse grains and fresh oil. The beverages constitute herbal tea, coffee and drinks made from flowers.

Nature Care Centre or Prakrutik Jivan Kendra an alternative health center based on Nature cure, organic food, yoga, mind empowerment and Ayurvedic massage is run by the museum. Every year around 2000 patients are treated in this center. The new venture is Antardeep (inner light) which provides a neutral, universal and compassionate environment in which using simple, interactive and practical techniques of emotional empowerment, thought management, stress management, energy management, healing, karma management, physical body management, etc. would be done.

Khadi: The Khadi (a hand - woven and hand spun cotton cloth) sector is supported by the Government by providing rebate on the sale of Khadi. Magan Sangrahalaya took up the production and sale of Khadi as a mission to support the dying weavers and spinners and sell eco-friendly cloth to the people without taking any kind of government subsidy.

To increase the productivity and earning of thick – yarn weavers using traditional charkha, Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti developed a four spindle Magana Charkha, an improvised spinning wheel. The critical intervention here is the replacement of the costly multinational “Top Arm” by an indigenous “Top Arm” which can be easily fabricated and repaired in any village workshop. With this appropriate device, the
spinner can earn and produce four times more than before. At present this self reliant khadi unit of the organization is providing employment to 150 artisans including silver plant workers, spinners, weavers, tailors, dyers and sales persons. With the collective effort of Magan Sangrahalaya team and artisans the institute sells khadi worth fifty lakhs annually. Using decentralized silver plant developed by Dastakar, Andhra Pradesh, the Sangrahalaya is producing the best quality eco- friendly organic silver. At the same time, it is also recycling, the organic cotton seeds back to the organic farmer since the process keeps the seeds intact.

**Natural Dyes:** The primary task of this wing is converting forest refuse into Colour. To conserve the environment and optimize the use of bio-friendly refuse the Sangrahalaya has developed 200 hues of organic dyes, most of which are made from unutilized local forest produce. With the support of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, the Sangrahalaya has developed new improved tools and techniques of natural dyeing and effective ways of recycling the effluents of a natural dyeing unit. The museum has also developed an innovative printing technique using fresh leaves whereby from a single leaf 200 motifs can be printed.

**Promoting Self Reliance through Natural Farming:** Unable to cope with constant rise of the cost of farm inputs and decreasing crop yield, farmers were unable to pay back their debts and were compelled to commit suicide. Natural farming frees the farmer from dependence on exploitative market and commercial interests. Hence, Magan Sangrahalaya volunteers initiated the Natural farming campaign in villages of Wardha. With natural farming the quality of soil has shown improvement and productivity too has increased.

**Bullock Operated Water Pump:** This bullock pump, with three horse power capacity draws 12,000 litres of water from a depth of 30 feet.

**Storing Raindrops:** The Sangrahalaya has met the acute water crisis of the area by a detailed watershed action plan which included planting of trees and storing rain water. There was violence and consumption of liquor among men owing to the scarcity of water. The Sangrahalaya also led an anti-liquor campaign and succeeded in banning its sale.
Conserving Soil Erosion: The Sangrahlaya is introducing soil conservation structures in an area of 2500 hectare.

Private Toilets: Bhavanpur one of the neighbourhood villages is member of the self help group that has taken an initiative to set up toilets. Each of the 100 households of the village collected rupees 1000 and deposited a total sum of rupees one lakh at the State Bank of India, Girad Branch so that each household gets a loan of 1000 rupees to construct bathroom – toilet set. At present all the households of the village have their own neat and hygienic toilets.

Women Self Help Groups: The Magan Sangrahlaya Samiti mobilized 1000 women in 100 villages of Seloo and Samudrapur blocks of the Wardha District and formed Self Help Groups. Majority of these women are farm labourers, daily wage workers and subsist below the poverty line. The Self Help Groups have assisted in capacity building of rural women, raising their technical skills and creativity, accounting and management skills.

Wardha Wardhan – The wing is involved in exposition of organic products. Wardha Wardhan is a week long fair organized by the institute where NGOS activist groups, farmers, artisans and artists display, demonstrate and sell their products. It also provides a platform for all these groups to interact with one another. For the public, it is an opportunity to know about alternative living, eco-friendly products, ideas and methods to conserve natured. The fair also serves as a market for eco-friendly products, organic food, alternative fuel, alternative sources of energy etc.

Karigar Panchayat: Through a network of volunteers the Karigar Panchayat is spread out in 21 states in India covering 200000 artisans including wood workers, black smiths, bamboo workers, honey gatherers, potters, weavers etc.

Marketing the Rural Products: Magan Sangrahlaya is promoting and strengthening the market of artisan products, products of rural enterprises run by women entrepreneurs. To support the sale of khadi the Magan Sangrahlaya has opened three outlets in Wardha, Sewagram and Seloo.
This museum is a splendid example of what a museum can do if they sincerely desire in community development. This serve as a wonderful example for other museums in undertaking such works for community development. Although all the problems cannot be solved in one go but efforts can be made in this direction.

Another museum which has taken up community development work is the Toilet Museum under the Sulabh International in New Delhi. Conceived developed by Dr. Bindheswar Pathak the museum has undertaken a project of upliftment of the scavengers who earlier did the task of carrying human excreta. Rehabilitation programmes are being undertaken for these ladies which include training in making jams, jelly, pickle etc, beautician course, zari work etc.

A programme has been undertaken to develop toilets which are hygienic for everyone in most parts of the country. Anyone can use the toilets in exchange of rupees one or two. Composting toilets having two pits have been developed which is a viable option for the economically underprivileged people of rural areas.

Key advantages of Sulabh flush composting toilets are that they are: -

Hygienically and technically appropriate, and socio-culturally acceptable

Affordable and easy to construct with locally available materials.

Design and specifications can be modified to suit householder's needs and affordability.

Eliminates mosquito, insect and fly breeding.

Can be constructed in different physical, geological and hydro geological conditions.

Free from health hazards and does not pollute surface or ground water, if proper precautions and safeguards are taken during construction.

Can be constructed on upper floors of houses.
Pits are generally designed for 3-year desludging interval, but if desired, it can be designed for longer periods or it can be reduced even to two years.

Maintenance is easy, simple and costs very little.

Needs only 1.5 to 2 litres of water for flushing, while conventional flush toilet needs 12 to 14 litres of water.

Needs less space than a septic tank toilet system.

Does not need scavengers for cleaning the pits or disposal. This can be done by the householder. of sludge

Makes available rich fertilizer and soil conditioner.

Can be easily connected to sewers when introduced in the area.

A low volume flushing cistern could be attached to avoid pour flushing.

Single leach pit is appropriate only if they can be desludged mechanically by a vacuum tanker, since its contents are not pathogen-free. In the two-pit system, since one pit is used at a time, the filled up pit can be cleaned manually even by the householder himself because of the long period of digestion which makes it free of foul smell and safe for handling. In the single pit system, desludging has to be done almost immediately after the pit has been filled to enable its reuse; this involves handling of fresh and undigested excreta which is hazardous for health. If a deeper and larger single pit is provided, desludging operation will be difficult and chances of pollution would be more especially where the ground water table is high. As a result of these toilets nothing less than a revolution has occurred for the underprivileged of the neighbourhood has occurred. Before these toilets by Sulabh were developed the economically disadvantaged were used to open defecation leading to several health hazards.
Economic eco friendly toilets are next in line of ideas of Sulabh International.

Biogas is being manufactured by treating human excreta and this gas is being used for household purposes.

A school has been set up for the daughters of the female scavengers and the school also undertakes programmes on female health and hygiene.

The State Archaeological Museum in Behala Kolkata had undertaken an outreach programme for the underprivileged street children termed Communication Space. This project was primarily undertaken to raise the awareness about heritage among the under privileged and street children in both rural and urban area with the help of Indian Museum Kolkata, West Bengal State Archaeological Museum and other district museums of West Bengal.

The events or Programmes included underprivileged and street children of the age group of 9-16 years. The venue was mobile and changed with the changing region and locality of the project but preferably museums (local) and also the Indian Museum Kolkata and State Archaeological Museum Kolkata.

The children were given kits on drawing and clay modeling to draw and model museum objects shown to them and also other objects which they wished. In addition to the drawing and clay modeling kits they were also presented some souvenirs, which included school bag, graphic booklets, certificate, drawing book, pencils, T-shirts and caps. They were also provided with lunch and refreshments. Initially, there was a plan to host this programme twenty times a year with thirty children which later increased.

The District Science Centre at Digha has undertaken outreach programmes for the local population. A workshop for making jute handicrafts was undertaken for the local underprivileged ladies so that that received necessary training in case they chose to be self sufficient. Apart from this there was an awareness workshop on AIDS for the local fishermen. It involved necessary knowhow on the different factors responsible for the spread of HIV, necessary health precautions and medical help that is available. Another outreach programme that recently been undertaken by
Digha Science Centre has undertaken is a programme on prevention on coastal erosion. It is done in collaboration with the marine biologists. It is an attempt to make the local population aware of the conservation of the coastal belt.

The Birla Industrial and Technological Museum is essentially a science museum but it had undertaken a commendable outreach programme to indigenous handicrafts in its premises. The programme was called *Karigarer Hat* literally implying the market for craftsmen. Here craftsmen had come with their crafts. They were manufacturing as well as selling their crafts. This effort on the part of the museum involved better promotion of the indigenous crafts such as woodwork, mask, puppet show, clay objects etc.

The Nehru Children’s Museum undertakes various projects as part of its outreach programmes to make aware of social issues. The Vidyasagar Sishu Academy is one such project. The academy located at Rabindra Sarobar, Kolkata was established with the objectives of rendering services to the children of the weaker sections of the society especially the slum area. The academy gives special emphasis on vocational training which includes sewing and singing.

The academy runs a crèche that benefits many underprivileged working women such as daily wage earners, domestic helps etc. The crèche that accommodates children of the age group between one month to five years. For the age group between three and six years, the academy has established Balwadi Centre, an educational Institution. Various activities for the welfare and entertainment of the children are held with the active cooperation of Inner Wheel, Rotary Club and Rotaract Clubs. Periodic Diagnostic camps producing medical services are held including medicines to the weaker sections of the society.

A special nutritional programme is undertaken providing eggs and fruits to 120 students everyday. Two sets of uniform are provided to all the students. The nutritional programme is financed by Sri Ravi Poddar, a noted industrialist

Ankur, a project of the museum is dedicated to children’s educational development through sports and physical skill. It also trains the unemployed underprivileged youth on vocational training in computer hardware and software, recitation, interior
decoration etc. It has a children’s play area that has been developed for the benefit of the children of the locality. The computer centre conducts classes for preparation of joint Entrance Examination. Poor, needy and meritorious students are given coaching free of charge. The classes are taken by the faculty of Jadavpur University. Qualified underprivileged students are offered scholarship during study of their main examination.

The Victoria Memorial Hall Museum too conducts outreach programmes on health and hygiene, environmental awareness, anti–liquor campaigns with the slum dwellers. Similarly programmes have been conducted in other districts in collaboration with other Non Governmental organizations for the upliftment of the rural craftsmen. There workshops are conducted to make the craftsmen about new technologies for better finished products, marketing strategies to be pursued while marketing their crafts etc. Sometimes these craftsmen are brought to the museum in the expense of the museum and are entertained by a local sightseeing tour by bus. Efforts are taken on the part of the museum to communicate with potential bulk buyers of handicrafts. In Purulia a workshop was organized by the museum on local wall paintings The earning from the sales were given to the Governor’s relief fund in the ratio 3:1.

Thus, it is clear that the education department of the museums serve the underserved audiences through their outreach programmes at parks, recreation centres, facilities for seminars, workshops or social service agencies, libraries and various institutions of the community. Programmes may range from awareness on health, hygiene, women’s health or wellness of the family. They may also address themes such as family centred learning at community events or shopping malls and other locations where diverse audiences gather. In this manner they can reach out to the society at large and perform a lot of community development work through their innovative outreach programmes.